



American bishop brings human rights focus to royal wedding



Episcopal Church Presiding Bishop Michael Curry gives waves to the crowd as he arrives at the Washington National Cathedral, Sunday, Nov. 1, 2015, in Washington. Curry, who came to the post after nearly 15 years leading the Diocese of North Carolina. He was elected to succeed Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori, the first woman leader of the church.

Who is Michael Curry? Sixty-five year old Bishop Curry is the current head of the Episcopal Church, Houston McKelvey writes.

Born in [Chicago](#), where his father, the late Rev. Kenneth Curry, an American civil rights activist and the descendant of African slaves,

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was a rector in an important African-American parish of the Episcopal Church.

Curry, who has two grown daughters with his wife Sharon, was raised in Buffalo, New York. The 53-year-old Yale graduate is the first African American to lead the Anglican church in America.

He was appointed Bishop of [North Carolina](#) in 2000, a position he held for a decade-and-a-half until his election as the 27th leader of the Episcopal Church.

In 2015, Curry became the first black presiding bishop of the predominantly white Episcopal Church, an offshoot of the Church of England in the United States that has been the spiritual home of many of the American founding fathers and U.S. presidents.

His appointment came just after the church decided to bless same-sex marriages, and in his sermons and writings he has frequently compared the black civil rights movement to the LGBT struggle for equality.

On his appointment, he called for racial and economic unity at a time of rising tensions in the United States.

Throughout his career, Bishop Curry has been outspoken on matters of social justice such as same-sex-marriage and immigration policy.

His principled stands on such issues have earned him praise from the Archbishop of Canterbury, [Justin Welby](#).

The archbishop described Bishop Curry as a “brilliant pastor” and “stunning preacher” upon hearing the news he would speak at the royal wedding.

His energetic sermon, which both started and finished with quotes from minister and civil rights activist [Martin Luther King](#), has already received widespread praise.

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“There’s power in love. Do not underestimate it. Anyone who has ever fallen in love knows what I mean,” he began.

“When love is the way, we actually treat each other, well, like we are actually family.

“When love is the way, we know that God is the source for us all, that we are brothers and sisters, children of [God](#).

“My brothers and sisters that’s a new heaven, a new earth, a new world, a new human family.”



The Archbishop of Canterbury (left) with Presiding Bishop, Michael Curry

“With this, I’ll sit down,” he told the couple as he began wrap up his sermon: “We gotta get y’all [married](#).”

His style earned him plaudits on social media, including from Labour MPs David Lammy and Ed Miliband, who paid tribute on Twitter.

Meanwhile, the bishop himself is using his new-found fame as an opportunity to promote his faith to a worldwide audience.

Curry’s stances have also brought him into open conflict with several Trump administration policies, including its move to end the Obama-era immigration programme that shielded hundreds of

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thousands of young immigrants from deportation, known as the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, or DACA.

In a September statement, Curry emphasised the Episcopal Church's support for the immigration programme and the youth affected, saying "our Christian values are at stake; humane and loving care for the stranger, the alien and the foreigner is considered a sacred duty and moral value for those who would follow the way of God."

Earlier last year, Curry denounced Trump's plan to ban transgender people from serving in the U.S. military saying it was "a violation of the fundamental ideal of equality in America." He has also thrown his support behind the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation's protest against a planned oil pipeline backed by the Trump administration. On May 24, Curry plans to join other Christian leaders in a march on the White House to draw attention to a joint [declaration](#) that sets out a number of concerns. It says that "we are living through perilous and polarizing times as a nation, with a dangerous crisis of moral and political leadership at the highest levels of our government and in our churches."

In rejecting Trump's "America first" policy, the declaration says "while we share a patriotic love for our country, we reject xenophobic or ethnic nationalism that places one nation over others." It also adds: "Global poverty, environmental damage, violent conflict, weapons of mass destruction and deadly diseases in some places ultimately affect all places, and we need wise political leadership to deal with each of these."

See Faith Perspective on this site today which contains the text of Bishop Curry's sermon.

Rt Rev Susan Brown installed as Church of Scotland moderator

A new moderator of the Church of Scotland's general assembly has been installed. The Rt Rev Susan Brown took up the role at Saturday's opening ceremony in Edinburgh.



The previous moderator, the Rt Rev Dr Derek Browning, welcomed his successor, describing her work as “full-blooded, soul-warming, kind-hearted parish ministry”. He said: “On this year when we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women to the ministry of word and sacrament, it is particularly special that you as a committed parish minister will be our moderator.

“It is also a delight that having served in two Highland parishes, you will also represent that important part of our country for the first time in a number of years.”

Brown, the minister of Dornoch Cathedral, will serve in the role for a year, as is customary. The 59-year-old, known for having been the minister who [married Madonna and Guy Ritchie](#) in 2000, previously said she was “deeply moved and honoured” to be chosen for the role. She is the fourth woman to hold the moderator title.

The first minister, Nicola Sturgeon, attended the opening, along with lord provosts from across the country and distinguished visitors from around the world. Richard Scott, the Duke of

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Buccleuch and Queensberry, represented the Queen as the lord high commissioner to the assembly.

Church of Scotland moves step closer to conducting same-sex marriages

The Church of Scotland has moved a step closer to allowing some Ministers and Deacons to conduct same-sex marriages in the future.

The General Assembly voted 345 by 170 to instruct the Legal Questions Committee to prepare legislation with safeguards in accordance with Section 9 (1A) of the Marriage Scotland Act.

But commissioners agreed that the committee should only act if, in its opinion, said safeguards “sufficiently protect against the risks they identify”.

The committee will report its findings to the General Assembly of 2020.

The motion calling for legislation to be prepared was put forward by Rev Bryan Kerr, minister of Greyfriars Parish Church in Lanark.

It was amended to ensure the committee had the power to recommend withdrawal following a call from Rev Peter White of Sandyford Henderson Memorial Church in Glasgow.

The debate was carried out in a spirit of grace and humility, but there was no mistaking the strength of feeling expressed in the Hall.

Speaking afterwards, Mr Kerr said: “I am delighted that that the General Assembly continues on a road where we are able to say to people in same-sex relationships that the Church has a place for you.



Right Rev Susan Brown as the Moderator of the General Assembly and chaired the debate,

“I am pleased we have reached this point and I have already had reaction from parents of people in same-sex relationships who are overwhelmed that the Church accepts that God loves them.

“It was clear from the floor of the Assembly that many commissioners appreciate having a choice with their families as to whether they act as minister or a parent of the bride or groom.”

Rev Mark Malcolm, minister of Chryston Parish Church in Glasgow, is a member of evangelical Kirk group, Covenant Fellowship Scotland.

Reacting to the vote he said: “From those of us who want to uphold the traditional and orthodox teaching of the Church, it is possibly as good an outcome as we could expect.

“Looking into the future, I think what is likely to happen is instead of the default position of the Church being orthodox and traditional, it will be revisionist .

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“And you will have to opt-in to the orthodox position rather than holding that position.”

Mr Malcolm said the tone and tenor of the debate was civil and people were respectful of those who hold very divergent views.

But he claimed that the decision had implications for peace and unity within congregations.

Mr Malcolm said: “This has not been a happy or peaceful process and people are largely weary and tired of this debate.

“They just want to get on with what it means to be the Church and proclaim the Gospel.”

Corrymeela summer school in theology

Corrymeela is to run a summer school in theology. All are welcome but the community is particularly interested in recruiting young people aged 18–25.



The summer school is from Thursday 5th July (12:30pm) to Sunday 8th July (2pm).

It will consider questions of public theology:

How do we read the biblical texts and hold conversations between them and the modern world?

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How do we approach divisive topics about religion and conflict today? How do we use theological methodologies?

What is it that young people know about theology that needs to be learned by the wider community?

Corrymeela will welcome a teaching team of people from across a vast array of theological disciplines (liberation, political and public theologies; biblical studies; political science; and the arts).

The full cost of this residential is £225.00 (for those aged over 25), but thanks to very generous sponsorship by the Student Christian Movement Ireland, the organisers are able to offer a subsidised rate of £75.00 to 18–25 year olds.

(If your parish is interested in sponsoring a place at the full cost, they would be delighted to hear from you).

If you would like some additional information about your stay, have a look at their [WELCOME BROCHURE](#). [Book Now](#)
<https://www.corrymeela.org/>



Music for an early summer evening

Cappella Caeciliana presents a programme for an early summer evening on June 2 at 8.00 pm, in the beautiful St. Thérèse of Lisieux Church, Somerton Rd, Belfast. The choir will perform works old and new, and the [programme](#) will feature both household favourites and some lesser-known, but very attractive, pieces.

Tickets are now on sale [online](#), from the Parish Office (Newington Avenue) and from Matchetts Music (50 Wellington Place). Under 25s and students of any age will be admitted free (no ticket required).

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Northern Ireland priest steps aside as police probe 'historic safeguarding allegation'

A priest has stepped aside from his position to allow for a police investigation into a historic "safeguarding allegation"., The Belfast Teleraph reports

Police said they are investigating a complaint made in April.

The Diocese of Dromore confirmed the priest would be stepping aside in a statement on Saturday evening.

It said both the diocese and the priest were cooperating fully with the police.

"While this allegation is being investigated, and as part of the diocesan Safeguarding Procedures, the priest has voluntarily stepped aside from all public ministry pending the outcome of the investigation," it said.

"The diocese cannot make further comment at this time whilst an investigation is ongoing. The Diocese advise anyone who may have a concern of a safeguarding nature to contact the PSNI, Social Services, or the Diocesan Designated Safeguarding Officer on 077 8991 7741."

The diocese has been at the centre of a scandal over how it handled allegations of abuse against one of its priests.

The PSNI has established a special unit to investigate complaints of abuse against the now deceased Father Malachy Finnegan.

He was a teacher at St Colman's College in Newry up from 1967 to 1976 and its president until 1987 and was accused of sexually abusing 12 boys.



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