



THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

**The Bishop in Europe
The Right Reverend Dr Robert Innes**

27 January 2026

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I have been writing to you at regular intervals during the current situation of unrest in St Andrew's Anglican Church. During my two visits last year with Archdeacon Leslie, I conveyed the assurance of my love and concern for you all. Despite the present difficulties, the congregation of St. Andrew's remains a strong and vibrant community of over 100 people. It continues to embrace its Anglican heritage, remembering all the good work that has enabled the church to flourish since the visit to Moscow of HM Queen Elizabeth II in 1994.

I share with you a deep desire for the community to be a place of light, healing and peace. Unfortunately, there continues to be harassment and threats from a private security company appointed by those who currently claim to hold positions of authority in our Russian legal entity, the Religious Organisation "The Anglican Church in Moscow". Evidence has been presented to the courts and steps are being taken to address this matter, following due legal process. However, in the meantime, the worshipping congregation of St Andrew's has once again been left feeling severely shaken and distressed. On Sunday 25th January, Nicolette Kirk, Churchwarden, along with other parishioners, were prevented from entering the church to conduct planned services, owing to the doors of the building having been padlocked. We need to be clear that the padlocking of the church is in direct contravention of the rights of freedom of conscience and belief belonging to our worshipping community under Russian law.

I understand information was posted on the church's hacked website the previous evening, stating that the administration of the Religious Organisation "The Anglican Church in Moscow" no longer recognizes the authority of our church hierarchy and for that reason would not be allowing services to take place for the present time. Such harassment and intimidating behaviour is unacceptable in any context, let alone at church. We are working with our partners to address this with urgency, since it breaches the rights of our congregation to worship in their sacred sanctuary with its Anglican tradition.

I am pleased and grateful for the good relationship we have with our ecumenical partner in Russia, the Russian Orthodox Church. This relationship is well-established and longstanding. The ROC recognizes our canonical rootedness. It relates to and cooperates with those persons duly authorised by our canons. Your Chaplain, the Revd Canon Dr Arun John, was duly appointed and received my licence at a public service on 15th December 2024 at St Andrew's. It was the Religious Organisation, "the Anglican Church in Moscow" that applied for his visas in full recognition of this Anglican tradition and canonical requirements. The Russian Orthodox Church also have the affirmation of the Archbishop of Canterbury, conveyed via the Archbishop of York as Primate of England, for Fr Arun's ministry in Moscow as the Apokrisiarios to the Russian Orthodox Church. Fr Arun is held in high regard by the ROC as well as by the overwhelming majority of our worshipping community at St Andrew's Moscow. We are hugely grateful to the Russian Orthodox Church for their support.

I hope this letter will help to allay your most natural concerns and fears by ensuring that you are aware of the correct information. May I close by assuring you of my thoughts and prayers, that you may remain strong in the face of such provocation, and to focus on the love of Christ, that will help us all continue to nurture the vibrant community at St. Andrew's.

Yours in Christ,

+ Robert Gibraltar in Europe

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