



## ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

Diocese of Durham Children's Council  
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*Dear Council, sisters and brothers in Jesus,*

I was delighted to receive your letters when Sharon gave them to me at the Commissioning Service for the Archbishops College of Evangelists. I am sorry it has taken me so long to respond to you- your questions were tough but I hope that I have gone at least some way to answering them.

Asaph, what a great question about the money pledged to address the Church of England's involvement in slavery, the plan is that lots of different organisations should get help over many years into the future.

Eja, thank you for asking about my pointy hat, it is called a mitre. And it does look rather strange doesn't it? But the reason I wear it is because of what it symbolises – it is in the shape of a flame. It links me back to the story of Pentecost Sunday in Jerusalem when God poured his Holy Spirit out on his followers and the church was born. It reminds me that even though I don't feel up to this role that God has called me to, he gives me everything I need through the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God's presence with us – all of us – certainly not just bishops. But every Christian. So every day we all must pray, 'Come Holy Spirit' – it is by God's Spirit that we have all we need.

William, thank you for your suggestions about how to incorporate more people into church- I think you are right. I think it's most likely to get new people into church by creating connections with them outside of church. If we just wait for people to come into our buildings we will be waiting a long time! Schools are a wonderful place for the first connections to be made – and this is happening in thousands of schools, both primary and secondary, up and down the country.

Megan, your mum sounds like a superstar! This is a wonderful story. And I would love to see the same thing happening in every church. One of our priorities as a church is to become younger. Every church can do this. And must do it. This is lovely to hear.

Zach, thank you for your thoughts on Baptism. It wouldn't just be good, it is essential. Baptism is totally free. Always has been. Always should be. Because God's grace and mercy might be priceless, but they are free! And to be honest, I hope every church would have dozens of baptisms a year....

Henry, I get asked a lot what I do as Archbishop – and it is quite hard to answer, because being Archbishop is about 12 different jobs – leading the Church of England, leading the worldwide Anglican communion, being bishop of Canterbury diocese, sitting in the House of Lords, speaking up for the disadvantaged.... But the particular priorities I have as Archbishop are prayer, reconciliation and telling people about Jesus.

Savannah, thank you for taking the time to let me know some of the things you have done as part of Children's council in the hope other children could also have that privilege. I am so glad to know what you have done – I love Holy Island- and would love to know more of what you do. It is so special that you are involved.

Alex, I have started preparing for the Coronation. In fact it is so much at the front of my thoughts that I am even dreaming about it. The other night I dreamt I lost the crown – which is silly because I don't even have it. In fact I think I only touch it for a minute!!!

Thanks Will for your question about prayer. I, like you, love the Lord's Prayer. At Lambeth Palace we have people from all around the world and so when we pray the Lord's Prayer everyone is invited people to say it in their first language. It's really moving hearing everyone talking to God in their own language. For fun I like to read books on history, go for a walk with the family and the dog, and keep my phone switched off!!

Sam, it is wonderful to know that you are involved in the Childrens Council when you are 8

Thanks for asking why I said yes to being Archbishop, Laura. I didn't say yes because I thought I would be good at it, or because I thought it would be easy, or because it was what I had always wanted to be. I said yes because Caroline, my wife, and I, felt it was what God wanted us to do.

Ben, I am so pleased to hear you are getting involved in how your local church runs. There are always things that we can do to serve, I reckon they will be so grateful for you being involved. Working on climate change is something we all should be involved in – but in my experience we often need you children and young people to lead the way.

Max thank you for asking why they are the only Children's Council – I am afraid I don't know why there is only one Children's Council. But what I do know is we need to hear the voices and receive the contributions of children across the church. For this I am sure you are right – our services need to be much more engaging and interesting. There's no excuse that they aren't – but I'm glad to hear you say it.

Thanks Beth. Let's start with your first comment – 'every child should be heard'. Yes, yes, yes. Now it might be that a church can afford a children's worker or youth worker – but it might be they can't. Whichever way, that shouldn't stop the whole church being involved in loving, welcoming and encouraging children and young people. This is part of being the church of Jesus. We are told he always welcomed children and young people.

Thank you so much for the time you have taken to ask me your questions. But more importantly thank you for all you do to love and serve Jesus. It is true that God has given us such gifts in each other, but I particularly learn and receive so much through children who know and follow Jesus. Please keep growing in your faith, keep praying and learning, keep speaking up and asking questions, and as we do all we can, we believe God will do what only he can do, and renew his church for the sake of the world.

*with love in Christ, who gives  
us peace and never lets us down  
Inch.*

The Most Reverend and Right Honourable Justin Welby  
Archbishop of Canterbury

*P.S. When my wife first saw me in a  
pointy hat (Mitre) she laughed so much her  
tummy hurt. She said I looked like a  
self-propelled tulip!*