



World's Anglican Primates gather in Lambeth

The Primates of the Anglican Communion have just completed a gathering at the Archbishop of Canterbury's official residence – Lambeth Palace in London – for prayer, Bible study, reflection and consultation ahead of this year's [15th Lambeth Conference](#), to be held from 26 July – 8 August.

“We return to our churches and dioceses conscious of the calling that is given to us by God, through Jesus Christ, and of our need for grace,” the archbishops and presiding bishops said in [their communiqué from the 28-31 March meeting](#).

“We have reflected on the servant leadership of Christ and our own roles as shepherds of his flock.”

The Primates' Meeting is [one of three Anglican instruments of communion](#), in addition to the Lambeth Conference of bishops and the Anglican Consultative Council, the communion's main policymaking body. Thirty-seven Primates attended, including some online, due to COVID restrictions in their countries.

The Primates met against a backdrop of violence and unrest across the world, acknowledging the dire situation in Ukraine.

“We were conscious that, as we gathered in London, many people in the world are in a time of turmoil,” they said in the statement.

“We are particularly aware of the humanitarian crisis and other catastrophic effects of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. We call for an immediate ceasefire and the withdrawal of Russian troops.”

The Primates also acknowledged conflicts in many other parts of the world, including Afghanistan, Eritrea, Yemen, Syria, Sudan, Mali, Congo, the Holy Land, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Central America, and South Sudan, and many others; and terrorism in Mozambique.

“These have forced many people to flee their homes. We recognise the plight of refugees, migrants, and displaced people around the world as one of the major tragedies of our time. We pray for peace and urge those with the ability to do so to bring about justice, sanctuary, and reconciliation.”

The Primates also discussed a consultation from the Church of England on extending the involvement of the wider Anglican Communion in the [choice of future archbishops of Canterbury](#).

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said at a press conference following the meeting that the Primates were determined that this year’s Lambeth Conference should not be dominated by debates about human sexuality

“The title of the conference is ‘God’s Church for God’s world’,” he said. “And the encouragement for it is to look outwards, and to look at other issues which are deeply troubling — to the way we treat people on the edge, food, insecurity, whether it’s rising sea levels, whether it’s war, persecution, freedom of religion and belief, torture, unfair trade practices, and a million other things.

Those are things which come under the heading of God’s call to the Church to speak for justice in every area, and not about human sexuality alone.”

Three Primates chose not to attend this week’s Lambeth meeting – the Primates of Nigeria, Uganda, and Rwanda.

The Primate of Kenya, who has also in the past expressed misgivings about the stance of other Provinces on sexuality, did attend, [the Church Times reports](#).

There was also no representative of Papua New Guinea, because because the Province is in between Primates.

While the absent bishops gave no specific reasons for staying away, Archbishop Welby, suggested it was unsurprising.

“I think they we know very well that they feel, for one reason or another, that they don’t want to be in the room with those who changed their teaching on the nature of marriage and human identity,” he was reported by the *Church Times* as saying.

The Primate of Canada, Dr Linda Nicholls, the only woman Primate, urged the absent Primates to attend the Lambeth Conference.

“We miss you, and we would we would like you to be present with us, so that we can pray together, so that we can listen to one another, and so that we can hear about the concerns for mission and ministry in your context,” she said.

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