

Read the text of the Archbishop of Canterbury's BBC New Year Message.

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<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0bwfrnk>

Read the transcript of the message:

Living together is never easy. Families have all sorts of arguments.

At this time of year especially, we get together, enjoy company, but sometimes get on each other's nerves.

Here at Lambeth Palace, where Archbishops have lived and worked for centuries, we've been trying an experiment.

Since 2015 we've been bringing together young Christians from around the world to live as a community for ten months.

They have an extraordinary range of backgrounds, cultures and opinions. They live together, cook together, volunteer with charities together, pray together, and – because they're human– they clash together.

That can be over something as small as the washing up, or as big as their politics.

They are united by one thing: their faith in Jesus Christ. But their own faith is not what holds them together.

In John's Gospel, Jesus says to his disciples:

"I have called you friends [...] I chose you." He didn't always get on with them – in fact, sometimes they drove him up the wall.

But they were united by something greater than their differences, his friendship.

In this community, I find it so powerful that these remarkably different people decide to choose each other.

There's a parallel with our country today. We're wonderfully much more diverse than we used to be. Yet we disagree on many things. And we are struggling with how to disagree well. Turn on the television, read the news, and you see a lot that could tempt you to despair.

Hope lies in our capacity to approach this new year in a spirit of openness towards each other. Committed to discovering more of what it means to be citizens together, even amid great challenges and changes.

That will involve choosing to see ourselves as neighbours, as fellow citizens, as communities each with something to contribute. It will mean gathering around our common values, a common vision, and a commitment to one another.

With the struggles and divisions of recent years, that will not be easy.

But that difficult work is part of the joy and blessing of being a community.

Whether it's the twenty people here - or millions of us.

So: will we choose each other again? Because in that choosing lies our hope.

I wish all of us a happy and – more importantly – hope-filled New Year.

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