

## **World Council of Churches joins calls for day of prayer and fasting for Congo and South Sudan**



**The UN's Under-Secretary General for Peacekeeping Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, visits the Monusco (United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo) base on the banks of the Semuliki river in northeastern Congo in**

**December, after 14 Tanzanian Munusco peace keepers were killed in an attack.**

The General Secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC), the Revd Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, has echoed calls from Pope Francis and Anglican leaders for this coming Friday (23 February) to be set aside as a day of prayer and fasting for peace, with a particular focus on the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan. The call was [first made by Pope Francis](#) in his Angelus address at the start of this month, and has been [endorsed by senior Anglican leaders across the world](#). “Let us join in prayer and fasting, as part of the global ecumenical movement in light of the ongoing social-political tension, violence, and the suffering of the affected peoples in the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan, he said.

“Lent is a time of repentance, fasting, and preparation for the coming of Easter. It is a time of reflection regarding the suffering, death, and resurrection of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ. It is also time for self-examination and reflection, for us to redirect and rededicate our attention and action, prayerfully, to the most crying needs in our society. Let us heed Pope Francis’s call to a day of prayer and fasting for



peace in South Sudan the Democratic Republic of Congo.”

In a letter to WCC member churches, he said that “In the DRC, 4.3 million people are displaced throughout the country and 13.1 million people will be in need of humanitarian assistance throughout the country this year.

“In South Sudan, 2 million people have fled the young nation as refugees and about 1.9 million people are internally displaced, over the past four years of conflict – with 7 million people inside the country – that is almost two-thirds of

the remaining population – still need humanitarian assistance.”

He said: “Children, young men, and women have been among the most affected. Millions of women and girls are exposed to gender-based violence in these crisis-affected areas.

“The churches and communities are dedicated and present in these communities, accompanying the affected people through these challenging times. We acknowledge the courageous and hopeful work that carries on each day to serve the people in need.

“May the prayers of all Christians on 23 February for the gift of peace be a sign of solidarity and closeness to those suffering in South Sudan and DRC.” To support the day of prayer and fasting on Friday, the WCC has produced [a set of prayers](#) which can be used by individuals or in the context of corporate prayer and worship.

## **C of I mission team arrives in Kitwe, Zambia**

The Church Mission Society Ireland team to Zambia, consisting of Archbishop of Armagh The Most Revd Richard Clarke (Patron), Jenny Smyth (Mission Director) and Revd Adrian Dorrian



**Jenny Smyth, Archbishop Clarke, the Revd Adrian Dorrian, Rev Keith Scott and Lyn Scott.**

(President) arrived on Tuesday afternoon, 20 February.

The journey from Dublin airport to Kitwe proved a long, but not unpleasant one. The team carried various items to be used by Rev Keith and Mrs Lyn Scott in their home and in St John's Anglican Seminary, including a donation of NRSV Bibles from The Book Well and some other items difficult to source in Zambia.

CMSI Mission Partners, the Scotts have spent just over a year so far in Kitwe, Diocese of Northern Zambia, teaching at St John's Anglican Seminary, where Keith is Academic Dean. They, along with Archbishop Albert Chama, Bishop of Northern Zambia and Primate of Central Africa

will be hosting the CMSI delegation over the next few days. Once settled in, the group spent their first evening discussing in detail the programme for the trip. After some orientation, the team they spend time experiencing life in the Diocese and in the Seminary.

On Sunday, Archbishop Clarke will preach and share with Archbishop Chama in a service of Confirmation, while Adrian Dorrian will be visiting and preaching at a Parish Church in the Diocese. The two will also be delivering some classes in the Seminary, where the Archbishop will lecture in Anglicanism and Adrian will be teaching Liturgy. Jenny Smyth will use the trip to foster the continued good relations between CMSI and its Global Partners, as well as providing direct support to the Scotts.

Speaking after their first evening in Zambia, Archbishop Clarke reflected that, “Although it is apparent that there are many differences in culture between Ireland and Zambia, our conversations on the first evening have borne out the truth that comes as no great surprise; our two churches, while separated by some miles face many of the same challenges around good stewardship, resourcing of clergy and the training of leaders. Northern Zambia is a Diocese where clergy have pastoral

responsibility for several churches across vast areas – something immediately recognisable to many of the parishes in rural Ireland. Although we seek to address these challenges in very different contexts, I look forward to learning from our shared experiences and practice over the next days.”

## **Dublin screening of ‘Unseen’ on mental health and suicide amongst young people and young adults.**

Dublin City University Chaplaincy will host a special Premiere screening of *Unseen* on Monday March 5 at 7.30pm. This short film is a powerful tool to help open up conversations about mental health and suicide amongst young people and young adults.

In 2014, The Irish Times reported that Ireland had the second highest suicide rate in Europe. A more recent report confirms that suicide is the leading cause of death in young men between the ages of 15–34 across Ireland.

Christ in Youth have made this film as a powerful free resource to help the church and society tackle such statistics.

*Unseen* is a short film narrative about the relationship of a 17-year-old boy with his Grandfather who discovers him trying to take his own life by suicide. It later unfolds that the Grandfather's wife, the boy's Grandmother, had also died by suicide 17 years earlier, however, no one ever talks about it. Hence the boy and his Grandfather's mental health has gone *Unseen*.

*Unseen* is a moving and hard hitting piece and the whole idea of the film is to set up a natural and safe conversation about mental health. The film was a nominated finalist at the 2017 Galway Film festival and recently won the Best Irish Short-Film at the Richard Harris Film Festival in October 2017. To have such a resource being made and filmed in Ireland, with Irish actors and crew, is an incredible gift for the wider Church.

The screening will take place in The Helix Theatre at Dublin City University. To confirm your FREE place please book a ticket here at [www.unseenfilm.org](http://www.unseenfilm.org)

To watch a trailer of *Unseen* click here <https://vimeo.com/219902386>

After each showing there will be contributions from practitioners explaining how this film can be used in different settings (Schools, Youth



Groups, Universities etc). CIY want this film to be used in the best way possible and the evenings will explain how the free resources can be utilised. There will also be some free refreshments on the night.

These Premiere screenings are tailored for youth workers, teachers, health practitioners, youth volunteers, church leaders, parents and anyone involved in pastoral care. The theatre will book up fast and places are allocated on a first come first served basis. Please only book if you are fully committed to attend as people will miss out if your booking is not honoured.

## **Evangelist Billy Graham had few equals - Moderator and Archbishop of Canterbury**

American evangelist Billy Graham was an example to Christians worldwide and had "few equals", the Archbishop of Canterbury has said.

Graham, who had the ear of presidents and monarchs and reputedly preached to the most people in live sermons in history, died aged 99 at his home in North Carolina on Wednesday.



He spoke to thousands at arenas in the UK during his tours, often referred to as crusades, in the decades following his first visit in 1946.

In 1996, after he stopped travelling because of Parkinson's disease, an estimated 2.5 billion people around the world watched his first "televangelist" show, hosted by Sir Cliff Richard.

And in 2001, Graham was awarded an honorary knighthood by the Queen, whom he had met several times, including in 1984 when he preached at Sandringham Parish Church.

The Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Rt. Rev. Dr. Noble McNeely has described the US preacher as a 'one of the greatest evangelists of the modern age' who had a 'passion for Jesus and a genuine love for people'.

Dr. McNeely said, "Billy Graham was a remarkable man. Obedient to God's call on his life, he was one of the greatest evangelists of the modern age. With a passion for Jesus and a genuine love for people, he brought the Good News of the gospel of Jesus Christ to millions of people around the world in a ministry that spanned the best part of six decades.

"As Christians, in our own way, we are all called to share that Good News, just as he did, letting people know that they are loved by God and through His Son they may have eternal life. It is a simple, life-changing message that is as relevant today as the day the world first heard it – a message that God richly blessed Billy Graham in preaching, using him to bring many, many people to Christ. I give thanks for his life and ministry."

The Most Revd Justin Welby said the church owed Graham an "immeasurable" debt.

He said: "Dr Billy Graham stood as an exemplar to generation upon generation of modern Christians.

"When it comes to a living and lasting influence upon the worldwide church he can have few equals: for he introduced person after person to Jesus Christ.

"There are countless numbers who began their journey of faith because of Dr Graham.

"The debt owed by the global church to him is immeasurable and inexpressible.

"Personally I am profoundly grateful to God for the life and ministry of this good and faithful servant of the gospel; by his example he challenged all Christians to imitate how he lived and what he did.

"He was one who met presidents and preachers, monarchs and musicians, the poor and the rich, the young and the old, face to face.

"Yet now he is face to face with Jesus Christ, his saviour and ours. It is the meeting he has been looking forward to for the whole of his life."

The Archbishop of York, John Sentamu, said: "So often throughout my life I have worked alongside those who have shared with me that their journey of faith in Christ began after hearing Billy Graham preach of the love of God for us sinners, and of Jesus' power to change lives and lead us out of darkness into his marvellous light.

"In this country many will recall the new life that came to the churches through his missions, especially Mission England in 1984. I met him that year at a rally at Crystal Palace where one of our singers from Holy Trinity Tulse Hill, Jacqui Hall, was one of the singers. Before that I was with him in the early 1970s when he was leading a mission in Kenya, where Bishop Festo Kivengere, one of Uganda's best known evangelists, was his interpreter, translating into Swahili.

"During his life he has faithfully invited millions to come and follow Jesus!"

Archbishop Sentamu added: "After many years of failing health, Billy himself has gone to share in the glory of which he so often spoke, cleansed

by the blood of the Son of God, shed on the cross, in whom he put his trust, and welcomed at the throne of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who first loved us, and gave himself for us.

“Wherever people remember Billy Graham today, there will be gratitude for this faithful servant of Christ, for his bold witness, and for the legacy of changed lives and communities which continues to spread hope, transformation, and a living story of salvation today. I thank God for his witness and for his example.”

Ian Parkinson, a leadership specialist with the C of E evangelical mission agency CPAS, described Graham as “possibly the greatest single catalyst for vocations to Anglican ordained ministry in the late 20th century.”

[Writing on \*The Living Church\* magazine’s website](#), editor Douglas leBlanc wrote about the influence a Billy Graham rally had had on the life of him and his family. “Through Graham’s crusade I came to a deeper understanding of what it means to be a Christian, and I learned to be an unapologetic evangelical,” he said. “I give thanks for the creative tensions that come into my life as an evangelical Episcopalian, and I give thanks for Billy Graham.”

The global Anglican mission agency Mothers' Union said that they were "saddened to hear of the death of Billy Graham – a man of great faith, wisdom and humility. May he rest in peace and rise in glory."

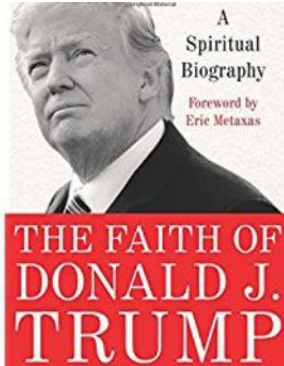
Another Anglican mission agency, Church Army, said: "We're giving thanks for Billy Graham's life & all he did to bring the gospel to everyone, everywhere – such an influential evangelist and preacher with an amazing legacy."

## **New book published on Donald Trump's Christian faith**

US President Donald Trump has given a thumbs up to a new book about his Christian faith.

Entitled *The Faith of Donald J. Trump: A Spiritual Biography*, the book includes interviews with the Mr Trump and US Vice President Mike Pence about the president's religious beliefs and his relationship with evangelicals during the 2016 election.

The book was written by the chief political correspondent for the Christian Broadcasting Network and the *Jesus in the Public Square* columnist for the *Washington Times*.



It journeys through Mr Trump's faith starting from his Protestant confirmation to how he stood up for traditional Judaeo-Christian principles as a presidential candidate and as the leader of the United States.

Despite much criticism about Mr Trump's three marriages and politically incorrect behaviour, the authors maintain that "President Trump won over evangelicals not by pandering to them, but by supporting them and all their most important issues without pretending to be something he's not".

James Robison, spiritual counsellor to the president told the authors: "God uses the imperfect people to accomplish his perfect will. He always has and always will."



The book explains that President Trump has surrounded himself with Christian leaders that will bring values of "hard work, discipline, duty, respect, and faith" back to America.

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