

WEEKLY SERMON

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A time for healing and trust

As a nation entering a new year, we continue to face a time of considerable uncertainty.

The path to a new relationship with our friends in Europe and to retaining relationships within the United Kingdom is far from clear.

But, following the recent General Election, it's a measure more certain than it has been for the last three years.

Something of the stalemate at Westminster has been broken and whether we approve of a Conservative majority or not, at least we have been spared a hung parliament and the difficulty of decision-making that that creates.

We undertake to support all who have been elected as Members of Parliament, as they take up office and seek to serve this country and the constituents who have elected them.

And we pray that a new trust in our politics and politicians will grow, that promises made in a manifesto will be kept and delivered and make the difference that is so necessary in parts of our national life.

There is much that needs mending and healing after the bruising debates of recent weeks; especially in those communities where work is hard to find, where children are being brought up in poverty, where there is a greater sense of despair than hope, where the gap between rich and poor is growing unacceptably and where addiction to drugs and alcohol has a destructive impact on family and community life.

We pray that a government with a majority will not be shy or hampered in delivering the kind of investment needed to bring change to those areas of our national life that are unworthy of a country with a strong Christian heritage.

How good it would be if those aspects of the NHS, social care, the police, the prison and probation services and transport networks that currently are under strain and are not able to meet expectations would be transformed.

And underpinning all that makes for a good society, we hold to the conviction that faith in and accountability to the God who made this beautiful world is a key foundation.

We continue to pray that faith in God will have an honoured place in our land and be a respected position; that the tide of secularism will turn and the freedom to believe, think and speak truth and conviction will be preserved.

HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES

In the name of Jesus Christ, I wish all the people of Lancashire a peaceful and fulfilling New Year.

Rt Rev Julian Henderson
Bishop of Blackburn