

DIOCESE IN EUROPE

THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

The Bishop in Europe:
The Right Reverend Dr. Robert Innes



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

BISHOP'S ADVENT APPEAL 2018

This year's Advent Appeal is to enable St. Andrew's Moscow to equip their church with a kitchen.

St. Andrew's is committed to the work of reconciliation and the building of trust between peoples. It fulfils this key element of our diocesan strategy in a unique and powerful way. It is not putting it too strongly to say that St. Andrew's Church contributes in a small way to the cause of world peace.

The offering and sharing of hospitality is a key part of the life of many of our chaplaincies. St. Andrew's is no exception. But, at present, food has to be brought in by parishioners or prepared in the parsonage. St. Andrew's would love to be able to prepare food on site.

A kitchen would further St. Andrew's work of reconciliation. It would strengthen church fellowship. And it would be a place in which some of the orphaned young people who are served by St. Andrew's could be taught how to cook. More details are attached to this letter.

We can all appreciate the importance of food and shared meals as means of furthering mission and outreach. I think the installation of a new kitchen is a great idea, which is worthy of our support.

So please do consider how you can support my Advent Appeal, which this year is for St. Andrew's Moscow.

As usual, you can give money to this appeal through your church treasurer, who will forward your gift to the diocesan office.

With every blessing,

+ Robert Gibraltar in Europe

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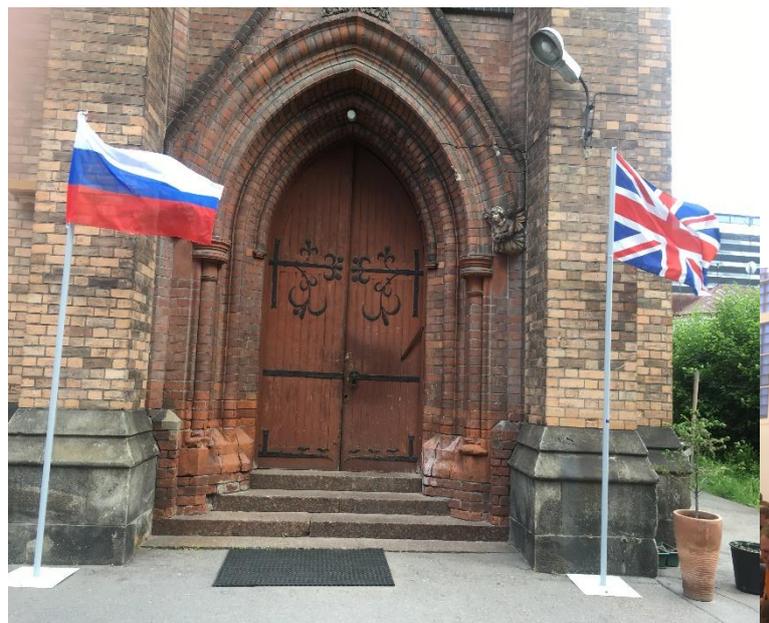
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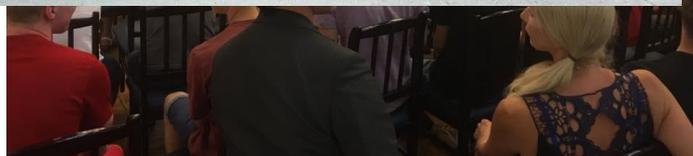
Charity Commission registration number: 250186

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St Andrew's Anglican Church in Moscow is an English architectural eccentricity situated 10 minutes' walk from the Kremlin. We are the only clearly identifiable and open British building in the city, especially after the closure of the British Council.



Our prayer is that, in the current political and diplomatic context, we can be a centre of reconciliation, a place where people can be welcomed, meet, listen to each other, and grow in the understanding and respect which leads to trust. We have no political influence, apart from the fact that we are here. Anybody coming into the building walks past both the Russian and UK flag; each week we pray for Her Majesty and for President Putin and their respective governments; and on our communion table where we remember the most costly and wonderful act of reconciliation, we have a symbol of reconciliation: a cross created from nails taken from the bombed and burnt-out cathedral in Coventry.



And through the building we are not only able to provide support for English speaking expatriates, but also be a place where Russians and Westerners are able to meet, learn, grow, serve and worship together. We are home to a remarkable school for about 160 young people from orphan or institutional backgrounds who have not attained school leaving certificates, or do not have some of the most basic skills for living, and they are here most evenings of the week (here at their June graduation ceremony).

We are home to an international choir and an English speaking pre-school. We host English and Russian AA and NA groups. Every other Wednesday we provide food parcels for Russian pensioners. Most weeks we have 3 or 4 concerts in the building. Like many chaplaincies we run cultural events which bring Russians and expatriates together: the ubiquitous fetes and bazaars



and, for instance, earlier this year an English breakfast and large screen showing of the royal wedding.

While there are no longer political exchanges, our links with the Orthodox Church mean we are in a position to bring over significant church leaders so that there is at least some semi-official

dialogue. Lord Chartres, the former bishop of London, is coming in two weeks' time. And each year we have thousands of tourists coming to look at this little piece of England in Moscow.

We would love to be able to extend our ministry of welcome and reconciliation by installing a kitchen. We do a great deal of entertaining, but food is currently either brought in by people mostly on public transport or is prepared in the parsonage. That is not easy when we serve lunch after more than half of our Sunday services, and we are now regularly catering for over 100 people. A kitchen would also be the non-liturgical hub which brings together the different communities who use the building, for preparing meals for those who are most needy, and providing cooking lessons for young people who have spent all their lives in state institutions.



It is not always easy living in a country which, deservedly or undeservedly, is treated as a feared international outcast. Financial sanctions are biting and affect the lives of ordinary people. There are fewer expatriates here now than there have been since the early 1990s. We lost 14 members of our congregation in one week with the diplomatic expulsions. And yet despite that, there is also something incredibly exciting about living on the edge, because it means we have to depend upon the mercy and grace of God. We do not know what to expect from day to day. Russians



use the word 'tchuda' to describe a 'wonder', and in daily life when much is unpredictable, we really are dependent on 'tchuda'. And we have seen His provision and guidance. Our congregation has grown significantly; we have about 15 adult confirmation candidates, 2 new readers in training and 1 person who has just left us to start training for ordination at theological college. And God has provided for us in many ways. And so we are immensely grateful to many people for their prayer for us, and to Bishop Robert for suggesting support for St

Andrew's and for our proposed kitchen – it is one of those 'tchudas' on which we depend.