

The Church of England's House of Bishops, which met in London this week, has issued the following statement on the tone of debate over Brexit:

In the light of this week's turbulent events, the bishops of the Church of England pray for national unity – and courage, integrity and clarity for our politicians.

We call on the country to consider the nature of our public conversation. It is time to bring grace and generosity back to our national life.

At the heart of the Christian message is Jesus' command to love our neighbour. This includes those with whom we agree and disagree – at home, in Europe, and further afield. We urge everyone – our political leaders and all of us – to bring magnanimity, respect and reconciliation to our national debate.

There is now an urgent need for the United Kingdom to recover a shared vision and identity to help us find a way through the immediate challenges.

Regardless of what happens next with Brexit, the Church of England, alongside many other churches and other agencies striving for the common good, will be at the heart of local communities; educating one million children, providing 33,000 social action projects and running 16,000 churches across the country. Above all else, we will continue to support the most vulnerable and share Christ's love with all.

This is the Advent season. As we reflect and await Christmas in joyful anticipation, we have faith in Christ to show us all the way of hope.

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**Source URL:** <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/press-releases/bishops-call-change-tone-brexite-debate>