



Press Release 23 May 2018 -

**** Christians around the world gather in prayer on final weekend of Thy Kingdom Come 2018 ****

Last weekend, Christians around the world gathered in prayer and worship on the final weekend of Thy Kingdom Come – the global ecumenical prayer movement initiated by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York.

Archbishop Justin Welby hosted a special Thy Kingdom Come event at St Albans Cathedral on Saturday, which saw thousands of young people come together to celebrate and share their faith. Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church in America, Michael Curry, also joined Archbishop Justin at the event – the two leaders travelled to the event after participating in the wedding of the Duke and Duchess of Sussex.

The event was one of thousands across the UK over the 11 days, from Inverness to Devon, and Bangor to Canterbury. One person even circumnavigated around the UK sailing and praying during the 11 days.

Internationally, Thy Kingdom Come events took place in countries including the Falkland Islands, Australia, Bermuda, Bangladesh, Canada, South Africa and Malaysia. Similarly, both Beacon events attended by Archbishop Justin Welby were live streamed on Facebook, drawing thousands of viewers from around the world including Morocco, USA, Brazil, Mauritius, Nigeria, Sweden, South Africa and Romania.

Archbishop Justin Welby and Bishop Michael share their faith journeys

Archbishop Justin Welby and Bishop Michael Curry shared testimonies at the St Albans Cathedral event at Saturday night- after attending the Royal wedding earlier in the day.

Archbishop Justin Welby powerfully recounted finding out the identity of his real biological father, and spoke about clearing up the personal belongings of the man he believed was his father after he died.

He also spoke about the revolutionary nature of Christianity, saying: “At the heart of what we do and believe as Christians is a revolution. It’s not conventional. It’s not normal. It’s not just living life as it comes. It is a revolution that should, and has, and will again transform the world in which we live,” he said.

In his testimony, Presiding Bishop Curry, continuing with the love theme, said: “I really do believe what Jesus is teaching us and His spirit, is that it [Love] really is the way to new life, not just for us but for the whole world. And that’s why the Gospel is Good News.”

The service also included worship from Soul Survivor, contributions from HE Archbishop Angaelos, Coptic Orthodox Archbishop of London, Founder and leader of Soul Survivor, Mike Pilavachi and Baptist minister the Revd Hayley Young.

The Archbishop of York, John Sentamu, concluded his week of mission with a special Thy Kingdom Come celebration at York Minster on Pentecost Sunday. Archbishop Justin Welby also took part in an ecumenical Pentecost service at Westminster Central Hall along with Pastor Agu Irukwu (Jesus House), the Revd Gareth Powell and the Revd Loraine N Mellor (Methodist Church of Great Britain), after preaching at a Pentecost service at Canterbury Cathedral that morning.

More about Thy Kingdom Come 2018

The global prayer movement **Thy Kingdom Come is now in its third year** after starting as a simple call to prayer from Archbishop Justin Welby and Archbishop Dr John Sentamu. Last year, Christians in more than 85 countries took part. This year, a greater number of nations has been involved than ever before including new places such as North Fiji, Finland and Hawaii.

The movement has also strengthened its ecumenical reach working particularly closely with the Methodist Church of Great Britain and the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

This year it has also expanded its international offer by developing resources into 10 different languages, in response to the growing demand. New language resources introduced this year included Arabic and Urdu.

The campaign also saw many high-profile Christian voices lend their support to the movement including Cardinal Vincent Nichols (Catholic Church), Danielle Strickland (Salvation Army), Pete Greig (24-7 Prayer), Shane Claiborne, Archbishop Thabo Makgoba and Nicky Gumbel (Alpha / HTB).

Archbishop Justin Welby, said of this year's wave of prayer:

"What's really excited me about this year's Kingdom Come, is the sense of gathering momentum of people knowing that they have met with Jesus Christ and that they have this sense that they want to share what being a Christian means for them – with those whom they love and those whom they know."

"And I can't remember that being something that seems to be gripping so many people, from every part of the Church. We just see God at work in so many wonderful ways and so, I am hugely grateful for the grace of God that comes undeservedly and that moves amongst us. It really has been the most exciting period I can remember for many, many, years."

Emma Buchan, Thy Kingdom Come project director, said: "We have been profoundly moved by the stories and sign of God working in our midst during these 11 days. It's so remarkable to see how many churches and individuals from across the traditions & denominations, from around the world, have been affected by prayers during Thy Kingdom Come – something we truly believe is a church without walls."