

## Presidency calls for prayers of lament and hope

### Statement from the Revd Richard Teal, President of the Methodist Conference and Carolyn Lawrence, Vice-President of the Methodist Conference:

“We know that many millions of people across the country have taken refuge in prayer during the pandemic. We join with the Archbishops of Canterbury and York in their call to set aside time each evening at 6pm to pray. There is a very great need amongst us to be able to lament the horrific loss of life and to find solace and hope during these dark days. Our prayer is that each of you will know that God is with us, sustaining us through our grief.”

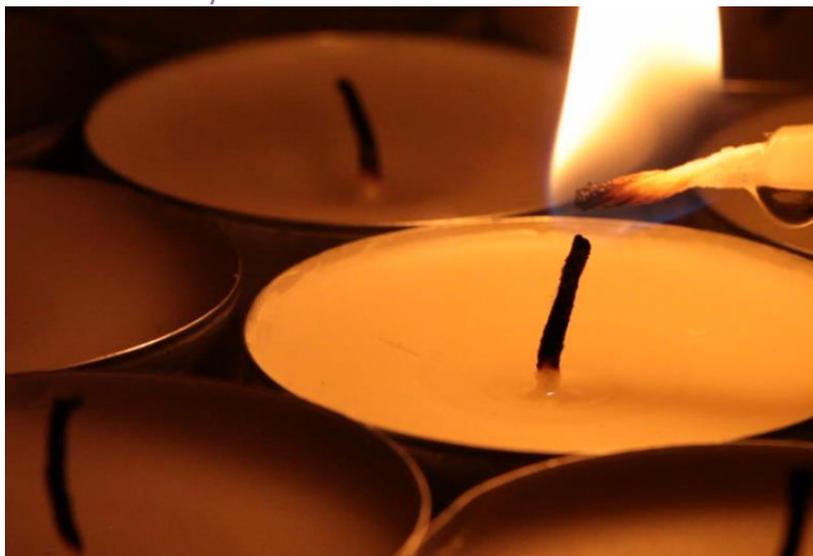
Coronavirus: Archbishops invite nation to pause, pray and remember 100,000 people 'known to God and cherished by God'

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**"100,000 isn't just an abstract figure - each number is a person: someone we loved and someone who loved us."**

**"Death doesn't have the last word. In God's kingdom, every tear will be wiped away."**

### The Archbishops of Canterbury and York



The Archbishops of Canterbury and York are issuing a call to the nation to pause and reflect to remember the more than 100,000 people across the UK who have died after contracting Covid-19 and all those who know and love them.

In an open letter, Archbishops Justin Welby and Stephen Cottrell invite everyone across England – whether they have faith or not – to pause, reflect on the “enormity of this pandemic” and to pray.

Death, they insist, does not have “the last word”, and the Christian faith promises that one day “every tear will be wiped away”.

God, they write, knows grief and suffering and “shares in the weight of our sadness”.

Acknowledging the wider impact of the pandemic on the whole of society through loneliness, anxiety and economic hardship, they invite people to “cast their fears on God”.

The letter also speaks of the particular impact of the pandemic on poorer communities, minority ethnic communities and those living with disabilities.

It acknowledges many who have lost their livelihoods as a result of the economic impact of the pandemic and it speaks about those unable to be with loved ones as they died or even at their graveside because of the restrictions.

The archbishops give thanks for NHS and social care staff, who they describe as “a blessing and lifeline for our nation”; for clergy, other frontline workers and “so many good neighbours”. They give thanks for the development of vaccines and reiterate a call to everyone to take the vaccine when it is offered.

They also urge people to support each other both by following the guidelines to limit the spread of the virus and in practical ways, reaching out in care and kindness.

The letter includes an invitation to everyone – whether they have faith or not – to join the archbishops in pausing and praying each day at 6pm from 1<sup>st</sup> February.

The archbishops write: “100,000 isn’t just an abstract figure. Each number is a person: someone we loved and someone who loved us. We also believe that each of these people was known to God and cherished by God.

“We write to you then in consolation, but also in encouragement, and ultimately in the hope of Jesus Christ. The God who comes to us in Jesus knew grief and suffering himself. On the cross, Jesus shares the weight of our sadness.”

They conclude: “Most of all, we have hope because God raised Jesus from the dead. This is the Christian hope that we will be celebrating at Easter.

“We live in the hope that we will share in his resurrection. Death doesn’t have the last word. In God’s kingdom, every tear will be wiped away.

“Please be assured of our prayers. Please join us.”