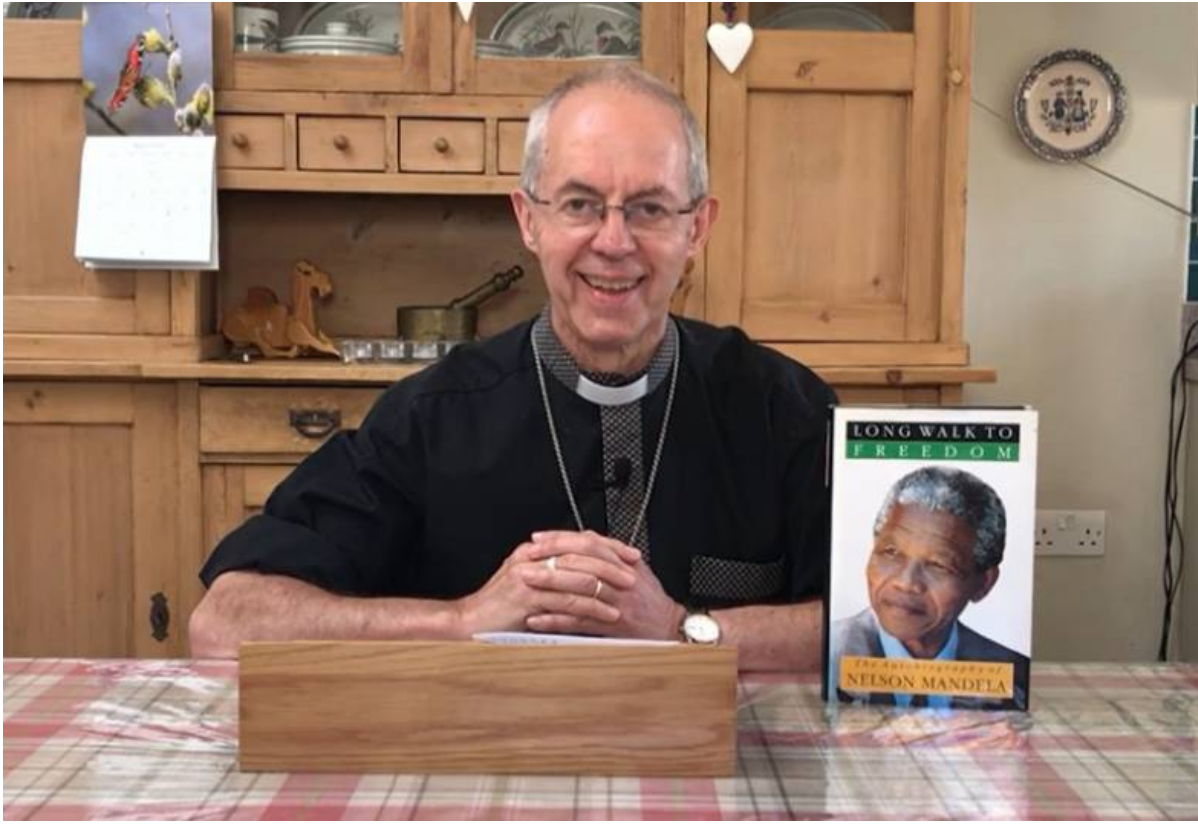


The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, will deliver a message of hope to school pupils across the country in the first assembly at Oak National Academy, it was announced today.



The Archbishop's address will be streamed through TES from 10am on Thursday 30th April 2020. It will then remain available on the Oak National Academy website.

In addition to the assemblies, the Church of England is also partnering with Oak National Academy to provide separate weekly collective worship sessions led by schools, which will be accessible to those of all faiths and none. This will be part of the Church of England's forthcoming #FaithAtHome programme, which launches later in the week.

As well as the Archbishop, the first assembly will feature the Secretary of State for Education, Rt. Hon. Gavin Williamson MP.

Thursday's event is expected to be the biggest school assembly ever held in the UK.

Since its launch last week the online classroom has seen over two million lessons accessed.

In his pre-recorded address, the Archbishop will say:

It's wonderful that this Academy is growing and exists in these dark times, it's a place of light and of commitment to the future.

I suspect this year 2020 will stick in the mind for many reasons and there are lots of things that you will be going through.

What do we do with that?

For Christians, it's all summed up in a word 'hope'. Hope means the certain expectation of something you don't have yet but you will have in the future because it's been promised by God.

Hope is hope of Life, hope of purpose, hope of peace, hope of justice, equality and a good future.

The Archbishop also draws on the words of Nelson Mandela, as well as his own experience of a visit to Sudan where he met and prayed with a young Christian refugee.

Assemblies at Oak National Academy will be held in partnership with TES and be delivered by a range of well-known faces. They will focus on topics like hope and resilience, as well as practical advice and support. They will act as a moment for the country's pupils to come together and provide reassurance during this uncertain time.

Oak National Academy opened its doors on Monday 20th April. The online classroom provides a sequenced plan of video lessons and curricular resources for teachers, as well as parents and their children.

A direct response to the coronavirus situation, Oak offers over 180 lessons a week, the equivalent of three hours a day for primary school students, and four hours a day for secondary. The online classroom has the support of various education organisations including the Sutton Trust, Teach First, the Teaching Schools Council and the Confederation of School Trusts, and is backed by the Department for Education.

Nigel Genders, Chief Education Officer for the Church of England said:

"The Church of England is well used to leading collective worship in community schools as well as Church of England schools across the country and we are delighted to be able to continue to offer that through the Oak National Academy at this time.

"Our #faithathome programme for schools will offer a chance to pause, think and reflect and will be open to people of all faiths and none."

Matt Hood, Principal of Oak National Academy, said:

“The wellbeing of our children and young people is so important at this uncertain time. It’s important that we do all we can to reassure them, and to offer advice and practical support. Our assemblies are our contribution to this mission. They will provide a focal point for pupils across the country, allowing them to hear inspiring messages from well-known faces.

“I’m delighted that our inaugural assembly will be given by the Archbishop of Canterbury. His message of hope is an important one for young people of all ages, of all faiths and none.”

More information

- The Oak National Academy is found at: <http://www.thenational.academy>
- The Church of England's #FaithAtHome will be launched on Thursday 30th April
- Media resources for the National Academy, including an FAQ and sample video lessons can be found [here](#)

Hope means the certain expectation of something you don’t have yet but you will have in the future because it’s been promised by God

Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby

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