

St. Pauls Church
Prayer Points January 2026

1) The Christian Institute reports that Peers have warned that Kim Leadbeater's assisted suicide Bill endangers pregnant women and their unborn children.

During the House of Lords' fourth day of scrutinising amendments to Kim Leadbeater's assisted suicide Bill, Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson highlighted the vulnerability of pregnant women, prisoners and the homeless.

The Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) would allow patients deemed to be terminally ill and with less than six months to live, to receive help to kill themselves, without testing if they are carrying an unborn baby.

Baroness Grey-Thompson emphasised that suicide is the "leading cause of maternal death during pregnancy in industrialised countries, and the leading cause of maternal mortality in the first twelve months after childbirth".

The Paralympian, who tabled an amendment to require applicants for assisted suicide to take a pregnancy test, also raised concern about the Bill's impact on "pregnant women who have recently given birth, particularly given the risk of post-natal depression and other pregnancy and maternity-related mental health conditions".

Speaking in agreement, Baroness O'Loan noted that "maternal deaths due to mental health problems are increasing", while up to 30 per cent of domestic abuse cases begin during pregnancy.

Addressing concerns surrounding homelessness, Baroness O'Loan emphasised: "Solutions to things like homelessness should not involve offering people assisted death, rather a home, possibly in sheltered accommodation, in which they may be able to flourish".

Considering the issue of prison overcrowding, Lord Deben added, "The moments in this Bill that most concern me are when you get nearest to saving money".

He noted that "particularly when you are talking about people for whom many have no sympathy at all, "do we really believe that there won't be many prisoners for whom the whole issue will be presented as 'You'll be better off and we'll be better off if you make that decision?'".

The Peers debated 23 amendments in December, still leaving over a thousand to be considered across the ten days scheduled for the New Year.

Despite activists' accusations that the unprecedented number of amendments is a delaying tactic, the Bill's critics insist that debating amendments is necessary due to the lack of "due diligence and proper pre-legislative scrutiny".

According to Right to Life UK's analysis of the December session, the 47 amendments that were debated received less than six minutes scrutiny each.

Spokeswoman Catherine Robinson stated: " It is simply not the case that Peers are wasting time, deliberately or not. If anything, these amendments are being rushed. The large number of amendments indicates just how poorly drafted the Bill was when it left the Commons".

2) The Christian Institute reports that in the US, abortion activists have published a children's book to promote abortion to five to eight-year olds.

The picture book titled 'Abortion is Everything' is illustrated with bright, colourful drawings, and is advertised as 'framing' abortion "as the actualization of a uniquely human superpower".

The book is written by Rachel Kessler alongside activist Amelia Bonow, whose group 'Shout Your Abortion' (SYA) aims to "arm existing activists, create new ones, and foster collective participation in abortion access all over the country".

The book is marketed as speaking "directly to five to eight-year olds about what abortion is, how it might feel, and why people have abortions".

Posting about the book's release, SYA claim: "Parents, caregivers, and educators who work with children have long been searching for a tool to talk to kids about abortion".

They say the book promotes abortion as "a tool that allows human beings to shape our destinies" and to "make choices that lead us towards the life we envision".

Instead of using the word 'woman' or 'mother', it talks about "human beings" who have an "organ called a uterus", and in its illustrations, it compares having an abortion as letting go of a balloon.

One mother commented on the SYA post promoting the book: "Love it. I've been speaking to my kids about abortion since they were small and it is so empowering to hear a child say: 'You don't have to be pregnant if you don't want to be' ".

The book received substantial backlash on social media, with one commentator saying: "Why would you even want to talk to kids about this???".

Another criticised it for "trying to sanitize abortion", stating "But abortion isn't everything. It ends everything - a heartbeat, a future, a God ordained life. This is one of the clearest pictures of a culture of death I've seen. Parents must speak truth early so children know life is sacred from the moment of conception".

LifeNews.com posted: "What kind of disgusting people make a book for kids to tell them that killing babies is okay?".

The Christian Institute also reports that the number of abortions in Northern Ireland has reached it's highest level since the law was liberalised in 2020.

Statistics from the Department of Health reveal that there were 2,899 abortions between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025. While this is only a 3.7% rise from the previous year, it is 84% higher than in 2021.

Since Westminster's liberal abortion regime was introduced in 2020, 11,192 abortions have been carried out in the province.

The vast majority of the abortions (88.9%) involved abortion pills, where a woman under ten weeks' gestation can take misoprostol at home without medical supervision.

TUV MLA Timothy Gaston accused the media of being "deeply dishonest" for claiming that new abortion regime was only needed for "hard cases", as "8000 abortions in four years since decriminalisation did not happen because of those exceptional situations".

He warned that it is "anything but compassionate to ignore the social pressures - economic, familial, and cultural - that push women towards ending a pregnancy instead of receiving real support".

Earlier this year, NHS England data revealed that over 54,000 women have been hospitalised following at-home abortion complications since 2020.

Research organisation Percuity reported that, according to NHS data, 1-in-17 women who had had an abortion at home required hospital care for complications including incomplete abortions, infections, and excessive haemorrhaging.

The DIY scheme, where women take both mifepristone and misoprostol at home, now accounts for the majority of abortions since it was introduced, initially as a temporary measure, during the coronavirus pandemic.

3) The Christian Institute reports that it has formally commenced legal action against the Prime Minister and the Civil Service over official taxpayer-funded participation in Pride marches.

Legal action was threatened in August, with the Institute sending Sir Chris Wormald a pre-action letter, but papers have been officially lodged with the High Court.

The Institute believes the current practice of officially endorsing and funding participation during work time, whilst sporting "Civil Service Pride" t-shirts and banners breaches the law on Civil Service impartiality.

The legal action will affect civil servants in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The challenge is being brought because the Institute believes official participation in Pride gives the public the impression that civil servants have taken sides on controversial issues on which they ought, by law, to be impartial.

It follows a win for gender-critical activist Linzi Smith who challenged Northumbria Police's participation in Pride events. The court in that case found Pride to be "political" and a breach of laws on police impartiality.

As a result, forces across the UK have stopped officers from officially participating in Pride marches. Northumbria has also withdrawn police cars branded with rainbow and 'progress' flags.

The Christian Institute's Deputy Director Simon Calvert said "The law is clear that civil servants must maintain impartiality on controversial political issues. Whether one agrees with it or not, no-one can deny that the LGBTQ+ Pride movement and its hard-line gender ideology are profoundly political".

"Pride London, the one attended by Whitehall-based civil servants, even banned political parties because they don't support their political demands, which include puberty blockers and gender self-ID. These are positions which the taxpayers who fund the Civil Service increasingly reject".

"Despite Pride being so politicised, the social media feeds of Government departments still feature images celebrating their participation in the movement".

"As Linzi Smith's successful judicial review of Northumbria Police determined, involvement in Pride signals support for a highly contentious set of political demands. It is inappropriate for civil servants to be officially endorsing Pride".

He continued: " I have been working in public policy for decades. I've been shocked by how many civil servants wear Pride lanyards in our meetings with them, even when those meetings are specifically about conflicts with that ideology".

"Sitting in front of a phalanx of civil servants in rainbow lanyards gives the impression their minds are closed on the issues we are discussing. It certainly does not communicate the kind of neutrality that taxpayers expect of civil servants".

4) Tim Dieppe, Christian Concern's Head of Public Policy, has written the following article on their website about the governments leaked definition of 'anti-Muslim hatred':

The government set up a working group to propose a definition last year, and their work has been kept secret from the public.

The definition has shifted away from the term 'Islamophobia' which is a welcome change, but it still poses significant problems for free speech.

The full proposed definition, which is now of 'Anti-Muslim hostility' reads as follows:

" Anti-Muslim hostility is engaging in or encouraging criminal acts, including acts of violence, vandalism of property, and harassment and intimidation whether physical, verbal, written or electronically communicated, which is directed at Muslims or those perceived to be Muslims because of their religion, ethnicity or appearance.

"It is also the prejudicial stereotyping and radicalisation of Muslims, as part of a collective group with set characteristics, to stir up hatred against them, irrespective of their actual opinions, beliefs or actions as individuals.

"It is engaging in prohibited discrimination where the relevant conduct - including the creation or use of practices and biases within institutions - is intended to disadvantage Muslims in public and economic life".

[Tim Dieppe has] long argued that no new definition is needed. British Muslims are already protected from discrimination and harassment in law. The term 'anti-Muslim hatred' or 'anti-Muslim hostility' are clear and sufficient in themselves. Any definition of 'Islamophobia' risks conflating criticism of the religion of Islam with hatred or

hostility towards Muslims. The proposed definition does not fall into this particular trap, no doubt because of how successfully this has been explained by [Christian Concern] and others.

The timing of the publication of this definition could not be worse. The Telegraph reports that the government planned to publish it's definition [last month] but realised that publication in the immediate aftermath of the Bondi Beach bloodbath by antisemitic Islamic terrorists would not look good.

So it has held back on a public announcement. Even this government realises that proposing to curb criticism of Islam in the light of blatant Islamic terrorism would not be a good look.

The first paragraph of the definition largely repeats what is already illegal. Criminal acts are illegal by definition. There is no need for this aspect of the definition, because it is already law. It adds nothing to what we already know.

It is in the second paragraph where the worst dangers lurk. What exactly constitutes "prejudicial stereotyping"? Or stating that Muslims have "set characteristics".

If I said "Muslims don't eat pork" - would that count? There is nothing to indicate it wouldn't.

A whole load of other statements could fall foul of the definition. Here are some:

- "Muslims don't drink alcohol" .
- "Muslims believe in Allah".
- "Muslims believe Muhammad was a prophet".
- "Muslims believe the Qur'an".
- "Muslims don't believe the trinity".
- "Muslims don't worship the same God as Christians".
- "Muslims don't worship Jesus".

This doesn't even get to claims about what Islam teaches - such as polygamy, for example, let alone jihad! It is clear that many, many statements about Muslims could fall foul of this definition, even though they are true and legitimate things to say.

Then there is the question of "radicalisation". What exactly does this mean? Islam is not a race and does not seem itself as a race. Islam is a religion, not a race. This is about beliefs, not racial characteristics. Being Muslim is about choosing certain beliefs. Whereas you cannot choose your ethnicity or racial characteristics. This, while it should be entirely valid and fair to criticise someone's beliefs, it is not fair or valid to criticise someone merely on the basis of their skin colour. We must be free to scrutinise and challenge ideas or beliefs of any religion or worldview. Islam should not be exempt from this on a fake basis that it is racial.

Activists are keen to liken 'Islamophobia' or 'anti-Muslim hostility' to racism - in order to shut down criticism of Islam. If they can deem criticism of Islamic beliefs or beliefs as a form of racism, then this will serve to put such criticism out of bounds. It is not entirely clear how to read this definition, but you can be sure that activists will exploit it to deem criticism of Islam as racism. If the government adopts this definition, they will be playing into these activists' game plan.

The notorious APPG definition of Islamophobia defined Islamophobia as "rooted in racism" and "a type of racism". The Network of Sikh Organisations wrote to the then Deputy Prime Minister, Angela Rayner MP pointing out that Islam is not a race and that therefore this definition conflicts with the Equality Act. If 'racialisation' remains in the new definition, it will also conflict with the Equality Act. The government surely cannot adopt a definition which clearly conflicts with existing law.

In the final paragraph we have "the creation or use of practices or biases within institutions - is intended to disadvantage Muslims in public and economic life". Well, who defines what these alleged biases are?

What if a school decides to ban Islamic prayers in the school playground? That could be deemed a bias intended to disadvantage Muslims. This has happened, of course. The Michaela School in Brent was taken to court for banning Islamic prayer rituals at the school. Fortunately the school won. If this definition had been in place, the judge may have been pressed to take a different view.

Would it be biased to insist a witness remove their veil in court? Would it be biased to argue that the burka ought to be banned in public? Would it be biased to suggest that all religious marriages should be registered in law so as to protect the rights of Muslim women? Would it be biased to call for lower numbers of Muslim immigrants, or to suggest that Islam is influencing our culture in negative ways, especially in relation to free speech?

So, as [Tim Dieppe] has shown, the new definition is hardly better than the old one. In a similar manner, it will serve to curb free speech in relation to Islam.

If the government adopts this as its official definition it will be a very significant moment in this country. While it will not actually be a blasphemy law, it could actually be a blasphemy code in relation to Islam. It won't actually be a criminal offence to say something which falls foul of this definition, but you could lose your job and have your speech recorded against you as a non-crime hate incident. Anyone working in any government organisation, the whole public sector, police and the courts will start to implement this definition. This includes schools, the NHS, the civil

service etc. Activists will pressure companies and businesses to adopt this definition. We will then have what amounts to de facto blasphemy laws.

Already we have the police and the Crown Prosecution Service prosecution people for burning a copy of the Qur'an and arresting street preachers for questioning what the Qur'an says. This is not happening to people who question what the Bible says! Adopting this definition will only serve to increase the intimidation that people already feel, and which causes most people to self-censor any criticisms they may have of Islamic beliefs or practices. This is what it is like to live in a totalitarian society.

5) The BBC reported on 5 December that a hijab featuring a magnetic "quick release system" designed to help female Muslim police officers on patrol has been put into production.

The headwear has been created by researchers at De Montfort University(DMU) with Leicestershire Police, with the magnetic attachment allowing the lower section to detach instantly if pulled in confrontation to prevent the "risk of strangulation while maintaining modesty".

Student officer PC Seher Nas says she feels "proud and empowered as a Muslim woman" when wearing the hijab as part of her uniform.

As well as interest from forces around the country, DMU has said it has been fielding inquiries from NHS Trusts, paramedics and the private sector.

Det Sgt Yassin Desai, the founder of Leicestershire Police's Association of Muslim Police, said the design had taken three years to develop.

Det Sgt Desai said the new item - called the Blue Light Hijab - was tested on female officers during several trials.

"The bottom part was able to detach and the officer was able to keep her dignity" he said.

Hijabs have been part of the uniform for a number of years, with North Yorkshire Police introducing a two-piece design to protect officers in 2020.

Student officer PC Nas has said it was her "childhood dream" to become a police officer. Although she has only been with Leicestershire Police for three-weeks, the 23-year-old said she had "always known" about the operational hijab, having followed it's progress in the news since 2021.

"Now, being [one of the first people] to actually wear it I feel proud and empowered as a Muslim woman" PC Nas said.

Insp Marina Waka added "It is reassuring to know that this new hijab, which will be issued as part of an officer's personal protective equivalent, is comfortable and safe as well as looking smart and professional".

"I hope it will inspire other Muslim women to consider becoming a police officer knowing they can wear a hijab that protects them while fulfilling their religious requirements as well".

6) Barnabas Aid reports that a senior church leader and President of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) has raised concerns about a "genocide" of Christians in Nigeria.

Daniel Okah says that " CAN has spoken clearly and courageously on this matter and we stand by our position that there is a Christian genocide in Nigeria".

Barnabas Aid estimates that at least 45,000 Christians have been killed by Islamists in northern and Middle Belt Nigeria since 2009.

Okah told reporters at a press conference that entire communities have been displaced, while abductions and killings remain a persistent problem.

"Across many parts of northern Nigeria and the Middle Belt, Christian communities have experienced unprecedented, coordinated, and in many cases, clearly targeted attacks" he said.

" These horrors have left thousands of people dead, countless widowed and orphaned, and entire villages levelled without justice or closure".

"It would be a grave injustice to deny the painful reality of what has transpired: lives brutally cut short, communities uprooted from their ancestral lands, families torn apart, churches razed, and hopes shattered".

According to an Islamic State West Africa Province social media post on 26 November, " the soldiers of the Caliphate targeted a Christian " in Miringa, Borno State, "with machine guns, which led to his death, praise be to God".

"Although we are pained that Nigeria is being spotlighted for such grevous reasons, if international attention is what is required to spur decisive governmental action to

protect lives and bring lasting peace, then we, the Christian community in Nigeria, welcome it" continued Okah.

Another church leader, Pastor Matthew Ashimolowo has also drawn attention to "targeted persecution of Christians", adding that in some places, "churches cannot operate and people can be hacked [to death]".

"Is there genocide?" asked Ashimolowo. "We cannot say there is no genocide".

Barnabas Aid also reports the Islamic State Central Africa Province (ISCAP) has claimed the killing of 64 Christians in north-eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in the past few weeks.

The claims were made by Islamic State (IS, ISIS, ISIL, Daesh) social media channels and reported by the Terrorism Research and Analysis Consortium.

All 64 deaths resulted from terrorist attacks in the Lubero District of North Kivu Province. In the most deadly attack on 25 November, ISCAP reported that "the soldiers of the Caliphate attacked a cluster of Christian villages in the vicinity of the town of Vuyinga [leading to] the slaughter of 16 Christians, and the flight of the rest from the area, praise be to God".

ISCAP has claimed the killing of at least 780 "infidel Christians" since Christmas 2024.

Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O LORD. Lord, hear my voice: let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications. If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared. I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning. Let Israel hope in the LORD: for with the LORD there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption. And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

Psalms 130