

## News New year

ANDREW MACCOLL/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK



Norse guards parade Jarls, or Viking chieftains, from Shetland's Up Helly Aa festival joined the torchlit procession in Edinburgh for Hogmanay celebrations

# After horror and tragedy, Welby finds hope for 2018

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The resilience of British communities after the disasters and terrorist attacks of the past year should give the country hope going into 2018 even though times may seem unrelentingly difficult, the Archbishop of Canterbury will say today.

The vibrancy of Borough Market since it reopened after the terrorist attack at London Bridge and the response from volunteers to help those affected by the Grenfell Tower fire represent "the light that shone in the darkness" of the year, the Most Rev Justin Welby will say in his annual New Year's Day message.

His message will be broadcast on the BBC from the London Ambulance Service's special operations centre, which received more than 100 calls from those caught up in the London Bridge attack in June.

He refers to the terrorist attacks in London and Manchester as well as the "horror and devastation" caused by terrorism all over the world. He also recalled: "I visited Grenfell Tower while it was still burning. I remember the desperation and sorrow."

Archbishop Welby draws attention to the plight of the unemployed and those who rely on food banks, and mentions those suffering illness or poor mental health. In October he revealed

that he has had his own struggles with the "black dog" of depression.

His message was: "When things feel unrelentingly difficult, there are often questions which hang in the air: Is there any light at all? Does anyone care?"

Citing a passage from the Gospel According to John, which states: "The light shone in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it," he says: "We see this light in the resilience of Borough Market. Today it is as crowded as ever and the people who work there are vibrant and welcoming. We see it in the faces of the hundreds of volunteers who turned out after Grenfell, simply to help strangers in need."

He praises the heroism of emergency service crews, including unarmed police officers who ran towards the gunmen in Borough Market, saying that the suffering of communities was often matched by "a depth of compassion".

He asks: "Which stories will define us? The horror or the response? The darkness or the light?"

The archbishop's mes-

**Justin Welby said people's responses were "light that shone in the darkness"**

sage is less overtly political than his Christmas Day sermon, in which he spoke out against "populist leaders that deceive their people".

He also warned that even "well-intentioned" political leaders are "normal, fallible human beings".

In Jeremy Corbyn's new year message, the leader of the opposition said that Labour was now "a government in waiting" and was "staking out the new centre ground in British politics", adding that the Conservative Party was "stuck in an outdated rut".

Sir Brendan Barber, head of the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas), used his new year message to call for action to improve the UK's productivity if living standards were to improve.

The Pope's new year message today, on what is the World Day of Peace, calls on people to "in a spirit of compassion, embrace all those fleeing from war and hunger, or forced by discrimination, persecution, poverty and environmental degradation to leave their homelands".



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