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A special initiative called “Together in Unity” has been launched by the Archbishop of Canterbury today in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

The Archbishop has shared a pastoral message to bishops and spouses of the worldwide Anglican Communion about the impact of COVID-19, encouraging Anglican dioceses and parishes to support one another during this difficult time.

The video has been shared on what would have been the period of the fifteenth Lambeth Conference– a decennial meeting for Anglican bishops and spouses in Canterbury. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the conference has been rescheduled to the British summer of 2022.

The message builds on the Archbishop’s message to the communion at the time of the announcement, which has encouraged the Anglican Communion “to walk together and be good news in the world”.

The “Together in Unity” initiative (which is being organised by the Anglican Communion Fund) will raise funding support for COVID relief in areas of the Communion hardest hit by COVID-19 and seek to demonstrate solidarity across the communion.

Churches and dioceses around the Anglican Communion are providing support services in their communities to tackle COVID outbreaks in their settings. Many are in countries where the health infrastructure and support measures may be severely under strain.

The initiative will work to provide income support, facilities for basic hygiene, equipment to slow the spread of the virus and food security – including for clergy. It will be one of many important COVID-19 appeals that are happening across the Anglican Communion at this time.

Speaking of the pandemic, the Archbishop’s message acknowledges that everyone has been affected by the impact of COVID-19 in different ways – and that some communities and dioceses have been harder hit than others.

“The Coronavirus pandemic has hurt families, communities and nations across the world in so many ways. In our Communion, there is not one province, diocese or parish that is untouched by the pandemic. The body of Christ is hurting. We know that some parts of the body are more hurt than others. And they need our help.”

The Anglican Communion Fund has already allocated over £180k of funding to support churches in areas of need across the Communion as part of a special COVID-specific grant cycle.

In Maridi, South Sudan: Over two hundred pastors and lay readers were provided food relief, church leaders were trained in virus prevention, and bicycles and hand microphones were provided for five pastors to carry virus prevention messages into remote areas through an Anglican Communion Fund Grant.

In Bangladesh: In the midst of job losses and economic pressures from lockdown, hundreds of vulnerable families, from both church and wider communities, have received support to enable them to buy food and daily necessities.

The Archbishop’s message also references the book of 1 Peter – the Biblical theme to the Lambeth Conference and Psalm 133 saying: “Peter refers to us as living stones, built up as a spiritual house. We are the household of faith. The household of God. In Psalm 133, David declares how good and pleasant it is for us to dwell together in unity. In this time of global crisis, we need to care for the weaker, and the more vulnerable members of the household. The pain and suffering of my own sister and brother must become my own pain and suffering. I must do what I can to help. By bringing our help across the world, we will fulfil our personal responsibility that God has given us through his call to the church.”

The ‘Together In Unity’ initiative is encouraging bishops and dioceses to share information about the campaign in their communities and support however they are able.

Find out more about the appeal

3 min read

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