

**Report into a meeting of the
Anglican Communion Standing Committee**

Saint Andrew's House and Lambeth Palace

27 to 29 September 2022



The Standing Committee of the global Anglican Communion of churches has held its first full in-person residential meeting since before the Covid pandemic. Six archbishops, two bishops, a priest and five lay people, gathered for the annual meeting of the Standing Committee. Most were present in person at the Anglican Communion Office in Notting Hill, and at Lambeth Palace in London, with three members joining the meeting online. All were buoyed by the recent successful Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops which had taken place in Canterbury in July and August.

During the pandemic, the Standing Committee held their meetings online – a move made possible through a change in its constitution approved by the full Anglican Consultative Council at its ACC-16 meeting in 2016 in Lusaka. They held a brief in-person in the fringes of this year's Lambeth Conference, but this was the first time that its full September residential meeting has been held since before the last ACC plenary – ACC-17 – in Hong Kong in 2019.

Commissioning of the Secretary General

It was also the first meeting of the standing committee since Bishop Anthony Poggio took over as Secretary General on 1 September. One of the first acts of the meeting was the commissioning of Bishop Anthony for his new role by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Revd Justin Welby, during a Eucharist service at the Anglican Communion Office chapel, which was streamed live on YouTube and Facebook. The service was attended by a number of invited guests, including the Ambassador of South Sudan to the United Kingdom, Her Excellency Agnes Oswaha.

The service took place just over a week after Archbishop Justin presided over the funeral of the late Queen Elizabeth II. In his sermon, he said that the hardest part of preparing for the service was preparing a sermon of just four and a half minutes. "As someone said at the time, the point about the late Queen was she was not high church or low church, but she was definitely short church!"

He continued: "As I puzzled about what to say – because everything that could possibly have been said about the Queen had been said – it became obvious: talk about God.

"Talk about God, because our role as Christians is to talk about God. God is the subject of the message because God reaches out to God's people. And we are to be the tellers of Good News, and of judgement, to say 'you cannot ignore God. You must not ignore God. You cannot turn away from God, because God holds out hope and purpose and life.'"

Archbishop Justin said that whenever anybody was commissioned in the Church, there was an implication of their commissioning as a “herald”. Speaking directly to Bishop Anthony Poggo, Archbishop Justin said: “as a herald, you have to hold together a number of different aspects of your ministry.”

One of Bishop Anthony’s tasks as Secretary General, he said, is to “have a real understanding, and a growing and deeper understanding, of the subject of the message you bring.

“You don't bring the message of the Communion first; you bring the message of the God of the Communion first. You don't bring the rules of the Communion first; you bring the love of God in Jesus Christ first.

“That is at the heart of our theology.”

Archbishop Justin said that the hardest part of Bishop Anthony’s task is “to discern what God is doing and be a herald and announce it around the world, in places of huge complexity, intense poverty, massive wealth, great misuse of power. . .

“You are to discern the situation of the Communion, discern the situation of the world, and know what it is that you have a message to bring; and therefore, to watch your own spiritual life in retreat, in prayer, in the study of the scriptures, is indispensable. But also, to listen to what people are saying [and] to understand why they are behaving as they do.”

Secretary General’s Report

The Anglican Communion’s Standing Committee are the trustees and directors of the Anglican Consultative Council, one of the Communion’s four Instruments of Communion, and the charity that employs most of the staff at the Anglican Communion Office, the global secretariat of the Communion.

In his report to the Standing Committee, the newly commissioned Secretary General spoke about a number of subjects, including the recent Lambeth Conference. “I am very pleased with how the Conference went, and have received a great deal of correspondence from Bishops from throughout the Communion expressing a similar sentiment”, he said. “Many are speaking of a rejuvenated Anglican Communion, with new links being formed (and existing links being strengthened) across the Communion.

“There seemed to me to be a collective sigh of relief when the Archbishop of Canterbury made his remarks to the bishops gathered during the discussion of the Call on Human Dignity, after which the whole atmosphere of the Conference appeared to relax.

“While there are some negative narratives continuing to emerge from some groups and commentators (many of whom were not in fact part of the Conference itself), this seems to me to be a minority. It remains important that we continue to highlight and amplify the positive reflections, while not being ignorant of those viewpoints which may be less favourable.”

He also addressed the ongoing work to transfer the Church of Ceylon from the metropolitan authority of the Archbishop of Canterbury into an autonomous province of the Anglican Communion, and the steps that need to take place before this could happen, including the creation of a third diocese. Standing Committee members were keen to encourage the leadership in the diocese to take this work forward.

The Anglican Alliance

The Anglican Alliance is a separate charity, closely linked to the Anglican Consultative Council. It works to coordinate and support the work of Anglican mission, relief and development agencies. Standing Committee members received a report from the Alliance's Executive Director, the Revd Rachel Carnegie. The report said that a key role for the Alliance, working with the Anglican Communion's Environment Network, was supporting the development of the Anglican Communion Forest Initiative, which was launched as a legacy of the Lambeth Conference.

"The Communion Forest is a practical and symbolic response to the environmental crisis, and an act of Christian hope", she said. "The Communion Forest will help equip the provinces in environmental protection, restoration and renewal. Local activities will be geographically, culturally and environmentally appropriate and therefore diverse."

Anglican Communion Office Departments

The Standing Committee received reports from the various departments based at Saint Andrew's House.

Jack Palmer-White, the Anglican Communion's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, was thanked by the Standing Committee for his work, ahead of his departure later this year to a new role.

In his report, he updated Standing Committee members about the newly created UN Reference Group, chaired by the Archbishop of Tanzania, Archbishop Maimbo Mndolwa, which helps to shape the work of the Anglican Communion's UN team.

The Director for Gender Justice, Mandy Marshall, highlighted various initiatives taking place around the Communion, including a training programme on "men, masculinity, and gender-based violence" by the Revd Dominic Misolo in the Anglican Church of Kenya's Bondo diocese.

The Director-Designate of Unity, Faith and Order at the Anglican Communion, Christopher Wells, was present to observe the meeting. He starts his new role on 1 November and was welcomed by the Standing Committee. His department's report was given by the Revd Neil Vigers, Programme Executive.

He updated the Standing Committee on the current status of formal Anglican Communion ecumenical dialogues with the Roman Catholic Church (ARCIC), the Orthodox Churches (ICAOTD), the Oriental Orthodox Churches (AOOIC), Pentecostal Churches (IPAC), Lutheran Churches (ALICUM) and the Methodist Churches (AMICC). He said that similar conversations could begin with the Assyrian Church of the East.

The Standing Committee also discussed the new approach for the reception of ecumenical texts in the Anglican Communion that had been agreed by the Anglican Consultative Council at their ACC-17 meeting in Hong Kong in 2019. This requires members of the Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Unity Faith and Order (IASCUFO) to be joined by members of a wider ACC Reference Group at a meeting prior to an ACC plenary meeting, for further reflection on ecumenical statements in light of provincial feedback and other considerations."

The Standing Committee began the process of identifying members of the Reference Group.

The Revd Canon Stephen Spencer gave a report on the work of the Theological Education in the Anglican Communion (TEAC) team. The work will shortly be taken over by a new Commission for Theological Education in the Anglican Communion. At the recent Lambeth Conference some 31 nominees for provincial reps for the new Commission had been identified. The CTEAC will continue to support and link theological colleges and seminaries around the Communion, and will continue to provide resources.

They will also seek to strengthen the work of training bishops in the Anglican Communion, working with organisations already working in this area – Canterbury Cathedral and the Council of African Provinces in Africa (CAPA); as well as with two other agencies looking to develop this area of work: the Anglican Centre in Rome and St George’s College in Jerusalem.

The Communications and IT Director, Gavin Drake, updated members about ongoing work to stabilise and simplify the IT provision at the Anglican Communion Office; and about the role of a new senior communications officer, currently being recruited, to develop work with external media and to develop an international network of communicators working in provinces, dioceses and mission agencies. New websites and greater use of languages other than English is a key part of the strategy now being delivered, he said.

The Director of Finance, Michelle Ormesher, presented her report to the Inter-Anglican Finance and Administration Committee (IAFAC), a sub-committee of the Standing Committee on Monday, before the main meeting of the Standing Committee. The most significant item was the agreement of a new 10 year lease on the Anglican Communion Office’s base – Saint Andrew’s House in Notting Hill, London. Saint Andrew’s House is the former home of the Community of Saint Andrew, a religious community of sisters in the Church of England. It is owned by a trust set up to support their ministry. The few remaining sisters now live elsewhere and are keen that the support the work of the Anglican Communion through the provision of office space.

Anglican Communion Commissions and Networks

Written reports were presented by official Anglican Communion Commissions and Networks, with questions being taken by link directors and by the new Commissions and Networks Support Officer, Rachel Parry.

The Safe Church Commission said that much of their work over the past year had been communicating and promoting the Anglican Communion’s Safe Church Guidelines and preparing for significant input at the Lambeth Conference. The Commission would now focus on developing a series of starter guides on safeguarding, a training curriculum, webinars and a series of videos.

The Science Commission, which launched at the Lambeth Conference, is working with the University of Oxford to explore the creation of a centre, located in the Global South, to be a base for the Commission’s work. More than half of Anglican Communion provinces have appointed a lead bishop for science. These form an episcopal reference group which will support and guide the work of the Commissioners.

The Commission on Evangelism and Discipleship combines the work of the Church Planting Network and the Season of Intentional Discipleship coordinating group. In the coming year, the Commission will continue to promote among churches a culture change with church planting and to target one million new church plants in 10 years. "We will continue to facilitate a movement of discipleship and disciple-making in all provinces, dioceses and parishes", they said.

The Anglican Communion Environment Network is focusing on supporting The Communion Forest, the Lambeth Conference legacy project; as well as continuing its ecumenical partnership with Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches on the Season of Creation. Last year a new regional grouping, the Anglican Environmental Network of Africa, was launched. The Network is continuing to support Anglican representation at UN COP climate change conferences.

The Lusophone Network celebrated the launch of the Anglican Communion's newest province, the Portuguese-speaking Igreja Anglicana de Moçambique e Angola (IAMA). The new province has been supported by the Network, which brings together the Anglican Communion Provinces and Churches in Brazil, Portugal, Mozambique and Angola. The Network Convenor, Bishop of Portugal Jorge Cabral, travelled to Mozambique to assist with the consecration of the province's new bishops.

The Francophone Network have completed the translation of the US-based Episcopal Church's Book of Common Prayer into French. They will work to translate other important Anglican documents. They are also working on a programme of theological formation in French.

The need for proper resources for translations and interpretation was discussed at various points in the Standing Committee's meeting; as members made clear their desire to ensure that non-English speakers were not disadvantaged.

The Youth Network has recently reconvened and re-launched in August. Much of their work is in its infancy, but they have already established mission committees to develop work around each of the Marks of Mission.

The call for a new Anglican Health and Community Network was made at the ACC-17 meeting in Hong Kong in 2019 – before the Covid pandemic. But it came into being in a world very much focused on health-related issues. They have held successful online international seminars on the role of faith leaders in tackling fake news about covid vaccines; and on "the other pandemic" – looking at mental health. During the Lambeth Conference, 70 bishops or spouses signed up to join the Network.

The Anglican Indigenous Network report highlighted the visit by the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby to Canada (and the subsequent visit by Pope Francis); and noted their apology for the past treatment of indigenous people by the Church – particularly young people in the context of residential schools, which numbers of unmarked – and in some cases unrecorded – graves of children are now being discovered. Their report says that the Anglican Communion should "move from a symbolic gesture to action that proactively advocates Indigenous voice, knowledge and wisdom."

The Anglican Peace and Justice Network will be working with others to strengthen the life of the network and to pursue the Lambeth Call on reconciliation, which asked the Network to work with the Archbishop of Canterbury's reconciliation team and the Anglican Communion Fund to develop peace-building response and support for individual peacebuilders in Provinces experiencing acute conflict.

The International Anglican Family Network was to expand Communion-wide participation. Representatives at the moment come from Zambia, Zimbabwe, Syria, Sri Lanka, Scotland, Philippines, Guyana and England. "We would wish to broaden this and hope for some youth representation", they said. The Network continues to publish its newsletter, with a greater focus on digital distribution. Since last year its newsletters have been published in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese.

The International Anglican Liturgical Consultation has been working primarily in three areas: reflections on liturgy during the Covid-19 pandemic, especially online eucharists; the liturgical formation of all the baptised – with a new chapter on bishops; and an Anglican Communion Calendar. The IALC will meet online in 2023 and in person in 2024, focusing on "the Eucharist in the life of the Anglican Communion".

A "high priority of concern" for the International Anglican Women's Network continues to be Domestic violence. "Additional stress due to Covid lockdowns, restrictions, deaths and illness has resulted in an increase in domestic violence worldwide," they said in their report. They will continue to use the international 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence (held annually from 25 November to 10 December) to continue the campaign to eliminate gender-based violence.

The Colleges and Universities of the Anglican Communion (CUAC) is the only official Anglican Communion network that is independently incorporated, and not governed by the Anglican Consultative Council. Its General Secretary, the Revd Canon Dr James Callaway, told the Standing Committee that he has "been continually struck by how CUAC's constellation of 160 Anglican colleges on five continents binds our global family together, while recognising the fragility of their Anglican identity amidst the market forces shaping higher education."

CUAC's planned triennial meeting in London in July 2021 fell victim to the pandemic but was transformed into a virtual annual meeting. Work is underway for the next triennial meeting, which will take place in Melbourne in July 2023.

The Standing Committee were very warm to the possibility of a new Anglican Schools Network; and invited CUAC to work with others to prepare a proposal which could be submitted to a subsequent meeting of the Standing Committee.

The Lambeth Conference

The Standing Committee received a report from Phil George, chief executive of the Lambeth Conference company, about the recent Lambeth Conference. Work is ongoing to create a programme for phase three of the Conference and in reviewing the texts of the "Lambeth Calls", which were discussed by the bishops during the meeting. The Archbishop of Canterbury would write to all bishops in the Communion with a further update before the end of the year.

Members spoke about how positive they felt about the Lambeth Conference and the renewal of relationships across the Anglican Communion.

Anglican Consultative Council's ACC-18 meeting in 2023

The Standing Committee discussed plans for the next plenary meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council – ACC-18 – which will take place in Accra, Ghana, in February 2023. The Anglican Communion's Marks of Mission will be the overriding theme for the meeting, providing a structure for the business agenda. A Standing Committee subgroup was agreed to work with a task group of ACO staff and the host province's organising teams.

The Standing Committee

All but one member of the Standing Committee took part in this week's meeting. The Standing Committee has three constituencies, with members appointed in different ways. The members are:

Ex-Officio

The President

The Most Revd Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury (Church of England)

Elected by the Anglican Consultative Council

Chair

The Most Revd Dr Paul Kwong (Hong Kong Seng Kung Hui)

Vice Chair

Canon Margaret Swinson (Church of England)

Members

Canon Alistair Dinnie,	(Scottish Episcopal Church)
The Revd Inamar de Souza	(Igreja Episcopal Anglicana do Brasil)
Mrs Joyce Haji Liundi	(Anglican Church of Tanzania)
Ms Basetsana Makena	(Anglican Church of Southern Africa)
Mr Jeroham Melendez	(Iglesia Anglicana de la Region Central de America)
The Most Revd Hosam Naoum	(Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East)
The Right Revd Joel Waweru	(Anglican Church of Kenya)

Elected by the Primates as regional representatives

Asia: *Vacant**

Europe: The Most Revd John McDowell
(Church of Ireland)

Americas: The Most Revd Linda Nicholls
(Anglican Church of Canada)

Africa: The Most Revd Jackson Ole Sapit*
(Anglican Church of Kenya)

Oceania: The Most Revd Philip Richardson
(Anglican Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia)

*Notes:

1. The Primates' regional representative for Asia became vacant when former Church of North India Moderator Prem Chand Singh stood down shortly before the meeting. The alternate for Asia, the Presiding Bishop of Jerusalem and the Middle East, the Most Revd Michael Lewis, could not attend at short notice. Arrangements will be made for Primates in the Asian region to elect a new regional representative soon.
2. The Primates' regional representative for Africa, Archbishop Jackson Ole Sapit, was unable to be present at this week's meeting and sent his apologies. His place was taken at this meeting by the Primates' Alternate regional representative for Africa, the Most Revd Albert Chama of the Church of the Province of Central Africa.

Six members of the Standing Committee, including the Chair and Vice Chair, will conclude their terms of service at ACC-18, when it meets in Ghana in 2023. Elections will be held during the plenary for their replacements. Those members are Archbishop Paul Kwong, Canon Maggie Swinson, Canon Alistair Dinnie, Ms Basetsana Makena, Jeroham Melendez and Bishop Joel Waweru.

The Standing Committee confirmed an additional on-line meeting in December ahead of an in-person meeting in Ghana ahead of the ACC-18 meeting in February. A full residential meeting will be held next September to enable the newly elected members to meet in person with existing members.

30 September 2022

This report has been prepared by the communications department of the Anglican Communion Office as a summary of business done.

It should not be read as minutes of the meeting or as an adopted report or document of the Standing Committee

© Anglican Consultative Council 2022

www.anglicancommunion.org