

# Join us to pray for the Anglican future

Anglican Futures, as our name suggests, is focused on the future.

Praying for the future of the church can be daunting but we hope these prayer sheets will help. They are designed to be used by individuals, small groups or churches. They are undated to allow them to be used at different times in different places. You can find suggestions of some of these ways on our website.

Looking ahead, things may well be messy, but we are convinced that the greatest challenge for our generation is not, "How do we respond to heterodox church leaders?", though that is important, but the holiness with which we treat our brothers and sisters whose conscience leads them to take a different path. So, our prayer is that we start by allowing God to challenge our own hearts, and then pray for the church.

## What's your focus?

The Anglican Church is global, national, regional and local. There are faithful Anglicans seeking to make a difference at all levels - here are just some of the groups involved.

Global: *Global South Fellowship of Anglicans, Gafcon, EFAC, Anglican Network in Europe*

National: *CEEC, Church Society, Gafcon GBE, Evangelical Fellowship Church in Wales,*

Regional: *Many dioceses have an evangelical group - known as a DEF or DEU*

Or you may feel called to pray for the future of your local Anglican church.

## Why 1 Corinthians?

In 2006, the leaders of two churches in the USA, The Falls Church and Truro Church, produced a guidebook called, "[40 Days of Discernment](https://americananglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/40-Days-of-Discernment.pdf)." They involved colleagues from the Diocese of Virginia and across the Anglican Communion. The guide was designed to help parishes consider their future in The Episcopal Church through a time of prayer, fasting and small group discussion. <https://americananglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/40-Days-of-Discernment.pdf>

With the permission of the Anglican American Council, we have been inspired by their material, as we have sought to prepare something more suited to those in the UK and Europe in 2023. We are grateful for their wisdom and the ACNA BCP 2019 for prayers.



Find out more about Anglican Futures

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Offering practical and pastoral support to faithful Anglicans

# Week 3: A Holy Church

*"If I had never joined a church till I had found one that was perfect, I should never have joined one at all; and the moment I did join it, if I had found one, I should have spoiled it, for it would not have been a perfect church after I had become a member of it."*

*CH Spurgeon (1834-1892)*

In October 2003, the Primates (Senior Archbishops) of the Anglican Communion met to discuss the forthcoming consecration of Rev Gene Robinson, a divorced man living in a gay relationship. They warned, *"This will tear the fabric of our communion at its deepest level, and may lead to further division on this and further issues as provinces have to decide in consequence whether they can remain in communion with provinces that choose not to break communion with the Episcopal Church ."* Their warning was ignored.

In June 2022, the Archbishops of Uganda, Nigeria and Rwanda wrote to Archbishop Justin Welby explaining why nearly a third of bishops would not be attending the Lambeth Conference, *"Sadly, it is an example of virtue-signalling that condones evil by hiding behind endless prayer and discussion, thereby giving the impression that what is really laudable is the discussion rather than the decision to obey the clear word of God on the pressing issue of human sexuality and marriage."*

Some orthodox bishops, including the Most Revd Justin Badi, the Archbishop of South Sudan and leader of the Global South Fellowship of Anglicans, went to the Lambeth Conference, in August, but were clear, *"Today, in Canterbury, we may be gathered together, but we most certainly cannot walk together until Provinces which have gone against scripture... repent, and return to orthodoxy,"*

So, if the church will never be perfect, why are these church leaders so clear that in this situation separation is necessary?

While same-sex marriage might be the presenting issue, the Living in Love and Faith process has revealed it is only a symptom of much deeper disagreements about the nature of the Scriptures, humanity, salvation, the purpose of the church and our eternal destiny. If we agree to disagree on these issues, surely we call God a liar and the gospel loses its power?

Let us pray that we and our church leaders would have the courage and compassion to proclaim the undiluted, unpoluted word of God to a needy world.





# Praying for a Holy Church



*We hope you will be helped to pray for the future of the church by taking time to read the bible passage (perhaps asking two simple questions - What does it teach me about God? What does it teach me about his church?) and by using the suggested prayers to begin to shape your own thanksgiving and petition.*

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| Day 1 | <b>Read:</b> 1 Cor 5:1-5   |
|       | <b>Reflect:</b> What happens when sinful behaviour that should have been nipped in the bud is tolerated? Chaos! Which is why Paul says radical action is needed - for the sake of the church and that the one disciplined might repent and be restored.  |
|       | <b>Pray:</b> Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made, and you forgive the sins of all who are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. |

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| Day 2 | <b>Read:</b> 1 Cor 5:6-8   |
|       | <b>Reflect:</b> More warnings of the danger of publicly known unrepentant sin - its effects will spread. The gospel means the price for that sin has been paid - and we can live lives of transparency in line with the truth. The question is, will we?               |
|       | <b>Pray:</b> Grant, we pray, Almighty God, that we who celebrate with reverence the Paschal feast may be made worthy to attain to everlasting joys; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen. |

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| Day 3 | <b>Read:</b> 1 Cor 5:9-11  |
|       | <b>Reflect:</b> Lack of discipline now leads to an incontrovertible crisis - the on-looking world can no longer tell the difference between the way the world lives and the way the church lives. How bad does it need to get before action is taken?  |
|       | <b>Pray:</b> O Lord God, grant your people grace to withstand the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and with pure hearts and minds to follow you, the only God; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen. |

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| Day 4 | <b>Read:</b> 1 Cor 5:12-13  |
|       | <b>Reflect:</b> We may not be tempted to judge the world - but will we heed Paul's reminder that as the church we have a duty to judge and discipline ourselves so the church reflects Christ himself?  |
|       | <b>Pray:</b> O God, whose blessed Son came into the world that he might destroy the works of the devil and make us children of God and heirs of eternal life: Grant that, having this hope, we may purify ourselves as he is pure; that, when he comes again with power and great glory, we may be made like him in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. |

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| Day 5 | <b>Read:</b> 1 Cor 6:1-8  |
|       | <b>Reflect:</b> The tolerance of unethical behaviour and lack of discipline within the Corinthian church means disputes have spilled out into the secular courts. Yet Paul's call is for godly discipline, not hiding sin and denying justice.  |
|       | <b>Pray:</b> Gracious Father, we pray for your holy catholic Church. Fill it with all truth, in all truth with all peace. Where it is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error, direct it; where in anything it is amiss, reform it. Where it is right, strengthen it; where it is in want, provide for it; where it is divided, reunite it; for the sake of Jesus Christ your Son our Saviour. Amen. |

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| Day 6 | <b>Read:</b> 1 Cor 6:9-11  |
|       | <b>Reflect:</b> What glorious words - 'such were some of you BUT' - you were washed, sanctified and justified in Christ and through the Spirit. When will we learn that if we deny sin, we lose the beauty of the transforming work of the gospel?   |
|       | <b>Pray:</b> Let your continual mercy, O Lord, cleanse and defend your Church; and, because it cannot continue in safety without your help, protect and govern it always by your goodness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. |

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| Day 7 | <b>Read:</b> 1 Cor 6:12-20  |
|       | <b>Reflect:</b> If we compare these verses to the profound mystery of marriage (Eph 5:22-33) we see the devastating spiritual and physical consequences of sexual immorality - both for the individuals and the church - the body and bride of Christ.                      |
|       | <b>Pray:</b> O merciful Lord, grant to your faithful people pardon and peace, that we may be cleansed from all our sins and serve you with a quiet mind; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen. |