

Latest News – 5th February 2023

Watch the service – A Service for the Third Sunday before Lent



How can we be salt and light to those around us? Rev Nicholas Lebey from [St George's Tolworth](#) leads our Service for the Third Sunday Before Lent. Rev Helen Hancock from [St Matthew's Surbiton](#) will be preaching.

The service is broadcast on the [Church of England's website](#), [Facebook page](#) and [YouTube channel](#). The service remains available to view afterwards.

All of the video content is manually subtitled. To turn these on, go to the bottom left of the video and click the filled-in box with two broken lines inside. The service is BSL-interpreted throughout.

Local Services & Events

5th February 2023

10.30am Sibsey for Morning Worship

10.45am Langrick for Holy Communion.

'For many, pets are a lifeline' – church pet food bank launches amid cost of living crisis

A pet food bank set up with support from a church is helping people to feed their dogs, cats and even guinea pigs amid the cost of living crisis.



'Leonard's lunchbox' meets at St Matthew's Church in Bethnal Green east London with the support and advice of the church's Rector, Mother Erin Clark.

The new service for pets follows the rapid growth of Bethnal Green food bank, founded by the church in January 2020. The food bank met in the church's hall until 2021 when it moved to another site and now provides food for around 900 people a week.

Grace Hui, who has three rescue dogs and founded Leonard's lunchbox – named after one of her dogs - said: "I work with a lot of animal rescue centres and I have three rescue dogs. I know how much they contribute to people's mental well-being. For some people, especially elderly people, who live on their own, walking a dog is their only way of going out and seeing other people, especially during the pandemic when it was very lonely. Giving up your pet because you can't afford to feed it would feel like letting down your best friend."

Mother Erin, who owns a Great Dane called Soren, said she had noticed people coming to the food bank choosing cans of dog and cat food over extra food for themselves. "People were choosing dog and cat food which is quite a sacrifice to make when you could choose other items for yourself, she said. "It was a sign of just how much pets mean to people. We do not realise how much people rely on their pets for their mental well-being. There is a lot of poverty around here and other social issues, I think for a lot of people their pet is their lifeline, it is what gets them out, it is a big part of their well-being."

‘My life stopped’ – why bereavement ministry is vital

The church-run Bereavement Journey course offers hope and changes lives.



Christ Church Clevedon

The Rev Canon Yvonne Richmond Tulloch was Canon for Mission at Coventry Cathedral when she was widowed suddenly in 2008, causing her “life to go into freefall”.

Her experience of grief led to her passion for helping other bereaved people find support. She established the charity AtaLoss, which offers a bereavement signposting website, and went on to help run *The Bereavement Journey* – a course which helps equip those grieving to come terms with loss.

According to Rev Tulloch, we don’t get over grief, we learn how to live with it – but people need to be helped in this. “Grief can affect every aspect of a person’s life – not just emotional well-being, but physical and mental health,” she explained. “Bereavement is one of the most stressful times in life, but for many people, it’s devastating. Those grieving are so often left feeling isolated, floundering, and confused. People don’t know what to say to bereaved people, so they steer clear of them – or they assume when they see them that they’re coping well, when they’ve just managed to pull themselves together or are still feeling numb in the early stages.”

For anyone bereaved during Covid restrictions, all the usual problems were exacerbated. This was the case for Ounissa Benali, whose mother died during the pandemic. “When my mum went into hospital, it was a nightmare: I couldn’t see her or visit her – I went from being with her 24-7 during lockdown to not being able to see her at all and having to isolate,” she explained.

“When my mum passed away, I really struggled. I was crying all the time, it was so difficult. I didn’t know where to turn or what to do. “My life stopped. I felt like an alien everywhere, and like nothing mattered. It had a terrible effect on my health. I had to stop working for about three

months. I was praying to find something that could help me. I did not know yet that *The Bereavement Journey* course was something that was even available.”

She first heard about the course - a series of films and facilitated discussion groups - after hearing about it through a friend at church. “It came at a time when I was feeling guilt that I was somehow not a good enough Christian – otherwise my prayers would have been answered, and my mum would have been healed,” she said. “At the first meeting, I was still in so much pain, but I started to understand what loss is, and the weight of the grief that I was carrying. The course films were so good; I recognised myself in almost everything.”

The course concludes with an optional seventh session offering a Christian perspective on commonly asked faith questions. “The last session on faith was amazing. It took away my guilt and gave me hope,” she added. “Sharing faith questions with other people, I realised I was not the only one wondering about these things, like why God heals some, but not others.” She reflected: “For the first time in my life, I really started to feel God’s love – I knew it intellectually before, but I didn’t feel it. The Bereavement Journey was one of the best things I have done in my life, it brought me so much peace – although the pain was still there, I now had something I could fall back on. I was reminded that even Jesus wept.

“During such a horrible time in my life, it brought me closer to God.”

More information

- The Bereavement Journey was developed over 20 years ago and has proven effective in helping people process grief whenever or however the person died.
- Currently over 180 courses are being run by churches across the country.
- When advertised to the public, a large percentage of guests attend from outside church, with over 90% choosing to attend the optional session on faith.

God on a mountaintop – the church groups taking worship to the hills of Cumbria

Cumbria is renowned for its stunning landscape. Church groups within the Diocese of Carlisle are taking full advantage of it, meeting monthly to walk and pray together and connect with God in the outdoors.



Paul Rose

Up to 130 people now take to the hills in and around the Lake District to meet and worship, as part of a network dubbed 'Mountain Pilgrims'.

The initiative was set up by Paul Rose, a "Pioneer Enabler" for the Diocese as a way of engaging people who might not relate to a traditional church setting.

Paul explained that the outdoor church services are more like pilgrimages, where every outing is an opportunity for revelation and to "create a space for both conversation and silence without awkwardness."

The idea was first developed in 2015. "We'd found that simply taking church practices and words into the outdoors felt inauthentic to our experiences," he explained.

"So we began the process of exploring how we could understand the experience of being in the mountains through the lens of the Christian story.

"We appreciated the space and silence that freed us from the distractions which often limit how we hear God's voice in our soul.

"We journeyed, spoke, prayed and shared, shoulder to shoulder with a community – and then we called ourselves Mountain Pilgrims."

The group has a core of around 90 regulars who attend monthly and around 40 others who join less often. Paul is currently working on expanding Mountain Pilgrims across Cumbria and the North of England, and into Wales and Scotland and is also taking the approach into schools.

The Pilgrims have developed a routine of walking the mountains on the Winter and Summer Solstices, using those days as an opportunity to reflect on the place of both light and darkness in the balance of life.

Paul recalled: “At a Winter Solstice gathering, a friend was standing as we slowly turned off our torches, leaving us in darkness.

“His mother had died earlier that year and he described a feeling of being held in that place of darkness by the rest of the natural world, creating space for him to recognise his grief.

“In that place of brokenness, he felt ministered to by creation – he encountered God beginning the healing process.”

He said that while for some people Mountain Pilgrims’ approach has become an alternative to an indoor church, others see it as an addition.

“Some settings use it as an outreach opportunity and hope to draw people back into the established church setting rather than creating a church out on the hills,” he added.

The groups are open to those of all ages and fitness levels, and there is an increasing number of wheelchair and pushchair-accessible routes, enabling those with disabilities and young children to take part.

“Participants certainly don’t need to be mountain goats,” he said.



Care and Support Reimagined: A National Care Covenant for England

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York have commissioned a report which sets out a radical and inspiring vision for England’s social care system.

The Archbishops’ report on social care is called Care and Support Reimagined: A National Care Covenant for England.

Nine experts were tasked with reimagining care and support in a way that addressed the needs and concerns of everyone involved: people who draw on care and support; people who work in the social care sector; people who care for their family members, friends, and neighbours.

The Commission spent the last year and half speaking to people who get care and support, those who give it as well as academics, policy makers and politicians. They found out what the existing challenges and frustrations were as well as how people could flourish and live full lives.

The uniqueness of the report is that it calls for a Covenant, which would clearly and simply set out the rights and responsibilities of everyone involved in care. The Covenant would make clear the role of citizens, families, communities and the State both in providing care and paying for it.

Welcoming the report, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Revd Justin Welby said:

“This report gives me hope that we can rise to the challenge of fixing our broken social care system. Jesus Christ offers every human being life in all its fullness, and so we must broaden our understanding of care and support as the means by which everyone, regardless of age or ability, can experience abundant life. Rooted in the right values, the development of a National Care Covenant is a step towards this, where everyone is engaged in a collaborative effort to ensure that we can all access the care and support we need.”

The Archbishop of York, the Most Revd Stephen Cottrell, said:

"This report outlines a new vision for our society where we learn to be inter-dependent with one another, where I thrive because you do, and together we live in a country where we serve one another and flourish together. In our Church, this begins with us proclaiming loudly and clearly that each of us is made in the image of God, known and loved deeply for who we are, not simply for what we contribute. I pray that this report is the beginning of a wider national conversation about what it means to be a caring society.”

Commenting on the release of the report, the Chair of the Commission, Dr Anna Dixon MBE, said:

“Our reimagined vision for care and support puts relationships at the centre and encourages us to think about how social care can enable everyone to live well. This is no time for tinkering around the edges of a social care system that for too long has left people who draw on care and support feeling marginalised, carers feeling exhausted and undervalued, a system which provides no clarity about what is expected of each of us. A National Care Covenant, with its focus on the mutual responsibilities, will help us to work together towards our common goal.”

The Co-Chair of the Commission, the Rt Revd James Newcome, Bishop of Carlisle, reflected: “It has been a privilege to hear the experiences and aspirations of people from across the country who draw on care and support, unpaid carers, and care workers, and we have sought to reflect their contributions in our report. I believe that the Church of England, alongside other faith communities, has a vital role to play in supporting people and creating spaces where everyone is valued and can participate, regardless of age or ability.”

You can read the report here:

- [Care and Support Reimagined: A National Care Covenant for England \(Full version\)](#)
- [Care and Support Reimagined: A National Care Covenant for England \(Summarised version\)](#)
- [Care and Support Reimagined: A National Care Covenant for England \(Easy read version\)](#)



LIVING
IN LOVE
& FAITH

Bishops propose prayers of thanksgiving, dedication and for God's blessing for same-sex couples

The Bishops of the Church of England will be issuing an apology later this week to LGBTQI+ people for the “rejection, exclusion and hostility” they have faced in churches and the impact this has had on their lives.

And they will urge all congregations in their care to welcome same-sex couples “unreservedly and joyfully” as they reaffirm their commitment to a “radical new Christian inclusion founded in scripture, in reason, in tradition, in theology and the Christian faith as the Church of England has received it – based on good, healthy, flourishing relationships, and in a proper 21st Century understanding of being human and of being sexual”.

The proposals, which follow a six-year period of listening, learning and discernment known as Living in Love and Faith, will be outlined in a report to the Church's General Synod, which meets in London next month. It will offer the fullest possible pastoral provision without changing the Church's doctrine of Holy Matrimony for same-sex couples through a range of draft prayers, known as Prayers of Love and Faith, which could be used voluntarily in churches for couples who have marked a significant stage of their relationship such as a civil marriage or civil partnership.

There will be a commitment to produce new pastoral guidance in relation to the discernment of vocation, replacing the 1991 statement “Issues in Human Sexuality”, to which all clergy currently are asked to assent.

Drawing from the feedback received through Living in Love and Faith, the bishops also identify a number of key areas for further reflection and work. Under the proposals, same-sex couples would still not be able to get married in a Church of England church, but could have a service in which there would be prayers of dedication, thanksgiving or for God's blessing on the couple in church following a civil marriage or partnership.

The formal teaching of the Church of England as set out in the canons and authorised liturgies – that Holy Matrimony is between one man and one woman for life – would not change.

The prayers would be voluntary for clergy to use and could be used in different combinations reflecting the theological diversity of the Church.

The proposals for the Church of England follow a discussion at the Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops from around the world last year on topics including same-sex marriage and blessings. During that discussion, the Archbishop of Canterbury made clear that the majority of the churches in the Anglican Communion continue to affirm traditional teaching on marriage, but that some have already come to a different view on sexuality “after long prayer, deep study and reflection on understandings of human nature” and now bless or celebrate same-sex unions.

Alongside the published report the bishops of the Church of England will be publishing a letter in which they apologise to LGBTQI+ people. The letter will also speak honestly about their ongoing disagreements over the possibility of changing the Church's teaching on marriage itself. But they will emphasise a clear and strong desire to continue to “walk together” amid their differences.

The Bishop of London, Sarah Mullally, who chaired the group of bishops which led the process of discernment and decision making, said: “I want to offer my heartfelt thanks to all who have participated in the process which has brought us to this point. I know that this has been costly and painful for many on all sides of the debate and has touched on deeply personal matters and strongly held beliefs. We have been moved by what we have heard and seen. And what has come through very clearly, even though there continues to be disagreement among the bishops and among the wider church on these questions, is a strong desire to continue to share our life together in Christ with all our differences.”

The Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell, said: “Over the last six years, we have been confronted time and time again with examples of the rejection, exclusion, and hostility that many LGBTI+ people have received in churches. “Both personally and on behalf of my fellow bishops I would like to express our deep sorrow and grief at the way LGBTQI+ people and those they love have been treated by the Church which, most of all, ought to recognise everyone as precious and created in the image of God. We are deeply sorry and ashamed and want to take this opportunity to begin again in the spirit of repentance which our faith teaches us. This is not the end of that journey but we have reached a milestone and I hope that these prayers of love and faith can provide a way for us all to celebrate and affirm same-sex relationships.”

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said: “I would like to thank all those across the Church of England who have participated in this deeply prayerful and theologically grounded process of discernment over the last six years. This response reflects the diversity of views in the Church of England on questions of sexuality, relationships and marriage – I rejoice in that diversity and I welcome this way of reflecting it in the life of our church. I am under no illusions that what we are proposing today will appear to go too far for some and not nearly far enough for others, but it is my hope that what we have agreed will be received in a spirit of generosity, seeking the common good.

“Most of all I hope it can offer a way for the Church of England, publicly and unequivocally, to say to all Christians and especially LGBTQI+ people that you are welcome and a valued and precious part of the body of Christ.”

Once the proposals have been debated by Synod, the House of Bishops will refine the prayers and then commend them for use.

Meanwhile a new group would be set up to produce new pastoral guidance to explain the practical implications of the bishops’ proposals and replace previous guidance and statements including Issues in Human Sexuality.

Synod will be asked to discuss the proposals in detail during its meeting from February 6 to 9, with the main debate on the proposals due to take place on February 8.

“God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.”
1 John 4.16

For further information, please visit: <https://www.churchofengland.org/media-and-news/press-releases/draft-prayers-thanksgiving-dedication-and-gods-blessing-same-sex>

Changemakers Supporter Conference

Save the Date!

Changemakers
Supporter Conference
Saturday March 4 2023

Sign up from January 2023 via:
caid.org.uk/conference2023

You are warmly invited to our online annual supporter conference.

Get connected with the people and stories behind the global work of Christian Aid, explore how you can make positive change by engaging with climate justice, and join with fellow volunteers across the UK as we share creative ideas and experiences of fundraising success.

This year, we will be hosting a one-day online event, packed with sessions to leave you inspired for Christian Aid Week 2023. We're excited to see you there.



When: **Saturday March 4 2023, 10am - 4pm**

Where: **Online**

RSVP: **Sign up from January 2023 via:**
caid.org.uk/conference2023



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This year's Online Conference will include an exciting range of stories of our work and a first look at this year's Christian Aid Week film.

Highlights will include:

- Introducing Christian Aid Week 2023 – get behind the story, watch the premiere of the video, hear about fundraising ideas and resources
- Celebrating the impact of the funds raised in Christian Aid Week 2022
- Campaigning - why we need to talk about climate justice
- The challenge of fundraising during a cost-of-living crisis
- Stories of how we respond to humanitarian emergencies around the world
- Discovering Christian Aid's amazing story over the last 75+ years

To sign up and for more information, visit <https://caid.org.uk/conference2023>

The Chapter Letter

A time to change...

This past week has seen the cathedral community mark a number of changes as we have marked out the changes that come with the passing of time. One of those has been saying farewell to the dean on her retirement, and another has been the marking of the liturgical change as we celebrated Candlemas.

Candlemas, more formally called The Presentation of Christ in the Temple or The Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, is one of the Church's Principal Holy Days and falls 40 days after the celebration of the Nativity. It recalls the journey made by Mary and Joseph to give thanks at the Temple and the words of Simeon – that Christ shall be 'a light to lighten the Gentiles' and those of Anna who, pointing toward the passion of Christ speaks of 'the sword that shall pierce Mary's heart'.

Candlemas was (until the Victorian reinvention of the Christmas season) the point at which the greenery and decoration of Christmastide was taken down, and marks for us a liturgical and spiritual tipping point as we turn from celebrating the birth of Christ toward the self-examination that will lead us toward the commemorations of Holy Week and the celebration of Easter.

So we now find ourselves occupying a little bit of a 'fallow space' in the Christian year: Christmas is now firmly past, the cribs have been packed away and the greenery disposed of, but we are not yet in the penitential season of Lent. This provides us with a little bit of time to take stock, give thanks for all that is good, and look at what we need to change to better fit us for the journey that lies ahead. This speaks as much to the institution of the cathedral as it does us as individuals – there is much that is good and we can give thanks for, but there are undoubtedly things that we could do to make things better, to grow in faith, and to grow into the likeness of Christ.

In practical terms, we might use this fallow space to think ahead to how we might use the time of Lent – traditionally a time to focus on the Christian spiritual disciplines of Fasting, Prayer and Almsgiving. These next two or three weeks give us a chance to step back, look at what needs changing if we are to grow into the fullness of life that God has prepared for us and look how we might open ourselves to the grace and wonder of God. In that way, we will not get caught out by the question 'What are you giving up for Lent?' as a question that has not really been thought about until we have been eating our pancakes on Shrove Tuesday, but we can have prayerfully thought about how we can use the disciplines of Lent to prepare us fully for the transforming glory of the Easter that is to come.

NICK BROWN, PRECENTOR

St Botolph's Church, Boston

Sunday services

First Sunday of the Month

11am – Sung Eucharist (also available online)

5pm – Choral Evensong (also available online) *during term time*

All other Sunday's in the month

11.00am – Sung Eucharist (also available online)

Wednesday midweek service

10.30am – Said Eucharist (also available online)



Explore the roof space of Lincoln Cathedral with views across the City.

Our friendly guides will show you the fascinating structures that hold up the roof of the Cathedral. We'll give you an insight into the workmanship required to build and maintain this stunning building.

You'll also get up close to our stained glass windows, visit one of our bell chambers and for those who are not afraid of heights, there is an opportunity to enjoy views down the full length of the Nave and across the City from the Cathedral's West Front.

If you love architecture, this tour is for you.

How long will the tour last?

Each tour will last approximately 90 minutes.

How much does it cost?

Tours cost £7.50 per person **in addition to the general admission fee.**

What else do I need to know?

Please note: A general level of fitness is required to climb the steep staircases.

Dates available and how to book?

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/guided-roof-tour-of-lincoln-cathedral-tickets-154101502743>

The Revd Canon Dr Simon Jones is to be the Interim Dean of Lincoln following the retirement of Dean Christine



Simon is Chaplain and Fellow of Merton College, Oxford where he has overall responsibility for the Chapel and Choral Foundation, welfare provision and student financial support. He teaches liturgy and is a member of the University of Oxford's Faculty of Theology and Religion.

Simon said: "It's a great privilege to have the opportunity to serve the Cathedral and Diocese of Lincoln in this interim role.

"I am grateful to colleagues at Merton for making this secondment possible, and very much look forward to working alongside new colleagues in Lincoln and becoming part of the Cathedral community".