

The Archbishop of Canterbury has concluded a visit to Eastern Europe where he met with religious leaders and communities in the region.

Archbishop Welby has been in Istanbul, Bucharest and Chisinau in Moldova. He flew out last Friday (10th March) and returned yesterday (Thursday 16 March).

The focus of his trip was strengthening ecumenical friendships and understanding the contexts, concerns and hopes of Christians in the region – particularly against the backdrop of the Russian invasion of Ukraine – as well as deepening friendships across faiths. The Archbishop also spent time in worship, prayer and conversation with Anglican clergy and congregations.

Starting off in Istanbul, the Archbishop met His All Holiness Bartholomew, Archbishop of Constantinople New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch, who was elected in 2013. He met with Pope Francis' election. He preached at Christ Church Anglican Church on



On Monday he travelled to Romania to acknowledge the long history of friendship between the Church of England and the Romanian Orthodox Church. He joined the Anglican Church of the Resurrection to preach at evening prayer.

During his visit, Archbishop Justin met Patriarch Daniel, who thanked him for the Church of England's support of Romanian Orthodox parishes in the UK, as well as Metropolitan Nifon of Targoviste, a member of the executive committee of the World Council of Churches.



On Tuesday the Archbishop paid a visit to Archbishop Calinic in the city of Curtea de Arges, where he was shown the historic monastery and the



members of the historic Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Augsburg

When he was in Romania, Archbishop Justin met with Ukrainian refugees who are currently being supported by the UNHCR in Bucharest. He spent time alone with some of them, who told him what it was like to flee their home because of conflict and then try to settle in a new country.

Commenting on the visit, the Archbishop said: "This is a trip where I am listening and learning from the Eastern Orthodox Church leaders and others about their concerns for the region and the instability on their borders. I am joining them in praying for peace in Ukraine and our hope for a better future.

"Yesterday's visit to Ukrainian families displaced by war, allowed me to see for myself the work the UNHCR is doing to support them. Two things struck me: the dignity with which people are treated here and the generosity of Romanian people. It was heart-warming. It was a privilege to meet Ukrainian refugees, to hear their stories and to meet the people who are working with them to create a safe-harbour.

"It was also a real pleasure, as always, to spend time with the chaplaincies and their congregations in the Diocese of Europe."

On Tuesday and Wednesday the Archbishop travelled to meet people from the Roma community who experience discrimination, stigmatisation and poverty. First the Archbishop visited a Roma village called Sintesta and met the Roma priest there called Father Daniel Ganga, who is working

was shown run-down houses with no electricity or running water. The
the afterschool club there.



The Archbishop rounded off his trip to Eastern Europe by visiting Moldova for the first time. In a brief visit lasting less than 24 hours, Archbishop Justin went to the Jewish Cultural Centre in Chisinaumet and met the Rabbi there, as well as the Metropolitan Petru of Bessarabia and Exarch of the Plains.



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