

The Rector's Message: 1,000 Christian leaders, 280 Bishops to GAFCON in Jerusalem

“Over 1000 senior leaders from seventeen provinces in the Anglican Communion, representing 35 million church-going Anglicans, have registered for the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) in Jerusalem . . . They include 280 bishops, almost all accompanied by their wives.

Archbishop Peter Jensen of Sydney, the chair of the Program Committee, reports that the program is almost complete. “The emphasis of our time together will be our future in the Anglican Communion and the reformation and renewal of our common life rooted in the Holy Scriptures and our common faith in Jesus Christ. Our program will focus on the transforming love of Christ. We will be drawing from the scriptures of the Old and New Testament in our pilgrimage, and their relevance to the challenges facing the church globally today. These include secularism, other religions, poverty and HIV/Aids as well as moral and theological issues.”

Pilgrims will visit traditional sites in Jerusalem during the pilgrimage June 22 – 29, 2008 including Mount of Olives, the Garden of Gethsemane and the Ophel Gardens and Temple steps where, at the first Pentecost, Peter preached and people of all nations responded. The 1000 pilgrims will travel to Bethlehem to the Church of the Nativity and Shepherds' Field, and then to Galilee. Some afternoons and most after-dinner periods are being left free for pilgrims to undertake other visits, for example to the Via Dolorosa and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and for fellowship together to share their experience and partnership in mission.

There will be daily study sessions focusing on expositions of Bible texts by speakers from East Asia, Canada, Ghana, Nigeria and England. Worship will also be an important element. There will be early morning communion and night prayer each day. There will also be a major pilgrimage Holy Communion Service at the opening and closing of the Pilgrimage with the sermon by an Anglican Primate. Worship is being planned by a team from the United States and Uganda.

Specific areas to pray for include courage, strength, vision and wisdom for . . . faithful Anglican leaders in the global church; that God may speak to His church, give clear direction for the Anglican Church worldwide and glorify His Name.”*