Light a candle of hope: A national call to prayer in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic

Wednesday 18 March, 2020

Please see below a statement from Presidents of Churches Together in England, including Archbishop Justin Welby, The Archbishop of Canterbury, and Cardinal Vincent Nichols, The Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster.

Churches Together in England

Press statement

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

18th
March 2020

Light a candle of hope: A national call to prayer in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic

Presidents of Churches Together in England have issued a call to prayer in the light of the coronavirus pandemic. This is for all churches and people of prayer to join on Sunday 22nd March, Mothering Sunday. They write….

This Mothering Sunday, 22nd March, we are calling all churches to a National Day of Prayer and Action. At such a time as this, when so many are fearful and there is great uncertainty, we are reminded of our dependence on our loving Heavenly Father and the future that he holds.

At 7pm this Sunday, light a candle in the windows of your homes as a visible symbol of the light of life, Jesus Christ, our source and hope in prayer.

Whether you are continuing to worship as congregations or not, we have the great privilege and freedom to be able to call upon God, wherever we are, individually and corporately, for healing in our nation. We would pray for all in leadership at this time, making decisions about the containment of the COVID-19 virus, for those working in health and social care, and especially for the most vulnerable, whether elderly or those with underlying health conditions.

There are already stories being told of wonderful acts of kindness across neighbourhoods. Alongside your prayers, take the opportunity to telephone or email someone who is isolated, buy some additional food for your local foodbank, or offer to deliver shopping for an elderly neighbour. We may not be able to touch physically, but we can make connections in so many other ways.

In the meantime, do please attend to all the government health advice that will be issued, and look out for resources from your specific church governing bodies. At least for those of us in the global North, we do seem to be in unusual times, and wisdom and flexibility about worship gatherings are a key part of our Christian discipleship during this period.

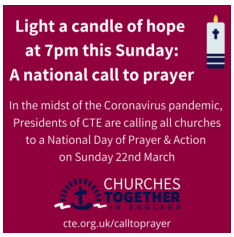
We note that this call to prayer and action comes on Mothering Sunday: a time of thankfulness, remembering especially mothers who have served us, often in very costly ways. It is also a very mixed day for many. For some the remembrance is painful, and for others Mothering Sunday is a reminder of disappointment or loss. In many ways, this period under the shadow of the coronavirus will be prompting similarly diverse reactions and so it seems especially appropriate that the call to prayer is made this Sunday. At this time of uncertainty join in with the National Day of Prayer and Action, lighting a candle of hope.

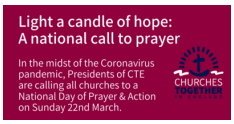
“Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you” 1 Peter 5:7

Presidents of Churches Together in England

Archbishop Justin Welby, The Archbishop of Canterbury

Media:





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Cardinal Vincent Nichols, The Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster

Revd Dr Hugh Osgood, The Free Churches Moderator

Archbishop Angaelos of London, CTE President for the Orthodox Churches

Pastor Agu Irukwu, CTE Pentecostal President

PRESIDENTS' STATEMENT ENDS

The church is still very much alive says Churches Together in England

Churches Together in England (CTE) has made it clear that the church is still very much alive and committed to being part of the answer to the social and pastoral challenges we all face. Revd Dr Paul Goodliff, General Secretary of CTE – the national body which supports and encourages churches from a wide range of traditions to work together – says:

"The church has certainly not closed. Although we are not able to gather together in person at this time, we as the diverse range of churches across England are seeking creative ways to continue to serve our communities, to support one another and to worship and pray together.

"The family of fifty churches in CTE agree with the Archbishops of Canterbury and York; 'We urge you sisters and brothers to become a different sort of church in these coming months: hopeful and rooted in the offering of prayer and praise and overflowing in service to the world.'"

END OF PRESS STATEMENT

Notes to editors:

This statement is available at www.cte.org.uk/calltoprayer

- Among other bodies supporting this call to prayer are the Evangelical Alliance, Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, Cytûn and the Church of Scotland.
- Churches Together in England (CTE) is the national ecumenical instrument supporting and encouraging churches from a wide range of traditions to work together in unity. Nationally, Churches Together in England brings together **50 Member Churches** from many diverse traditions, including Free Churches, the Church of England, Catholics, Pentecostals, Orthodox and Reformed churches. In fact, we unite the broadest range of churches in the whole of Europe.
    - See our full list of Member Churches at www.cte.org.uk/memberchurches
- CTE's vision is to create a space in which fruitful collaboration and mutual understanding can grow, so that we as churches work more closely together to share in God's mission – making the gospel of Christ better known in our nation, worshipping together and working together for the common good.
- All across England, churches are working together at national, county and local levels, and CTE enables churches to be more active in ecumenism at all three levels.

Media information

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