

Report into a meeting of the Anglican Communion Standing Committee

**Saint Andrew's House, London
7 to 9 November 2023**



Introduction

The Standing Committee of the global Anglican Communion of churches held its annual in-person residential meeting at the Anglican Communion Office in London.

The Vice Chair of the Anglican Communion, Archbishop Hosam Naoum, took part in the meeting online from Jerusalem, as he remained in his Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East as the region continued to endure war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza. Aisha Drong also took part online, having been unable to acquire a UK entrance visa. Gathered in person were five archbishops, one bishop, three priests and three lay people.

Prayer and Bible Study

Prayer and worship was a key part of the meeting. In addition to daily services in the Anglican Communion Office chapel, The Standing Committee began each session with prayer.

The Standing Committee members began their meeting with a Bible Study on Romans 12: 1-21, led by the Revd Dr Isabelle Hamley, the Church of England's Secretary for Theology and Ecumenical Relations and Theological Adviser to the English House of Bishops. The passage is about Christians using their spiritual gifts for the good of the Church, and emphasises love, humility, and overcoming evil with good.

The Committee's reflections on the passage included a briefing from Archbishop Hosam on the work of the al-Ahli Arab Hospital in response to the worsening humanitarian crisis in Gaza. The Standing Committee prayed for peace in the region.

Secretary General's Report

The Secretary General of the Anglican Communion delivered his second annual report to the Standing Committee, outlining his activity during his first 14 months in post.

He said that he had visited 12 of the Anglican Communion's 42 member churches: the Episcopal Church of South Sudan, the Anglican Church in Kenya, the Anglican Church of Tanzania, the Anglican Church of Mozambique & Angola, the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, the Church of the Province of West Africa, the Episcopal Church, the Anglican Church of Canada, the Church of the Province of the Indian Ocean, the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East, the Church of the Province of South East Asia, and the Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui.

"Some of my recent visits as Secretary General have included attending Provincial Synods or House of Bishops meetings in various provinces across the Communion, as well as visits and meetings with our ecumenical partners, including an official visit to the Vatican. These visits also give the opportunity to ensure that all voices around the Communion are heard, particularly those in smaller provinces."

His travel plans for 2024 were currently being developed to ensure that his visits cover a diverse range of provinces, he said.

After summarising the work of the various departments at the Anglican Communion Office, he touched on the ACC's financial position, and explained that a staff-based fundraising team had been established to focus on a collective strategic approach from the ACO.

"With thanks to Compass Rose Society, we have established an Endowment Fund that is in its early stages", he said. "The aim is to raise 10 million USD for this Endowment fund, and there would be an annual drawdown of up to five per cent of the value. As the funds for this grow, it would make a great difference to the ACO and the wider Communion as a whole, as it would provide an ongoing source of financial support to the ACO in the form of a solid income."

ACC-18

The Revd Canon Dr Stephen Spencer presented the official report of the 18th Plenary Meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC-18) which was held in February this year in Accra, Ghana. The Standing Committee welcomed the work on the report, *The Five Marks of Mission Today and Tomorrow*, and approved it for publication and distribution.

Youth representation at ACC meetings

The Standing Committee discussed a paper prepared by the Anglican Communion Youth Network addressing ACC-18 resolution [5\(f\): Youth Engagement in the Life of the Church](#). The ACYN had suggested changes to the way youth representatives to the ACC were selected. The Standing Committee agreed to explore additional criteria and guidance for the selection of ACC Youth members.

IASCUFO

The Chair of the Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Unity, Faith and Order (IASCUFO), Bishop Graham Tomlin, joined the meeting alongside Dr Christopher Wells, Director of Unity, Faith and Order, to brief Standing Committee members on the work of the Task Group set up by ACC-18 to "explore theological questions regarding structure and decision-making to help address our differences in the Anglican Communion".

The Task Group has held a number of online meetings as well as an in-person discussion in Kenya. Work is ongoing as they seek to explore how the structures of the Anglican Communion can ensure full equality, mutuality and interdependence of its members despite ongoing differences.

Standing Committee members held a frank yet friendly discussion, expressing their understanding of Anglican Identity in the context of their particular Member Churches. They also discussed the current state of the Anglican Communion and its Instruments of Communion / Unity. The discussions emphasised the importance of relationship prior to structures; the esteem with which many hold the office of the Archbishop of Canterbury; and the attractiveness of loosening the expectation of full communion, the better to accommodate difference, disagreement, and debate.

The work of IASCUFO's task group continues and their work will next be discussed at the Primates' Meeting next year. The Chair described their work as "a difficult task being carried out by a great group of people." As Bishop Graham left the meeting he received applause from Standing Committee members.

Primates' Meeting

The Secretary General briefed Standing Committee members on plans for next year's Primates' Meeting, which is being hosted by the Anglican Centre in Rome. The meeting will have an emphasis on pilgrimage and discussions will focus on Anglican Identity. The Chair explained that the agenda is not the business of Standing Committee, but the logistical arrangements are, as part of the responsibility of the ACC is to support meetings of the Instruments of Communion.

Working Group on the Strengthening of Standing Committee

Bishop Philip Richardson, the former Primate of the Anglican Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia, joined the meeting online to brief members about the work of the Working Group on the Strengthening of Standing Committee. The working group was established after the 2020 Primates' Meeting.

He said that eight members of the Current Standing Committee are in episcopal orders, four are laity and three are in non-episcopal ordained orders. This was in contrast to the Anglican Consultative Council which has a significantly higher proportion of lay members. "This is clearly not what is intended by synodality and there is therefore a strong argument for strengthening the Standing Committee by ensuring a better balance of voices from the core elected membership and hearing from the Primates, including the Archbishop of Canterbury, in a different way", he said.

Standing Committee discussed the report's five recommendations and particularly the need to ensure that the voice of laity is preserved. The Standing Committee noted that the work of this group was related to ongoing work of the IASCUFO working group.

The Standing Committee agreed that the work of Bishop Philip's group was now at an end. The Standing Committee would take forward some of the recommendations for constitutional changes to the ACC, and these would require further work before being presented at a future ACC plenary meeting for approval. Other recommendations would be passed to the IASCUFO working group for them to consider as part of their ongoing work.

Church of England Crown Nominations Commission

Standing Committee discussed the decision of the Church of England General Synod to increase the number of Anglican Communion representatives on the body that will elect the next Archbishop of Canterbury. Previously, this was one representative, usually a Primate. Under the new rules, the Standing Committee will nominate five people, one from each of the five regions of the Communion. There should be one primate, one priest or deacon and one communicant lay person. At least two should be male and two should be female; and a majority should be people whose ethnicity is commonly referred to as "global majority heritage".

The Standing Committee discussed how they would choose the panel of five and agreed that current and immediately past members of the Anglican Consultative Council should be the “pool” from which the five were selected and agreed that there should be a youth representative and an indigenous person.

The Standing Committee agreed to request the primates from each region to nominate a slate of people. A group from the Standing Committee would then apply the criteria to select the five representatives.

Anglican Communion Fund

Safiya Nyirongo, the Chief Executive of the Archbishop of Canterbury’s Anglican Communion Fund (ACF), joined the meeting online to brief Standing Committee members about the work of the ACF and the Personal Emergencies Fund, which recently transferred from the ACC to the ACF.

The ACF is an independent charity, based at Lambeth Palace, which raises and distributes funds to the Churches of the Anglican Communion on behalf of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Safiya explained that the ACF were seeking to expand their trustees by including three people nominated by the ACC, including at least one from Standing Committee; and two Primates nominated by the Primates’ Standing Committee.

The Standing Committee agreed to further discuss and identify potential nominees, working closely with Primates, to achieve global regional balance in the nominees.

ACO Strategic Framework

The Revd Canon Dr Stephen Spencer updated Standing Committee on the process being undertaken to adopt a new Strategic Framework for the Anglican Communion Office. The existing Framework, he said, explained the car and how the car works – it sets out the work of the ACO departments; the new Framework will be more accessible, being less concerned with how the car works and more descriptive about the journey being taken.

Standing Committee approved the work in progress. A revised Strategic Framework will be presented to a future meeting of the ACC.

Anglican Communion Office matters

The Standing Committee approved a new training policy for ACO staff, which was presented by Grace Barlow, the Director for Administration and Logistics.

Grace Barlow also presented the updated Anglican Consultative Council Risk Register, which the Standing Committee considered as part of their annual review of the Register.

Mandy Marshall and Gavin Drake, the two ACO-staff Safeguarding Officers, presented a report on the Safeguarding work over the past year, including the results of an independent review of the work of the ACO safeguarding practices. The Standing Committee re-adopted the ACO Safeguarding Policy and the Safeguarding Procedures, noting that work on revised documents would be presented to them in 2024.

Anglican Communion Office – Departmental Reports

Martha Jarvis presented her first report to Standing Committee as the Anglican Communion's Permanent Representative to the United Nations. She spoke of the different aspect of her work, including distinct prophetic advocacy, developing trusted partnerships between UN organisations and Anglican churches, communicating to the Communion, and convening dialogue between UN officials and Ambassadors and senior Anglican leaders. The advocacy work includes supporting Anglican delegations to significant UN meetings, including the COP climate change summit, the Commission on the Status of Women, and work on Indigenous rights.

Bishop Jo Bailey Wells, the first Bishop for Episcopal Ministry in the Anglican Communion (EMAC), briefed Standing Committee on the work of the new department, which exists to advancing episcopal ministry and develop the Lambeth Calls. They do this through fostering bishops in ongoing conversation and fellowship cross-provincially with small group fellowship and Bible study and offering programmes for leadership development; and by promoting each Lambeth Call with a quarterly focus on each Call, to encourage wide participation beyond bishops. During the Standing Committee meeting, EMAC released details of the early 2024 focus on Anglican Identity.

Mandy Marshall, Director for Gender Justice, challenged the Standing Committee by asking "where are the women?" In particular, she asked what progress had been made in the 18 years since 2005 when the Anglican Consultative Council, at its ACC-13 meeting in Nottingham, called for equal representation of women in decision making at all levels in the Communion. "Where is the voice of women being lost?" she asked. Mandy also spoke about the importance of tackling gender-based violence, reminding Standing Committee members that one in three women across the world will experience physical and sexual violence. That vulnerability increases for poorer women, women in rural areas and women with disabilities.

Dr Christopher Wells, Director for Unity, Faith and Order, updated the Standing Committee on ecumenical dialogues involving the Anglican Communion, including recent meetings of the Anglican–Oriental Orthodox Commission (AOOIC) in Jordan and the International Commission for the Anglican–Orthodox Theological Dialogue (ICAOTD) which was meeting in Jerusalem when Israel was attacked by Hamas. "When Christians come together to discuss our differences, we begin with the Bible", he said. "And when you open the Bible together, people relax." Explaining the importance of ecumenical dialogue, he quoted Ephesians 4: 4-6: "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all." And then asked: "is there one body?" He said that the work of building unity begins with God's own gift, to which the call to communion responds.

Gavin Drake, Director of Communications, gave his last update to Standing Committee before stepping down later this month. He explained how the ACO had been more pro-active in its relationship with external media outlets to raise the profile of the Communion and its Secretary General. This had included providing information in advance, during and following visits undertaken by the Secretary General to Member Churches across the Communion; as well as supporting and amplifying the voice of some primates facing various crises in their regions. Internal communication to bishops, ACC members, provincial secretaries and others across the Communion had also been improved with the re-introduction of regular publication of the Anglican Communion Bulletin, and the new quarterly Chairs' Update.

Grace Barlow, Director of Administration and Logistics, summarised her department's work in delivering the successful Anglican Consultative Council meeting (ACC-18) in Accra, Ghana in February 2023; and she updated them on the work now underway to deliver the next Primates' Meeting, from 28 April to the 3 May 2024, which will be hosted by the Anglican Centre in Rome. The ACO database of current bishops in the Anglican Communion is being updated into a new cloud based system and communication with members churches is being undertaken to ensure that the data remains accurate.

The Interim Director of Finance, Sean Willans, said that it had been a busy but extremely productive year for Finance, Facilities, and IT. We continue to receive much needed provincial contributions but have seen a decline in contributions over the past three years possibly due to Covid. However, it is pleasing to see a slight improvement in 2023. He explained that we encourage Member Churches to continue to make their annual contributions as we rely on these to be able to provide the support to the Communion as a whole.

All the directors used their presentations to Standing Committee to praise and recognise the hard work and dedication of the staff teams at the Anglican Communion Office in delivering their departmental objectives.

Anglican Alliance

The Anglican Alliance is a separate charitable company. It was established following the 2008 Lambeth Conference and brings together those in the Anglican family of churches and agencies to work for a world free of poverty, inequality and injustice, to raise the voices of the vulnerable, to reconcile those in conflict, and to safeguard the earth. The Anglican Communion Standing Committee are the "members" of the Anglican Alliance charitable company, under English law. In order to fulfil their duties as members of the company, the Standing Committee moved to a formal business meeting of the Anglican Alliance.

The Standing Committee received the annual report and accounts of the Anglican Alliance, which had already been approved by the Anglican Alliance trustees. They also approved the appointment of two additional trustees: Reginald Robertson, from Ghana in the Church of the Province of West Africa; and Michael MacKenzie, from the Anglican Church of Canada. They also welcomed Canon Sammy Wainaina, who is an ex-officio trustee following his appointment as the Archbishop of Canterbury's Adviser on Anglican Communion Affairs.

Rachel gave a programme update on the work of the Anglican Alliance, and lifted up the work of al-Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza as "a shining example of the Beacon of Hope that Anglican ministries seek to be across the world."

The work of the Anglican Alliance is focused on five priority areas: thriving communities, safeguarding creation, tackling inequalities, resilience and disaster response, and people on the move. The Anglican Alliance is the body, along with the Anglican Communion Environmental Network, that is incubating the "Communion Forest" initiative, launched at the 2022 Lambeth Conference.

Rachel gave examples of how the Communion Forest is growing in various places, including in Kenya, where Archbishop Jackson Ole Sapit is giving leadership in a major commitment to reforestation, with the Church already growing four million trees; the Philippines, where Church leaders are planting mangroves in an initiative to restore the coastal ecosystem; and a growing number of Anglican Communion Member Churches who now provide saplings or certificates of trees planted to mark Confirmations.

ACC-19

The Archbishop of Armagh, the Most Revd John McDowell, updated the Standing Committee on preliminary plans for the 19th plenary meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC-19) which will be hosted by the Church of Ireland in 2026. It is likely to be held in Northern Ireland at some point between June and September.

Anglican Communion Commissions

The Standing Committee received reports from the official Anglican Communion Commissions. Amongst the highlights:

The **Anglican Communion Safe Church Commission** has been developing text-based and audio-visual resources to assist member Churches to implement the international safeguarding Guidelines in a way that is relevant to their own province.

The new **Anglican Communion Science Commission** has developed a hub at Saint Paul's University in Limuru, Kenya, led by Professor Joseph Galgalo.

The **Anglican Inter-Faith Commission** has recently renewed its membership and is preparing for the Anglican Communion focus on the Lambeth Call on Inter-Faith in 2025.

The **Commission on Evangelism and Discipleship** is continuing to develop resources for the Plant Anglican website, and has prepared training courses on church planting and discipleship which are being taught in seminaries in several provinces.

The new **Commission on Theological Education in the Anglican Communion** has been responding to requests for particular work in Lambeth Calls and resolutions from ACC-18; and has developed working groups to develop resources in the area of reconciliation, intentional discipleship, science and faith, theology of safeguarding, and from oppression to freedom.

Anglican Communion Networks

The Standing Committee also received reports from the official Anglican Communion Networks. Amongst the highlights:

The **Anglican Communion Environmental Network** highlighted work carried out from a number of provinces, including campaigns to stop logging in the Solomon Islands; the Church of England's divestment from fossil fuels; the Anglican Church of Kenya's partnership with Mwangaza Light to roll out low energy stoves; and the installation of a solar farm by the Diocese of Central Zimbabwe.

The **Anglican Communion Lusophone Network** celebrated the creation of Igreja Anglicana de Mocambique e Angola and was reviewing the constitution of the network's co-ordinating group to include four bishops: one each from Angola, Mozambique, Portugal and Brazil.

The **Anglican Communion Youth Network** is collaborating with the Anglican Alliance and mission agency USPG on shared objectives; the ACYN executive acts as a reference panel for the Anglican

Alliance. The ACYN launched a #RenewCreation campaign to encourage young Anglicans to Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose, and Recycle as a personal commitment to creation care; has tested contextual Bible studies in the Americas region; and gathered Anglican youth for online prayers in the early days of the Sudan war.

The **Anglican Health and Community Network** reported "a great deal of progress" over the past year; including in long term infrastructure and partnerships; communications and network expansion; and themed context-specific pilot projects for equipping Anglicans in health and wider ministry. It has consolidated its roles in the WHO Faith Network and the Council of Churches (WCC) Health Commission. It has produced resources on mental health and child health.

The **Anglican Indigenous Network** reported the devastating effects of fires on the Hawaiian island of Maui. These happened in Kula, a forest reserve, a brush area and the historical town of Lahaina. "Together these fires burned over 3,400 acres, claiming more than 2,000 structures, most were residential. Additionally, the fire in Lahaina claimed 115 souls and a little less than 400 people are still unaccounted for." The network's Kalani Holokai said in the network's report: "there is so much need on our small island, our recovery will be long and difficult; we are grateful for all the help we've been given, for the aloha that has been shown from people from all over the world. We will still need your prayers and your aloha."

The **Anglican Peace and Justice Network** is "at a time of transition as new leadership, structure, working patterns and communications are established" following the stepping down of former convenor, the Revd Phil Groves. In its new strategy, the network will share the stories and best practice of Anglicans working for justice and peace.

The **International Anglican Family Network** is reviewing its communications activity and is asking every Primate to appoint a Provincial Families Champion who would provide and source material for IAFN communications and foster regional networking.

The **International Anglican Liturgical Consultation** held an online gathering in May to begin to consider *Renewing the Anglican Eucharist*, which will be theme of a Consultation in February 2024, to be held in Seoul.

The **International Anglican Women's Network** is encouraging the use of studies such as the *God's Justice Theology and Gender Based Violence* resource. "There continues to be an interest in reflecting on Scripture through the lens of gender justice and this has been encouraged around the network", they said. "This is particularly important as many experience abusive and violent behaviour and words that are justified by interpretations of Scripture that are harmful."

Le Réseau Francophone de la Communion Anglicane (the **Anglican Communion Francophone Network**) is considering a possible annual meeting for clergy and spouses. For its next full meeting, they hope to gather in Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of Congo. "Our members have very few opportunities to meet in person, which is crucial for support and collaboration". They are considering opening three offices serving Canada and Haiti, Central Africa, and the Indian Ocean. "This could help the francophones to work better together in a more effective network."

The **Colleges & Universities of the Anglican Communion** held its 11th International Triennial Conference in Melbourne, Australia in July. Under the theme "*Discerning Truth, Deepening Learning and Enhancing Wellbeing*", the conference was the first for CUAC since Covid forced the cancelation of the planned 2020 London Triennial. Eighty delegates from member institutions on five continents convened for a week of study, reflection and fellowship, with keynote speakers from England, Kenya and Australia.

The **Anglican Communion Legal Advisors' Network** is drafting a vision paper for the re-formation of this network within the life of the Communion. They envisage "a much wider membership, in which legal advisors across the Communion can find mutual support and fellowship."

The new **Anglican Communion School's Network** continues to develop, with representatives joining from Anglican Churches in Alexandria, Australia, Bangladesh, Brazil, Burundi, Canada, Costa Rica, England, , Hong Kong, Ireland, Mexico, Myanmar, Southern Africa, The Episcopal Church and West Africa and the West Indies. The first meeting of the network was in October, with a focus on definitions of an Anglican identity in schools.

The interim **Spouses Network** started as an outworking of the spirit of the Lambeth conference. After being confirmed at the ACC-18 meeting in February, a steering group is seeking to find a way to make effective and fruitful links between those across the Communion who are the spouses of bishops.

Finally, Standing Committee was informed that a group of Spanish-speaking Anglicans had begun discussing a possible **Anglican Communion Hispanic Network**. Discussions are ongoing and proposals for a new network would come to a future meeting of the Standing Committee. The news was welcomed by Standing Committee and mention was made of existing informal groups for Chinese- Tamil- and Arabic-speaking Anglicans.

The Standing Committee meeting concluded in prayer and was followed by a Eucharist in the Chapel of Saint Andrew's House.

9 November 2023

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

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The Standing Committee

The Standing Committee has three constituencies, with members appointed in different ways. The members are:

Ex-Officio:

The President:

The Most Revd Justin Welby

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Church of England)

Elected by the Anglican Consultative Council:

Chair:

Canon Margaret Swinson

Church of England

Vice Chair:

Archbishop Hosam Naoum

Episcopal Church of Jerusalem and the Middle East

Members:

The Right Revd William Mugenyi Bakemuka

Anglican Church of Congo

Mrs Joyce Haji Liundi

Anglican Church of Tanzania

The Revd Tsz Leung Ip

Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui

The Revd Inamar de Souza

Igreja Episcopal Anglicana do Brasil

The Revd Wendy Scott

Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia

Canon Andrew Khoo

Anglican Church of the Province of South East Asia

Ms Aishi Sama Drong

Church of Bangladesh

Elected by the Primates as regional representatives:

Asia: The Most Revd Azad Marshall Church of Pakistan

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: Vacant*

***Notes:**

1. The Primates' regional representative for the Americas, Archbishop Linda Nicholls, and the Alternate, Archbishop Tito Zavala, both gave apologies for this meeting. Archbishop Howard Gregory, Primate of the Church of the Province of the West Indies, attended in their place.
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.
3. The Primates' regional representative for Oceania became vacant when Bishop Philip Richardson stood down as Primate of the Anglican Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia. The Primates' Alternate regional representative, Archbishop Leonard Dawea, was unable to attend as the meeting coincided with a meeting of the Melanesian House of Bishops.