

Transcript of the homily delivered by Primate Shane Parker at the New Year's Day Eucharist at Christ Church Cathedral in Ottawa on January 1, 2026.

I am glad to be here in this cathedral in the nation's capital, upholding a very long tradition where the Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada addresses the church (and the nation, if it's listening) from this pulpit. I'm especially glad to be here because the Cathedral Girls' Choir is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. (One of the best things I ever did was to get behind the idea of this choir.) Our Cathedral in the nation's capital has one of the strongest youth ministries in the Anglican Church of Canada, with two choirs of 40 or more kids gathering weekly to sing scripture and to grow into their stature as children of God.

The Primate travels a lot. I have been literally coast to coast since I was sent from here six months ago. And, by telephone or video conferencing, I've been from coast to coast to coast on some days—beginning in Newfoundland, ending in British Columbia, sometimes by way of the North. Next week I will be in Jerusalem, in February I'll be in Mishamikoweesh, and in March I'll be in the UK to attend the installation of Sarah Mullally as the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Wherever the Primate goes, the Primate brings along the Anglican Church of Canada. Today, I bring the Anglican Church of Canada to this cathedral's pulpit, but today I also address the Anglican Church of Canada as a whole.

My first official primatial visit was to the gathering of Sacred Circle in Calgary last August. Thirty-one years ago, leaders of the Indigenous Anglican Church in Canada received a very clear vision which they rendered into a document called The Covenant—a gift from God to the Indigenous Church. Four years ago, there was consensus around a document called Our Way of Life. The Covenant and Our Way of Life describe the fundamentals of the Indigenous Anglican Church in Canada. These two documents, and all they mean, represent the reclaiming of a legacy that is at once hundreds and thousands of years old: a reclaiming of the unique cultural expression of Anglicanism that is found in Indigenous communities across this country. From being marginalized in Canada (and by the Anglican Church of Canada), from existing alongside, quietly and unnoticed, the Indigenous Anglican Church is now resurging. It is celebrating and it is being celebrated. Our Indigenous Anglican Church is growing confident as a body with ancient roots and traditions on this land. This is very good.

In what can be described as kind of a cosmic irony, the Anglican Church of Canada, as distinct from the Indigenous Anglican Church that dwells within it, has over the last century gone from being in a central place of privilege in Canada to being on the margins. Once

influential, consequential and noticed, the Anglican Church of Canada now lives quietly alongside mainstream Canadian culture: not affirmed, not celebrated, not even known.

So, what does it mean for us to lift up the name of Jesus from our place in the margins of Canadian society? What are we to make of the words from the ancient Christian hymn in Philippians we heard read today: “At the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord...”? That could sound like a call to Christian nationalism—which our church has recently and firmly denounced as a distortion of the Gospel of Jesus and a threat to Canadian democracy. It sounds a lot like the place, the mindset, that the Anglican Church had when it first came to this land: imperial, somewhat arrogant, privileged and profoundly damaging to the spiritual traditions of First Peoples.

But our faith, as Indigenous and non-Indigenous Anglicans, is centred on the name of Jesus. For us, the people, clergy and bishops of the Anglican Church of Canada—for the parishes, congregations, ministries, missions and dioceses of the Anglican Church of Canada—lifting up the name of Jesus means three things: communion with each other; communion with all humanity; and communion with the Creator of creation.

Lifting up the name of Jesus means building up our parishes and congregations to be well-run places of belonging, friendship and lifelong relationships. To be intergenerational, diverse communities of worship, pastoral care and service. To be communities that include all who seek relief from isolation and meaninglessness and loneliness—places of genuine concern and meaning. For us, the name of Jesus means deep communion with one another as followers of Jesus.

For us, the people, clergy and bishops of the Anglican Church of Canada, lifting up the name of Jesus also means selfless, courageous and steadfast acts of compassion, justice, advocacy, mercy and peacemaking. It means building up our ministries and missions that serve the most vulnerable people, the oppressed, the victimized, wherever they are in this world. Critically, it means standing alongside every group or government or person of goodwill who also seeks to bring compassion, justice, mercy and peace to others. For us, the name of Jesus means deep communion with all human beings and with the earth itself.

For us, the people, clergy and bishops of the Anglican Church of Canada, lifting up the name of Jesus means believing that the future is fundamentally trustworthy. It means being a people of hope. Christ was born. Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again. We are a people who wait and live and serve in hope because we believe Christ Jesus is before, within and after all time, all space, all things in heaven and earth. We believe the

future is trustworthy because God, the Creator of creation, is creating toward Christ Jesus. This is our fundamental hope: all shall be well. What we see happening, what we think is happening, what the newsfeeds say is happening, is not all there is: God is not finished yet. There is more Christ Jesus to come. For us, the name of Jesus means deep communion with the one who is creating all things.

And so, as we, the people, clergy and bishops of the Anglican Church of Canada, mark the beginning of a new calendar year, be not afraid. Do not be immobilized. Do not fret about our place on the margins of Canadian society.

Be fully alive. Use your good gifts and resources, fully and wisely: build up, adjust, shape, your parishes and congregations to be meaningful places of deep communion with one another.

Courageously and selflessly join with other people of goodwill to serve those who live precariously: be in deep communion with all humanity.

And lay claim to the hope that dwells within us and around us at all times: be in deep communion with the Creator of creation, who gave us the good name of Jesus.

Amen