

**Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2019**

**ONLY JUSTICE**



**Cyfiawnder yn Unig / Ceartas amháin**

**18-25 January**

[www.ctbi.org.uk/weekofprayer](http://www.ctbi.org.uk/weekofprayer)





St Antonius Padova Catholic Church, East Java

I am pleased to commend the materials for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2019.

Last year we were invited to reflect upon the continuing impact of the Transatlantic Slave Trade upon Caribbean society and upon Christian unity and witness. This year we are reminded again that our prayer for unity is offered up amidst injustice and that Christian disunity is in so many ways related to the divisions in our world.

The Churches of Indonesia, from whom the material comes, speak out of a context of ethnic and religious diversity, and where there is a strong emphasis upon the need for a unity that is found in diversity, and one built on solidarity and collaboration. Yet they also highlight issues of economic injustice and how religious pluralism can face challenges in the face of radicalization.

This gives us an opportunity to reflect upon the context in which we pray for Christian unity. How do divisions in our society contribute to divisions in the Church? How does injustice in our British and Irish contexts create challenges in pursuit of our shared life together?

As in previous years the CTBI Writers Group has offered additional reflections and questions that I hope will enable a deepening prayer and reflection, along with suggestions for further action from Christian Aid.

*Bob Fyffe, General Secretary, Churches Together in Britain and Ireland*

# Introduction to this year's theme

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Our prayers for Christian unity are offered within a context of a world where corruption, greed and injustice bring about inequality and division. We ourselves are often complicit in injustice, and yet called together to form a united witness for justice and to be a means of Christ's healing grace for a fractured world.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2019 material has been prepared by Christians from Indonesia, which is the largest country in South East Asia, made up of more than 17,000 islands, 1,340 different ethnic groups and over 740 local languages. It is united in its plurality by one national language Bahasa Indonesia. With some 86% of its 260 million people estimated to be Muslim, Indonesia has the largest Islamic population of any country. About 10% of Indonesians are Christian from various traditions, as well as Buddhist and Hindu communities. The nation is founded on five principles called Pancasila, with the motto Bhineka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity). Across the diversity of ethnicity, language and religion, Indonesians have lived by the principle of *gotong royong* which is to live in "solidarity and by collaboration". This means sharing in all aspects of life, regarding all Indonesians as brothers and sisters.

This harmony can be fragile at times and is threatened in particular ways. *Gotong royong* sits ill at ease with the neo-liberal approach to economics that has led to Indonesia's economic growth - with that has come corruption that

Slums in Jakarta





Beautiful landscapes contrast with urban sprawl

infects politics and business, often with devastating effects on the environment. Meanwhile those who are supposed to promote justice and protect the weak fail to do so. As a consequence, a country rich in resources bears the burden of many people living in poverty. This is reflected in a traditional Indonesian saying, “A mouse dies of hunger in a barn full of rice”. Particular ethnic and religious groups are often associated with wealth in ways that have fed tensions. As a result the radicalization that pits one community against another has grown and is exacerbated by the misuse of social media to demonize particular communities.

A common Christian response to such a reality whilst acknowledging our own complicity, heeds Jesus’s prayer “that they all may be one”, and enables us to combat injustice.

Moved by these concerns the Christians of Indonesia found that the words of Deuteronomy, “Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue...” (see Deut. 16:18-20) spoke powerfully to their situation and needs. Before the people of God enter the promised land they renew their commitment to the Covenant. The passage comes in a chapter whose central theme is the festivities to be celebrated by the Covenant people. After each festival the people are instructed, “Rejoice during your festival, you and your sons and your daughters,

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your male and female slaves, as well as the Levites, the strangers, the orphans, and the widows resident in your towns” (Deut. 16:14, see also 16:11).

Indonesian Christians look to recover this same spirit of inclusive festivities across communities, which they previously enjoyed. This is rooted in justice, which is why we have a verse about appointing judges.

Jesus reaffirms this when he says that the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who hunger and thirst and are persecuted for justice (cf. Matt. 5:6, 10), and the Church is called to be a foretaste of this kingdom. However, in this disunity Christians fall short and fail to be a sign of God’s love for his people. Just as injustice has widened the divisions that have riven Indonesian society, so injustice has also fed the divisions of the Church. Indonesian Christians speak of the need to repent of the injustice that causes division, but also believe in the power of Christ to forgive and heal. They speak of finding themselves united under the cross of Christ, calling both for his grace to end injustice and for his mercy for the sin which has caused division.

Surabaya, capital of East Java



# DAY 1

**Amos 5:22-25**

**Luke 11:37-44**



## Starting Point

Christians in Indonesia recognize that in their land there are people who passionately try to practise their faith, but who oppress those of other beliefs. In the prophecy of Amos, God rejects the worship of those who neglect justice. In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus reminds us that the outward sign of true worship of God is acting justly. Christians can sometimes be very committed to prayer and worship, but less concerned for the poor and the marginalized. When, as Christians, we work together on justice issues we grow closer to one another and to God.

## Reflection

At the table  
we sit,  
empty plates, but for a few crumbs.

Everyone's had their fill again,  
satiated,  
at least for now.

Turning on the taps  
we fill our bowls,  
in the hope that the stains  
will disappear.

The water cascades  
over cup  
and plate,  
cleansing it  
of any sign of human contact,  
as if there had never been a meal.

In our polite conversation  
and edgy discourse,  
we fool ourselves  
into thinking we are making  
a difference.

We faithfully gather,  
but are we just acting,  
waiting,  
for the others to speak up  
as we wash our hands?

# Let justice roll down like waters (Amos 5:24)

## Prayer

God of all,  
you have shown us the path  
of justice.  
You are the father of the orphan.  
You are the constant companion of  
the widow.  
You are the friend of the stranger.  
In each of these,  
may we meet you  
and recognize the wind of  
your Spirit,  
moving us toward the need  
for justice.  
In all that we do,  
may we know your grace and mercy  
and offer healing and justice in  
your name.



## Questions

- How would you describe justice?
- Where have you recognized justice in action?
- Can we have unity without justice?

## Go and Do

(see [www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo](http://www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo))

‘Charity is no substitute for justice withheld’.

Take time to reflect and remember campaign successes of the recent and distant past, e.g. the abolition of transatlantic slavery and the end of apartheid in South Africa. Visit Go and Do to read about recent successes in the campaign for tax justice.

Celebrate the successes and get together to discuss what action your community of churches could take to challenge injustice that is happening now. Visit Go and Do for some creative activism ideas.

# DAY 2

## Ephesians 4:22-25

## Matthew 5:33-37

### Starting Point

The letter to the Ephesians presents a call for Christians to be honest and accountable to each other, so that we may grow in community. There is no place for deceitfulness, for it serves only to impair our relationships and so destroy that community. We are called to live an authentic life

### Reflection

If I am to speak truth to power,  
whose truth do I speak?  
Whose justice do I seek  
in the space between my right-ness  
and that of the 'other'?  
If I say 'yes' to justice,  
does that make it all mine?  
What of the grey between  
the emphatics?

'Let me declare boldly,  
sure-footedly  
that my yes is  
a "yes-yes", and my  
no is "no".' Says Jesus.

'Let me draw clarity  
in the sand that  
defines and refines  
knowledge, truth and tales

of faith and stand up for the truth.  
Our yes must mean 'yes' and our no  
must mean 'no' – with no equivocal  
language or dishonest behaviour.  
Dishonesty disrupts the unity of the  
Church for which we are called to  
pray and work.

in such a way  
that all are sure.

'Let me dwell deep  
in the place within  
where, regardless of the  
outward form  
you know beyond doubt's shadow,  
that truth and justice,  
peace and righteousness lie.

'And let me,  
in my boldness  
turn widdershins  
the hypocrisy of  
those who confuse integrity  
with fake-ness,  
who obscure truth with falsehood  
and call it news.

'Let me boldly be good news.'



# Let your word be 'Yes, Yes' or 'No, No' (Matthew 5:37)



## Prayer

God of justice,  
grant me the wisdom to see right  
from wrong.  
Let my heart be guided by honesty  
and my lips speak truth.  
In times of doubt, cloak me in  
courage the colour of trust.  
Birth in me the passion for unity  
and peace  
so that I may be a good news bearer  
for all.  
In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

## Questions

- What does it feel like to have your words distorted?
- Look at on-line or paper copies of current news items. Can you distinguish spin, or 'fake news' – what are the markers of such items?
- How, in our churches, do we tell, or re-tell our own stories in order to set ourselves in a good light?

## Go and Do (see [www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo](http://www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo))

Not everything we read or see in the news is true. 'Fake news' has become a catch-all term for stories that are deliberately made up and also those that have some truth to them but are not reported accurately.

Hold a newspaper reading breakfast for the churches in your area and take time to discuss the headlines and equip yourselves with the skills to discern what is true in this 'post-truth' age? Visit Go and Do to find out some steps for identifying fake news that you can discuss over breakfast.

Visit Go and Do to find out about and join the campaigns challenging the negative and scaremongering reporting in the media.

# DAY 3

## Psalm 145:8-13

## Matthew 1:1-17



### Starting Point

Christians in Indonesia live within a context of great diversity. Indonesia is a nation of over 17000 islands and 1340 ethnic groups. The churches are often separated along ethnic lines, and some may wound the unity of the Church by regarding themselves as sole guardians of the truth. There are those who are excluded and pushed to the margins. The scripture passages for today remind us that the love of God transcends the boundaries of ethnicity, culture, race, and religion. God is broken with those who are broken. God stands outside with those who are excluded. God includes everyone in the plan of salvation and none are left out.

### Reflection

Born  
Endangered  
Love - withheld misdirected  
misused hidden from me

Broken  
Untended  
Self - withheld misdirected  
misused hidden from me

Rejected  
Cast away  
Place - withheld misdirected  
misused hidden from me

Found  
Harboured  
Love – offered whole healthy  
including me

Broken  
Tended  
Self – offered whole healthy  
including me

Accepted  
Welcomed  
Place – offered whole healthy  
including me

Pain  
Acknowledged  
Love – chosen given  
accepted returned

# The Lord is gracious and merciful to all (Psalm 145:8)

Healing

Started

Self – chosen given accepted returned

Wholeness

Sometimes

Place – chosen given  
accepted returned

God

born

broken

rejected

Life – restored remade including me

## Questions

- Where do you see God's grace and mercy in action?
- Who are those on the margins of your communities?
- What can you/we do to engage those who feel beyond God's reach?

## Prayer

God of all humanity  
your Son was born into a line  
of men and women,  
ordinary and extraordinary.  
Some of them were remembered  
for their great deeds,  
others more for their sins.  
Give us an open heart to share your  
unbounded love,  
and to embrace all who experience  
discrimination.

Help us to grow in love beyond  
prejudice and injustice.  
Grant us the grace to respect the  
uniqueness of each person,  
so that in our diversity we may  
experience unity.  
This prayer we make in your  
holy name. Amen

## Go and Do (see [www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo](http://www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo))

God stands with those who are most marginalized. Consider how your churches might join with those who are most marginalized in our societies. Contact local organizations working to support destitute asylum seekers and find out how you can help best. Visit Go and Do to find out more.

Take action to ensure those who are displaced but excluded from the UN resolutions on rights of refugees are included and given the support they need. Visit Go and Do to find out more.

## **Dates**

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is traditionally observed from 18th to 25th January (the octave of St Peter and St Paul). However, some groups choose other times of the year, particularly around Pentecost which is a symbolic date for the unity of the church. Do make your own decision, taking local factors into account. To allow for use at any time in the year, the Days material uses the notation 1-8.

## **Order of service**

The order of service in the centre of the pamphlet can be pulled out and photocopied if you wish. Alternatively, all resources can be downloaded from the CTBI website and you are welcome to further edit or adapt them for local use. Please acknowledge the source of material as Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, Week of Prayer for Christian Unity resources.

## **Christian Unity wall**

Please add details and photos of your events, prayers and messages of unity to the Christian unity 'wall' at [www.weekofprayer.org](http://www.weekofprayer.org) by posting to Twitter using the #wpcuwall hashtag. Posts appear automatically (after a slight delay).

## **Photo credits**

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**Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2019**

**ECUMENICAL WORSHIP SERVICE**

# **Order of Service**

**Justice and only justice you shall pursue**

**(Deuteronomy 16:18-20)**



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## Call to worship

**Leader** Let us worship the Triune God.  
God, our Father, you crown your creation with justice  
and mercy.

**Congregation** **We come to worship you.**

**Leader** Jesus Christ, your cross brings new life and justice,

**Congregation** **We come to worship you.**

**Leader** Holy Spirit, you inspire our hearts to act justly,

**Congregation** **We come to worship you.**

**Leader** May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and  
the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit  
be with you all.

**Congregation** **And also with you.**

**Gathering hymn of praise** *(chosen locally)*

## Introductory words

**Leader** As Christians from different churches, we gather here to pray  
for unity. This year, we pray with the churches of Indonesia,  
whose chosen theme is “Justice, and only justice,  
you shall pursue”.

A background image of a sunset over a mountain range. The sun is a bright, glowing orb in the upper left, casting a warm orange and red light across the sky. The mountains are silhouetted against the light, with some peaks appearing hazy. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

## Prayer of repentance

**Leader** Beloved sisters and brothers, let us confess before God that we have sinned. We ask for forgiveness.

**Reader 1** Compassionate God,  
Jesus ate with outcasts and sinners. We confess that we prioritize those of higher social status, that we ignore strangers, the poor and the least in society and that we fear to defend the oppressed.  
Lord, have mercy.

**Congregation** **Lord, have mercy.** *(This response may be sung)*

**Reader 2** Righteous God,  
you call us, the Church in every place, to act justly. We confess that we misuse Church resources and power. This causes some people to turn away.  
Lord have mercy.

**Reader 3** Loving God,  
Jesus challenged us to love one another. We confess that we view other churches as rivals and disregard those who do not share our point of view.  
Lord, have mercy.

**Congregation** **Lord, have mercy.**

**Reader 4** Gracious God,

You call us all to love without discrimination. We confess that we disrespect our neighbours, spread falsehood and gossip, and participate in the disruption of social harmony.

Lord, have mercy.

**Congregation** Lord, have mercy.

**Leader** May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins and lead us to eternal life.

**Congregation** Amen.

## **Hymn/Song**

# **Proclamation of the Word of God**

Let us listen for the word of God in the Old Testament

**First reading: Deuteronomy 16:11-20**

This is the word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God**

**Responsorial Psalm: 82:1-8** (*read or sung*)

Rise up, O God, judge the earth.

**Rise up, O God, judge the earth.**

God has taken his place in the divine council;  
in the midst of the gods he holds judgement:  
'How long will you judge unjustly





and show partiality to the wicked?’

**Rise up, O God, judge the earth.**

Give justice to the weak and the orphan;  
maintain the right of the lowly and the destitute.  
Rescue the weak and the needy;  
deliver them from the hand of the wicked.

**Rise up, O God, judge the earth.**

They have neither knowledge nor understanding,  
they walk around in darkness;  
all the foundations of the earth are shaken.

**Rise up, O God, judge the earth.**

I say, ‘You are gods,  
children of the Most High, all of you;  
nevertheless, you shall die like mortals,  
and fall like any prince.’

Rise up, O God, judge the earth;  
for all the nations belong to you!

**Rise up, O God, judge the earth.**

Hear the Gospel according to St Luke.  
*(An Alleluia may be sung according to local custom)*

**Gospel reading: Luke 4:14-21**

This is the Gospel of Christ.

**Praise to Christ our Lord.**

*(An Alleluia may be sung according to local custom)*

## Sermon on the theme of our common commitment to justice

*A sermon 'starting point' can be found at*

<https://ctbi.org.uk/week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity-resources>

## Commitment to Justice, Mercy and Unity

**Leader** Jesus Christ prayed for the unity of his disciples.  
The gift of his life is justice for the world.

**Reader 1** As members of the body of Christ, we are called to walk  
humbly and act justly.  
Let justice roll down like waters.

**Congregation** **Holy Spirit, unite us in our prayers.**

**Reader 2** As members of the body of Christ, we are called to speak out  
against injustice.  
Let our word be 'Yes, Yes' or 'No, No'.

**Congregation** **Holy Spirit, unite us in our words.**

**Reader 3** As members of the body of Christ, we are called to lavish  
God's grace and mercy on all.  
Let us break through barriers of ethnicity, religion and culture.

**Congregation** **Holy Spirit, unite us in our humanity.**

**Reader 4** As members of the body of Christ, we are called to keep our  
lives free from the love of money, and be content with  
what we have.  
Let us break the cycle of greed and live in simplicity.



**Congregation** **Holy Spirit, unite us in our weakness.**

**Reader 5** As members of the body of Christ, we are called to bring good news to the poor.  
Let us condemn exploitation and the systems that perpetuate it.

**Congregation** **Holy Spirit, unite us in anger towards injustice.**

**Reader 6** As members of the body of Christ, we are called to care for the whole of creation.  
Let us protect the life and beauty of all that God has made.

**Congregation** **Holy Spirit, heal us and restore us.**

**Reader 7** As members of the body of Christ, we are called to treat all with dignity.  
Let us recognize discrimination, oppression and abuse.

**Congregation** **Holy Spirit, open our ears to the cries for justice.**

**Reader 8** As members of the body of Christ, we are called to bring hope to others.  
Let us be salt and light.

**Congregation** **Holy Spirit, unite us in hope for justice.**

We have just asked the Holy Spirit to unite us in action. In a few moments we will have time to consider what commitment each one of us can make to justice. As you entered the church you were given two different coloured cards. Write your commitment on both of them. They will be collected in two baskets, one for each colour. One basket will be offered to God, the second

basket is for our Churches Together group (or whichever group has organized this service) so that we can consider how to enable our congregations to carry out these commitments.

So take a moment now to consider. What step, however small, can you take to further God's justice in our broken world?

*(A song for unity and/or justice may be sung by the choir or music played as the congregants write their commitments.)*

*(Near the end of this song/music, ushers collect the cards in two baskets. One is presented to a representative of the Churches Together group, and the other is put at the foot of the cross.)*

## Offering

**Leader**

What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?  
(Micah 6:8) We commit ourselves to acts of justice.

Gracious God,  
you have shown us your compassion and care for all creation. Your love inspires us to offer these commitments to act justly by loving others wholeheartedly regardless of their cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. Accept now our offerings and transform them into action for the unity of your church. We ask this through your Son Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit, who live with you as one God forever and ever.

**Congregation Amen.**



## The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.  
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father;  
through him all things were made.  
For us and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,  
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary  
and became truly human.  
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the Scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.  
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father [and the Son],  
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.  
We believe in one holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

## Prayers of intercession

**Leader** Let us raise to God our common prayer for the Church and for the needs of all humanity.

**Reader** From the islands and the oceans,  
we worship you, O God, the Creator of life.  
Throughout the mountains and the valleys,  
we praise you, O God, the Saviour of the world.  
With the tongues of all nations,  
we thank you, O God, the Comforter of bodies and souls.  
We come before you bearing our burdens and hopes.  
Today we ask you:

**Congregation** **O God, hear our prayer and grant us your love.**

**Reader** We pray for those who live with injustice.  
Encourage us to lift up their voices and strengthen their hope.  
We pray for those who continue to perpetuate injustice.  
May your kindness transform their hearts and make them  
agents of freedom and peace.  
We pray for every institution and every person who stands  
for justice.  
Let us act justly according to your words.  
Today we ask you:

**Congregation** **O God, hear our prayer and grant us your justice.**

Reader

We pray for the visible unity of the Church.  
We celebrate the rich diversity of your people.  
May we be compelled to fulfil Jesus' prayer that we may be one  
and work together to live your Kingdom.  
Today we ask you:

**Congregation** **O God, hear our prayer and grant us a passion for unity.**

Reader

We thank you for the many colours, cultures, and customs of  
our world.  
In our differences, unite us by your love.  
Enable us to act together to uphold life  
and to make this world a just and peaceful household for  
all humanity.  
Today we ask you:

**Congregation** **O God, hear our prayer and grant us your peace.**

## The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever.  
Amen.

## Hymn/Song

*(during which the basket which is in front of the cross is taken to the door)*

## Sharing peace

*The leader invites the assembly to exchange a sign of peace.*

**Leader** As you leave this gathering you will be invited to take one commitment card from the basket. We invite you to pray for the person who has made that commitment.

## Blessing

**Leader** May God embrace you with love  
and make kindness flow out from you.  
May God ignite courage within you  
and transform you into agents of justice and peace.  
May God grant you humility  
and give you perseverance to nurture unity.

**Congregation Amen!**

*Invite people to take a card from the basket as they leave.*

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# Acknowledgements

## CTBI WPCU 2019 Writers

Each year Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) works in collaboration with various writers from within the four nations to produce these materials for your use. In acknowledgment of this collaboration we have listed below the colleagues who have helped us accomplish this task for 2019:

- |                                   |   |  |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Revd Dr Adrian Burdon (Moderator) | - | Superintendent Minister of the Shaw and Royton Circuit, Manchester                                       |
| Jenny Bond                        | - | Churches Together in England   |
| Revd Peter Colwell                | - | Deputy General Secretary, Churches Together in Britain and Ireland                                       |
| Ruth Harvey                       | - | Director of Place for Hope, Church of Scotland Minister and a member of the Religious Society of Friends |
| Doral Hayes                       | - | Executive Development Officer, Association of Interchurch Families                                       |
| Phillip Mellstrom                 | - | Worship Development Worker, Church of Scotland   |
| Dr Siôn Aled Owen                 | - | Geirda Language Services   |
| Denise Tapfumaneyi                | - | Office Administrator, Churches Together in Britain and Ireland   |
| Wendy Young                       | - | Church Resources Officer, Christian Aid  |

# DAY 4

**Hebrews 13:1-5**

**Matthew 6:25-34**



Shopping in Bali

## Starting Point

God's goodness has provided ample food and fresh water to sustain life for all and yet many people lack these necessities. Human greed frequently leads to corruption, injustice, poverty and hunger. Jesus teaches us not to be concerned about accumulating more material things than we need. We should, rather, be concerned with proclaiming the Kingdom of equity and announcing God's reign of justice. Christians are called to live lives which enable the waters of justice to flow.

## Reflection

I scrape together  
the crumbs of my excess,  
perhaps enough to feed  
the sparrows?

I soak up  
the spilling over of my cup,  
perhaps enough to drown  
my sorrows?

I ask myself,  
when is enough  
ever going to be enough?

You ask me  
if I can spare any change  
and I worry  
that I do not have enough

enough good reason  
enough good will  
enough compassion  
enough empathy  
enough humanity  
enough energy  
enough desire  
enough courage  
to make the change that is  
sorely needed.

# Be content with what you have (Hebrews 13:5)

## Prayer

God of the seasons,  
whether in bountiful harvest,  
or when there is no yield for what  
we have sown;  
let us be content,  
that your grace is sufficient.  
Help us to have the generosity  
of spirit,  
to share what we have  
with those who have not.  
May we all be blessed  
with love, grace, compassion  
and mercy,  
as we seek to walk humbly  
and do justly,  
for your name's sake. Amen.



Slums in Bogor

## Questions

- Share a story of a time when you did not have enough – how did you feel?
- What do you find the most difficult thing to share?
- What do you find the most difficult thing to receive?

## Go and Do (see [www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo](http://www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo))

Pay attention to the advertising messages you receive, on buses, billboards, TV, newspapers, online. Reflect on the messages that we are absorbing everyday about what we supposedly need.

Reflect on your identity as a consumer and consider the steps we can take as individuals and as a community of churches to live simply so others can simply live?

Plan a Lent journey between the churches in your area that involves a fast from buying and how we might count and share our blessings instead. Visit Go and do to find out more.

# DAY 5

**Amos 8:4-8**

**Luke 4:16-21**



## Starting Point

The prophet Amos criticized traders who practiced deceit and exploited the poor. God, who sides with the victims of injustice, will not forget such wrongdoing. In a globalized world, such marginalization, exploitation and injustice is rampant. The gap between rich and poor is becoming wider. Economic demands become the deciding factor in our relationships and the demands of justice are more and more pushed to the side-lines. Christians are called to challenge the prevailing attitudes and to work for justice.

## Reflection

I'll believe it when I see it!  
I've heard it all before!  
'Things can only get better'  
'Audacity of hope'  
Promises of something new!  
Good news?  
They are just bus-slogans when the  
poor remain poor,  
the vulnerable abused and no-one  
speaks out!  
Do you think I can jump up  
and dance  
when my hands and feet are made  
heavy with the anger from  
broken promises?  
And so I stare at you,  
because to stare is all I can do.

But  
if 'good news' means  
rising up against power,  
overturning the tables down the  
road in the big city,  
walking, talking and eating with  
people like us,  
going the whole way with us,  
not departing when things get  
too tough,  
even when the suffering becomes  
too great to endure,  
this would truly be something new.  
It would be good news fulfilled.  
Then I could be tempted to trust  
one more time.

# To bring good news to the poor (Luke 4:18)

## Prayer

God, the bringer of good news,  
forgive our lust for power  
and free us from the temptation to  
oppress others.

Instil in us the determination  
to see your good news made real in  
us and those around us,  
as we share in the mission of your  
Son Jesus

to fulfil your promise of freedom  
from poverty and oppression.

We pray in his name. Amen.



## Questions

- Where do you see deceit and false promises?
- Who are the poor and the powerful in your community?
- What can we do to bring the good news of the gospel to both the powerful and the poor?

## Go and Do (see [www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo](http://www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo))

The World Economic Forum meets from 22nd – 25th January 2019 in Davos, coinciding with when many churches mark the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. It is a moment that highlights the extreme disunity and inequality across the world. 42 people own the same wealth as the poorest 50 percent (Oxfam 2018).

Take time this week to work together for a world where there is unity not just between Christians but where we as human beings can flourish together. Renew your commitment to trade that is fair and ethical and to continue to campaign for taxes to be paid. Visit Go and Do for more information.

# DAY 6

**Jeremiah 10:12-16**

**Mark 16:14-15**



## Starting Point

We are, today, facing a serious global ecological crisis and the survival of the planet is threatened. The passage from Mark's Gospel reminds us that, after his resurrection, Jesus commissioned the disciples to proclaim the good news to the whole creation. No part of creation is outside God's plan to make all things new. So, Christians are called to promote values which reconcile humankind with all creation. When we join with other people in defence of our common earthly home, we are not just engaging in activism, but we are fulfilling the Lord's command to proclaim to all creation the good news of God's healing and restoring love.

## Reflection

Proclaim the good news to all  
of creation,  
not just to my small part.

Oh God, who made the world,  
both body and gift.  
Your creation groans.  
What have we done?  
Land and sea polluted,  
death and destruction,  
communities gone,  
families displaced.  
While we sit in comfort.

Your creation groans.  
What have we done?  
A damaged world,  
a broken system.  
Upheld by stupidity, destruction,  
neglect and greed.  
An abuse of God's gift,  
while we disconnect.

Where is God's voice,  
God's rolling waves of justice?  
We too are God's body,  
thinking beyond ourselves,  
seeing consequences,  
listening for the still small voice,  
swimming against the tide.

Asking what shall I do?

# The Lord of hosts is his name (Jeremiah 10:16)



Air pollution at the edge of Surabaya

## Prayer

Loving God,  
by whose breath all things came  
to be,  
we thank you for the world  
which manifests your glory,  
diversity and beauty.  
Grant us the wisdom to walk gently  
upon the earth  
and to share together your good news  
with all creation. Amen

## Questions

- Where do you see an abuse of human power, leading to destruction or neglect?
- Where do you see God's justice in the created world?
- Where can we make a difference?

## Go and Do (see [www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo](http://www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo))

Wrap up warm, pack a flask and organize a nature walk with the churches in your area. Take it as time to journey together and to reconnect with the natural world of which we are all a part. You could go to a park if you are in the city, or step outdoors if you are in the countryside.

Pray for another way for the world and that we as humanity might work with creation rather than against it. Visit Go and Do to take action in the next stage of the climate justice campaign.

# DAY 7

**1 Samuel 1:13-17**

**Matthew 15:21-28**

## Starting Point

The marginalization and dismissal of women's voices continues in our own times and in our own culture. Within our own churches we are often complicit with attitudes and actions that devalue women. As we become more aware of the issues, so we begin to recognize the many ways in which women are subjected to violence and injustice. Human trafficking, exploitation of women and children, and sexual abuse continue to be the reality for many women. In the scripture readings both Hannah and the Canaanite woman are dismissed as 'worthless' nuisances. But they stand up for themselves, change the perceptions of Eli and Jesus, and achieve their deepest desire. Many women are unable to challenge marginalization and exploitation. As Christians unite in prayer and the study of the Scriptures, truly listening for God's voice, we discover that God also speaks today through the cries of the most abused in society.

## Reflection

*Hannah*

Weeping silently,  
praying from the heart before  
the Lord,  
why does Eli think she is drunk?  
Quiet, dignified, refuting her accuser,  
she is promised her heart's desire.

*The Canaanite woman*

Nameless,  
fierce and canny on behalf of  
her daughter,  
turning insult to advantage,  
rejection to praise resounding  
throughout centuries.  
Great is your persistent faith!

*The 'worthless' woman*

Belittled, discounted, invisible,  
why won't you hear my story?  
Why won't you believe what they are  
doing to me?  
Desperate worm turning,  
speaking out, #MeToo,  
a tsunami of testimony, standing  
strong together,  
mountains pushed aside.  
Nothing is impossible with God.



# Woman, great is your faith! (Matthew 15:28)

## Prayer

Gracious God,  
you are the source of human dignity.  
By your grace and power  
the words of Hannah, from the midst  
of her tears,  
challenged and turned the heart of  
Eli the Priest.

By your grace and power  
the Canaanite woman was  
emboldened to reject rejection  
and move Jesus to heal her daughter.  
As we strive for a Church which  
unites all humanity,  
grant us the courage to reject all  
forms of violence against women  
and to celebrate the gifts  
that women bring to the Church.  
This we pray through Jesus Christ  
our Lord,  
in whom all may find their true  
worth and calling. Amen.



## Questions

- How would you describe a person of great faith? Think of someone you know.
- Can you remember a time when you felt marginalized or dismissed?
- What can we do to empower women, children and other marginalized people in our community?

## Go and Do (see [www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo](http://www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo))

Visit Go and Do to find out how the Side by Side faith movement for gender justice is making great progress across the world.

Organize a local event with the churches in your area to mark and celebrate International Women's Day on Friday 8th March. Visit Go and Do for resources and ideas.

Wear black each Thursday in solidarity with all across the world who are working and longing for the day when there is an end to violence against women. Find out more at Go and Do.

# DAY 8



## Psalm 27:1-4

## John 8:12-20

### Starting Point

Over the past eight days the churches of Indonesia have helped us consider difficult situations facing the world. Many of these have raised questions of justice. The Church has been complicit in many instances of injustice and, through that complicity, we have damaged our unity and diminished the effectiveness of our witness to the world. Christians gather for common prayer, professing common faith and to listen for God's voice. Although the many injustices wound us, we do not lose hope, but are called to action. The Lord is our light and salvation, the stronghold of our lives. We do not fear.

### Reflection

#### *Hope*

Forgive us how we've devalued you:  
'We live in hope' and yet don't hope  
to live,  
'Hope so', when we have none in  
our hearts.

Show us who you really are:  
disturb the deathly ease of  
our despair  
and give us the courage to embrace  
your pain:  
impudent in the face of hate,  
unrelenting under oppression,  
daring to resist the entropy  
of division.

Goad us to take up that felon's cross  
whose agony  
laid empty the grave.

# The Lord is my light and my salvation (Psalm 27:1)

## Prayer

God our hope,  
we praise you for your  
loving kindness.  
Uphold us when we are about to  
give up,  
show us your light when all around  
seems dark.  
Transform our lives that we may  
bring hope to others.  
Help us to live united in our diversity  
as a witness to your communion,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
one God now and forever. Amen.



## Questions

- How has Jesus empowered you to witness to what is right?
- Where in the life of your church or group of churches do you most need the gift of hope?
- What is your best hope for your community?

## Go and Do (see [www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo](http://www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo))

Generate hope by sharing your actions and prayers for justice on the CTBI prayer wall using the #wpcuwall hashtag on Twitter and visit [www.weekofprayer.org](http://www.weekofprayer.org) to see the actions others have taken.

The Christian Aid Week 2019 packs for organizers will be landing on doormats across the UK and Ireland this week. Plan to get involved in this other week of the year that witnesses Christian unity across the UK and Ireland. Visit Go and Do to find out more.

# Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2019



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Twitter: #wpcu2019

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**ISBN: 978-0-85169-409-2**



**Published by**

**Churches Together in Britain and Ireland**

Interchurch House

35 Lower Marsh

London SE1 7RL

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Tel: 0203 794 2288

Registered charity no. 1113299.

Company limited by guarantee,

registered no. 5661787