



## Image of the day - Arundel Cathedral



## **C of I members complicit - Apologies and clarification from archbishops on Mother and Baby Homes**

*The Most Revd John McDowell, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, and the Most Revd Dr Michael Jackson, Archbishop of Dublin, Bishop of Glendalough, and Primate of Ireland, have issued the following statement in relation to the Report of the Mother and Baby Homes Commission of Investigation:*

‘The Report of the Mother and Baby Homes Commission of Investigation sheds light on the suffering of women and children who found themselves with nowhere else to go but to these homes. The pain and hurt experienced by the women and children in these homes has been shocking and

disturbing, and their response has been courageous and inspiring.

‘We acknowledge with shame that members of the Church of Ireland were complicit, as with the rest of society at that time, in a culture of hypocrisy and judgement which stigmatised women and children and endangered their health and well-being. We are sorry and apologise for the role that our Church played in shaping a society in which unmarried women and their children were treated in this way. They deserved much better.

‘We also want to pay tribute to those former residents of homes, and others, who have focused society’s attention on mother and baby homes. One of the most prominent groups was associated with the Bethany Home, which operated under a general Protestant ethos while being independently managed.

‘We acknowledge the Commission’s detailed and extensive reporting and we must all feel ashamed when we consider the social pressures and judgements that drove so many women and their children into these deserts within our community.

‘The Report seeks to understand the injustices endured, and also recognises the difficulties faced by those who ran the homes in a society that often did not want to know or to help, and in a State that did not help enough.

‘The Commission’s recommendations on access to available information for residents in the homes deserve urgent consideration to ensure certainty in future over access to their personal records and knowledge of their identity.

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‘Everyone who has read this Report and related coverage can only be moved on behalf of the women and children whose stories are told within it. This is a sombre time for us all.’

## **Explanatory notes**

### **Origins and ownership of the Bethany Home**

There has been considerable commentary on a reference in the Report that the Church of Ireland was associated with the bodies that founded the Bethany Home: the Dublin Prison Gate Mission, and the Dublin Midnight Mission. This appears to imply a governance link, which is not factually accurate, and a correction of this is being sought from the Commission. The Church’s research sources are being supplied to the Commission and will be supplied to the media on request; they are repeated below for transparency.

The Church regrets the renewed confusion this has caused to former residents. The Church wishes to clarify its position regarding ownership of Bethany.

### **Dublin Prison Gate Mission**

The Report states in Chapter 22 (para 22.1, page 1), that Dublin Prison Gate Mission, one of the bodies that founded the Bethany Home, was associated with the Church of Ireland. In fact, it is widely recorded that the Dublin Prison Gate Mission was established in 1876 by Friend Mary Edmundson, a member of the Quaker meeting, and a description of the founding and history of the project is included in the book *Charitable Words: Women, Philanthropy, and the Language of Charity in Nineteenth*



*Century Dublin* by Margaret Helen Preston (p.118), Praeger Publishers, 2004.

## **Dublin Midnight Mission**

The Mission is also claimed to have been associated with the Church of Ireland (also at Chapter 22, para 22.1, page 1). Little is known about this charity; it raised funds locally, among Protestant communities in Dublin in the 19th Century and the early 20th Century, but was not a body connected to the Church of Ireland. It is supposed to have its origins in a London-based gentlemen's charity aimed at rescuing women and founded by Theophilus Smith, some aspects of which are described by Smith in a publication from 1860, entitled *Statement of the origin, proceedings and results of the midnight meetings for the recovery of fallen women* (5th edition), Midnight Meeting Movement, London; the publication is available [at this link](#).

Bethany Home was an amalgamation of the above charities. Governance documents concerning the Dublin Prison Gate Mission are with the Charities Regulatory Authority.

## **Irish Church Missions (ICM)**

The ICM was founded as a private mission in England in March 1849 by an Anglican clergyman, the Revd Alexander Dallas, Vicar of Wonston, Hampshire. It had an independent management – it was not run by the Church of Ireland or the Church of England – and raised much of its funding privately while viewing itself as an Anglican entity working alongside the Church on the island of Ireland.

The Report acknowledges its English origins later in Chapter 22 (paragraph 22.100, line 14, page 46) – “A

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member of the ICM's general committee in London visited Ireland as a result of this case" – referring to an occasion in 1943. The Report more casually describes the ICM as being "the Church of Ireland's Society" (Chapter 22, para 22.11). For the reasons above, this is factually inaccurate.

See The Long Reads on page 22

## **Door to door survey finds openness to Christ in midst of Covid**

**A church door-to-door survey in Bleary has found that almost a third of people believe Covid is going to affect their mental health in 2021, but 49% believe Christ can provide the answers to their worries.**

A visitation team from the Parish of Knocknamuckley (Down & Dromore) posted letters to 370 homes giving advance notice of the survey, with 156 homes taking part in a socially distanced doorstep survey over two weeks in the run up to Christmas.

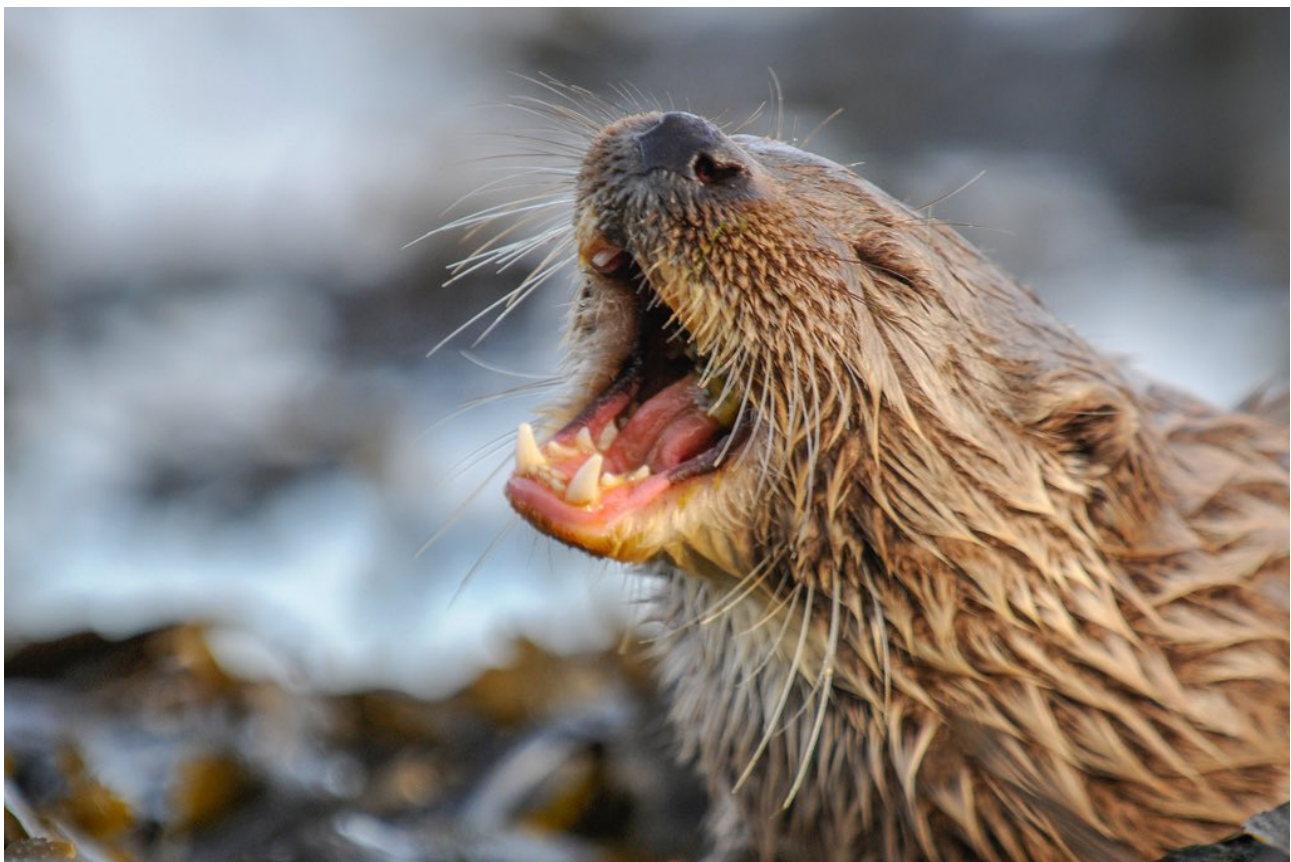
At least seven people who answered their doors came to faith or recommitted themselves through the work of the team.

Rodney Adamson, a member of the church, was motivated to lead the project in light of the despair he saw in many people during repeated lockdowns. Mr Adamson has been involved with gospel outreach projects for over 25 years and runs his own kitchen manufacturing business.

"People are isolated in our communities and we must go to them to bring a message of hope," he said. "We believe that God is interested in people struggling in lockdowns."



He said that some of the key findings of the survey were that almost a third of people saw Covid as affecting their mental health in 2021, but that in addition 49% saw Christ as providing the answers for their future. He also found that 53% of those surveyed were interested in knowing God personally.



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“After reviewing the results of the survey, not surprisingly, it would seem that Covid has shocked people more than any other interference they have ever had to deal with,” he said.

“People are unsure how they will cope with it in the future but it is also interesting to note that they realise God is the answer and they don’t want to disregard His authority over world events.”

**He said the response from people during home visitations was “very positive”.**

“One resident answered the door by asking ‘Where have you been?’ after the project was delayed by two weeks due to the circuit breaker lockdown.

“Many people were wanting to speak with us and asking for the Christian direction. One man who said he was an atheist even thanked us for calling with him. He went on to say he did not have the same conviction as we have but said he would read the literature he received because we had taken time to come and speak to him.

“Others received the gospel message into their lives, declaring that it has helped them face ongoing concerns in their lives.”

For those people who answered the survey by saying they would be interested in knowing God, team members took them through a booklet, ‘Knowing God Personally’.

“A large percentage of people acknowledged that they have got life wrong at times and made bad decisions. We explained that believing that Jesus has died for their sins, they could believe God to forgive them and help in the way ahead.



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“Some of them indicated they want to follow their new-found faith and continue in fellowship. So we also advised them to develop their relationship with God by reading the Bible to find out how He will direct them, and to bring their concerns and joys to God in prayer.”

Some of the key findings of the survey of 156 households, were:

76% said Covid had affected their life.

55% said it had affected their lifestyle while 35% said it had affected their family.

31% believed it would affect their mental health in future with 32% believing they would suffer more isolation.

29% said they would carry on as normal.

49% said they believed that Christ was the answer to their worries for the future though 24% were not sure about this.



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53% said they were interested in knowing God personally while again, 24% said they were not sure on this issue.

Anyone who wishes to engage with the team on matters of faith can contact the rector of Knocknamuckley, Revd Geoffrey Haugh on [revghaugh@hotmail.com](mailto:revghaugh@hotmail.com) (tel 028 388 31 227) or Rodney Adamson on [rodneyadamson55@gmail.com](mailto:rodneyadamson55@gmail.com)

## **Coronavirus: Fermanagh clerics get their vaccine in Enniskillen**

Two well-known Enniskillen clerics have received their first dose of the Covid-19 vaccination.

Dean Kenneth Hall, of St. Macartin's Cathedral, and Monseigneur Peter O'Reilly, of St. Michael's Parish, Enniskillen received their Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine jabs last week.

Both serve as chaplains for the South West Acute Hospital, with Dean Hall serving as the Church of Ireland chaplain, and Monseigneur O'Reilly serving as the Roman Catholic chaplain, Victoria Johnston writes in The Impartial Reporter.

Monseigneur O'Reilly received his first jab last Thursday at the Lakeland Forum, Enniskillen.

He told The Impartial Reporter about his experience. "I arrived in good time and was given a form to complete with my H&C number – we all have one for the NHS.

"There were a few questions checking if I was on any medication, or had any underlying conditions or allergies."



Monsignor O'Reilly (Left above) was impressed with his treatment. He said: "When I got to the vaccination point, the nurses there went through the details very patiently and carefully.

"The vaccination itself only took a moment, and the nurses were very kind throughout.

"I was invited to wait 15 minutes afterwards before leaving [as a standard wellbeing check].

"So, it was all a straightforward, reassuring experience conducted by professional and helpful staff. The whole thing was very well set out, organised and conducted. I was impressed."

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Despite receiving his vaccine jab, Monsignor O'Reilly is still being vigilant about the threat of Covid-19.

He said: "I'm still being vigilant about the face covering, the hand sanitising, and about keeping a distance from others. This was only the first dose of the vaccine, after all; the other dose will come later.

"I'm conscious that I can still catch the virus, but equally I'm aware that after a week or two, even the first jab will give me a good degree of protection from the worst effects of this virus.

"But the vaccination does not allow me to be careless."

Dean Hall received his first dose on Friday, and also praised the process. He described the vaccination as "really no different than a flu jab".

Dean Hall praised the vaccination staff at the Fermanagh Lakeland Forum for ensuring "fantastic safety precautions".

He added: "I had no fear of getting the vaccination jab. I was a wee bit sore afterwards, and felt a bit out of sorts the next day, as I tend to do after taking some medications, but I was fine the day after.

"I had a mild reaction – but I have no hesitation in going back for my second jab, as I don't want to get Covid."

He commented on receiving the vaccination jab through his role as hospital chaplain. He said: "I still think we need to do our part as chaplains, as we could come in contact with the virus, or bring it to someone within the hospital."

Dean Hall said it was a matter of personal choice whether or not to get the vaccine, but added: "I have every faith in the



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authorities, I have every faith in the health service, and I accept the advice of those qualified to give advice.

"We all have to do our part."

## **Cleric who administers to dying patients with COVID in NI hospital has tested positive - 'Please pray for me'**

A local chaplain to Antrim Area Hospital who recently spoke about this devastating experiences administering to patients dying with COVID-19, The News Letter reports.

Father James O'Reilly, a Catholic priest at Parish of Antrim, spoke of his experiences at the hospital earlier this week.

He appealed for the public to take Coronavirus seriously.

However last night the cleric himself appealed for "prayers" after himself testing positive.

"Hey everybody. Unfortunately I started feeling unwell yesterday and as a result went for a covid test this morning which has come back positive.

"Please if I could ask you to stay away from St Joseph's presbytery for the next ten days for any reason.

"And please pray for me. And all who have covid. Fr James." Earlier this week in a candid interview on BBC's Good Morning Ulster. Father James O'Reilly who said he works at the Antrim hospital "24/7" said he is "dealing with families, sickness and death".



**Father O'Reilly (above) said what he sees on a daily basis is “families not being able to be with loved ones”.**

He said he wants to send a message to the public to make them understand that “this thing is real and it kills”.

“I was in the hospital last night in a Covid ward and one nurse was still there six hours her shift ended, I see the superhuman efforts these nurses are putting in,” he said.

“You think this thing is not as serious until it comes to your door.”

He added: “I guess, though I don't know, that people are not taking it as seriously as they should.

“This thing is real and it is so, so serious.

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“When the priest is called it is to administer the last rites,” he said. “Then being with families who can’t be with their loved ones.

“It hits you when you least expect it as there are no words to give to families.

“But your very presence gives them a bit of comfort. It is tough.”

He said he wants to send a message to the public to make them understand that “this thing is real and it kills”.

Father O’Reilly said in his role as Catholic chaplain to AAH he has “one of the great privileges of going to bedsides

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because families are not allowed to, and that is wrong and not fair.

“People are dying alone with no one near them because of this thing and if we as a community should take this on board.”

He added that since the start of the pandemic in March he has seen “the great toll it is taking on staff”.

“They are our last line of defence against this disease,” he added.

“I have seen the resilience of staff. If the peak happens there is not the resources and beds to deal with it.

“But if we practice social distance and staying at home we can help.”

## **Dublin Black Santa raises €28k despite restrictions**

2020 marked the 20th anniversary of the Black Santa Sit Out at St Ann’s Church in Dublin. The pandemic put paid to a lot of the usual features that have made the annual appeal part of the Christmas landscape in the city centre. However, despite only being able to collect on Dawson Street for four days this year’s appeal raised €28,000.

The appeal was launched by Archbishop Michael Jackson and Dublin’s Lord Mayor Hazel Chu on Monday December 21. For four days the Vicar, Canon David Gillespie and caretaker, Fred Deane, and volunteers from the parish took the the street outside St Ann’s armed with their collection buckets. For the first time in Black Santa’s history, it was possible to make a donation online via the St Ann’s website.





**Lord Mayor of Dublin Hazel Chu, Canon David Gillespie and Archbishop Michael Jackson at the launch of the 2020 Black Santa Sit Out at St Ann's Dawson Street in December.**

But this year there were no choirs spreading festive cheer as and obviously footfall in the city centre was greatly reduced.

“This year’s appeal was very different. There could be no choirs and many who make the special trip to St Ann’s every year were not able to do so but Fred and I were more determined than ever to ensure that the appeal went ahead,” Canon Gillespie stated.

“This year, more than ever, the charities supported by Black Santa needed our support. We were lucky to be able to collect and we were relying on the generosity of those who were passing by St Ann’s and those who went online to [churchnewsireland@gmail.com](mailto:churchnewsireland@gmail.com)

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make donations. The 2020 Black Santa Appeal raised €28,000 in just four days. This is an amazing result and we thank everyone who donated in person or online. Every cent collected will be given to the charities concerned very soon,” he added.

Over the last two decades the Dublin Black Santa Appeal has raised over €700,000 for local good causes. Among those to benefit this year are the Salvation Army, The Simon Community and the Peter McVerry Trust, all of which work with homeless people and also Protestant Aid, Barnardo's, St Vincent De Paul, the Laura Lynn Foundation and the Solas Project.

Black Santa in Dublin is modelled on a similar appeal, which has been run by successive Deans of St Anne's Cathedral in Belfast for many years. It has become known as the Black Santa appeal because of the long heavy black cloaks worn by the clergy to keep out the cold. All the charities supported by Black Santa do invaluable work and every cent donated to the appeal is divided among them.

## **Farewell to Connor diocesan children's ministry staffer**

The appointment of the Rev Geoff Hamilton as rector of Kilhorne Parish, Annalong, sadly means Connor Diocese will be saying goodbye to Geoff's wife Jill, who has served as Diocesan Children's Project Development Officer for seven years.

Revealing that she will be standing down from her post, Jill said: “Geoff and I are really excited about moving to Annalong and meeting everyone in Kilhorne Parish. We



really do feel that God has had a hand in leading us to that part of the world and are eager to see what God has in store for us and the church there.”

Jill continued: “Due to the move to Annalong and my desire to be an integral part of the life of the parish and to get involved and help where I can, I have decided to finish up in my role as Diocesan Children’s Officer with Connor Diocese. “I have been in the role since November 2013 and have really loved getting to know both clergy and voluntary children’s leaders throughout the diocese.

“It’s been a privilege to work alongside you and to get an insight into the fabulous work that is going in in the parishes with children and families.”



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Jill thanked all the leaders she has worked with over the last seven years for their 'encouragement and support.' She will remain in post until March.

The Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev George Davison, paid tribute to Jill's contribution to the life of Connor Diocese. "I would like to thank Jill for all her work in the diocese," he said.

"Jill has been a tremendous help to many parishes and has developed resources which will continue to assist with children's ministry in Connor.

"I would also like to take this opportunity to wish both Geoff and Jill every blessing in their new ministry together in Annalong."

## **Long Reads 1**

### **Geoffrey Beattie: 'Being an Ulster Protestant is something to be proud of, I can't believe that so many are ashamed of their background**

And as he releases his emotionally-charged memoir, TV psychologist Geoffrey Beattie tells us about his Belfast upbringing, his complicated relationship with his mother and about his pride about being an 'Ulster Protestant'.

Gail Walker writes in the Belfast Telegraph.

Geoffrey Beattie's life has taken him on an astonishing trajectory from an impoverished childhood in Protestant working-class Belfast to a career as a world-renowned psychologist and TV celebrity.





## **Geoffrey Beattie**

But that journey has brought inevitable stresses and soul-searching as the highly intelligent boy who pored over his schoolbooks in a damp, dilapidated terraced house with an outside toilet transformed himself into the urbane, confident academic enjoying the spoils of material success in England.

That conflict is most apparent in the outworking of his relationship with his late mother Eileen, a clever, stoical, droll Ulsterwoman who didn't suffer fools and was especially adept at cutting her adult son down to size. It's a complex

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bond he examines in unflinching detail in his new book *Selfless*, an emotionally-charged memoir that charts the impact of his social mobility on himself and his family. "The tension was there right from the start," he says.

[[] <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/life/features/geoffrey-beattie-being-an-ulster-protestant-is-something-to-be-proud-of-i-cant-believe-that-so-many-are-ashamed-of-their-background-39970303.html> ]

## Long Reads 2

Flowers are seen on a grave at Mount Jerome Cemetery in Dublin for children who died in the Bethany Home.

### **Bethany Home: 'No exception' to high rates of infant mortality in Protestant-run institution**

Jack Horgan-Jones writes in *The Irish Times*

Matron believed children of unmarried mothers 'tended to be weak and prone to illness', commission finds

Across 49 years, the Protestant-run Bethany Home admitted 1,584 women and 1,376 children.

The deaths of five women and 262 children are associated with the institution, with the infant mortality rate in 1943 running at 62.1 per cent. Of the child deaths, 61 per cent occurred between 1937 and 1947.

Burial records were located for 235 Bethany children, with all but four buried in Mount Jerome Cemetery in Harold's Cross, Dublin.

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The commission found that Bethany was “no exception” to the high rates of infant mortality seen in all mother and baby homes until the late 1940s. Women admitted aged from 13 to 62 years, with the highest numbers admitted in the 1930s and 1940s.

First located at Blackhall Place before relocating to Orwell Road in 1933, Bethany Home was formed after the closure of two Protestant charities - the Dublin Midnight Mission and Female Refuge, and the Dublin Prison Gate Mission.

Jack Horgan-Jones writes in The Irish Times

[[] <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/bethany-home-no-exception-to-high-rates-of-infant-mortality-in-protestant-run-institution-1.4456513> ]

## News briefs

**Ecumenical Service on @rtenews** - this Sunday 17th January at 11.00am -Pastor Martin Sauter of the International Congregation at St Finian's Lutheran Church, Dublin will launch a Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

**Peace making** - On 22 Jan nuclear weapons will become illegal in international law. Find out how your church can mark this important event for humanity on the blog <https://irishchurches.org/news-blog/5453/church-bells-will-ring-to>

**Christian persecution in 2021** - the Methodist Recorder states is expected to rise in China and India, according to Release International in its newly-published annual Persecution Trends survey. The Vice-President of the GB Conference, Carolyn Lawrence, has welcomed the report.

May the God of hope  
fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him,  
so that you may overflow  
with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:13



## Pointers for prayer

Today we pray for those facing food insecurity globally. Coronavirus, conflict and cuts to UN funding are increasing the risks of food insecurity and malnutrition in 2021, in particular in South Sudan.

An increase in domestic abuse has been an unwanted consequence of the global pandemic. We pray for all who have suffered that they will have help to rebuild their confidence in their self-worth and practical ways to move forward in life.

Prolonged restrictions and times of isolation can lead to a loss of confidence in venturing out and interacting with



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others. We pray for all who are experiencing this and ask God to help us gently reach out with encouragement and understanding.

We pray for those who have lost jobs in the last months and are now seeking new employment. May their confidence in their abilities stay strong and may unexpected doors open for them to new opportunities for work.

The #COVID19 pandemic has wreaked havoc in the lives and livelihoods of so many. We pray today for God to give us the means to help rebuild hope and confidence in people, through practical help as well as emotional and spiritual support.

Today we pray for the USA. We pray for stable democracy and an end to divisions in the USA as a new president is inaugurated this month.

Today we pray for teachers and students. As the new term starts, schools have faced a lack of clarity over reopening which has made it more difficult to plan appropriate education for students and has left teachers and support staff without clear guidance.

## **Speaking to the Soul**

The Lord had said to Abram, “Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father’s family, and go to the land that I will show you.”

Genesis 12:1 NLT

I wonder what your life looks like at the moment. I would guess that for many of us there are plenty of aspects of our lives that suit us really well. Life isn't perfect, and we can easily come up with some suggested improvements, but the thought of it all changing completely would come as quite a shock. Well, if that's true for us, imagine how much greater the challenge would have been for Abram. We would be able to reach for our computers and find out information about the wider world, but not Abram! God was taking him away from the security of his home and leading him on the most incredible adventure into a land of which he knew nothing.

And there's another interesting detail. Abram is 75. There's nothing wrong with being 75 but most people would consider that it is hardly the time of life when you are expecting to go on a daring adventure! One would assume that that would be left to much younger people. But that's not how God works. Living the life of faith is one long adventure and, whatever your age, you need to be ready for change because that's how God works.

The writer to the Hebrews uses the example of Abram as an illustration of faith. He reflects that Abram went out "not knowing where he was going". By any normal standard that sounds extremely foolish. Leaving home without having a clue about the destination sounds ridiculous. But Abram was a man of faith and he knew that following God's will was the wisest possible course of action. Abram was willing to head out into the unknown together with his family and cattle for the simple reason that he trusted God. And the truth is that thousands of years later God works in exactly the same way

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today. He may ask you to do something which appears completely crazy by human standards, but if he is truly calling you then it will always be the best way.

## QUESTION

Are you willing to go on an adventure with God?

## PRAYER

Loving Father, thank you that you still call people to live by faith today. Help me to be willing to go on an adventure with you. Amen.

