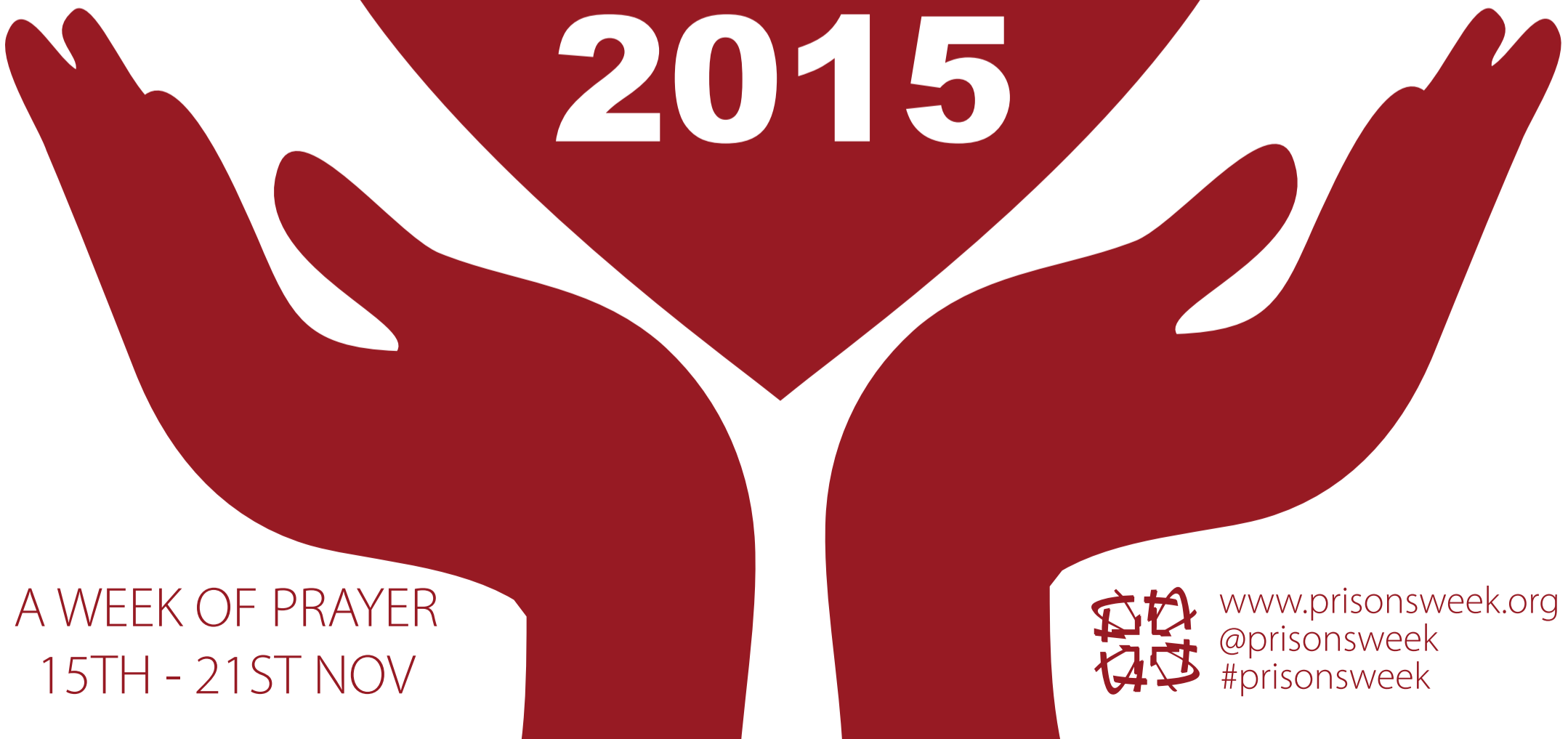


A NEW AND LIVING WAY



**PRISONS
WEEK
2015**



A WEEK OF PRAYER
15TH - 21ST NOV



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...we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way... Hebrews 10 v19b - 20a (NIV)

Hebrews chapter 10 tells us that by God's will, "we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all", and that his body has indeed become a curtain, through which we can enter a new and living way. A new way of life with hearts cleansed and our guilt washed away. A new way of life in hope, holding on to the promises of God, spurring each other on to do good, meeting with and encouraging one another. Let us pray, this Prisons Week, for all people affected by prison, **that we will walk this new way, this new life**, so that with confidence we can come together as God's people, companions on the way, to spur each other on and encourage the good in us, whoever and wherever we are.

SUNDAY: The Prisons Week Prayer - Lord, you offer freedom to all people. We pray for those in prison. Break the bonds of fear and isolation that exist. Support with your love prisoners and their families and friends, prison staff and all who care. Heal those who have been wounded by the actions of others, especially the victims of crime. Help us to forgive one another, to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly together with Christ in his strength and in his Spirit, now and every day. **Amen.**

A NEW AND LIVING WAY

MONDAY: FOR THOSE WHO WORK IN PRISONS Sometimes it can feel as if we who work in prisons have worked ourselves into a rut, into ways of being that are not open to change, nor as hopeful and imaginative as once they were. We see the same behaviour bringing the same lack of progress. May we not be constrained by lack of resources, daily challenges or frustration, but inspired with new hope and new vision by the power of the Holy Spirit, leading us into new and life giving ways of working. May we be able to lead others to a new vision and a living way.

Loving God, show to all who work in our prisons your new and living way to live and to work. Restore them with fresh confidence and vision and give to them the grace and energy to share in Christ's new life, inspiring others to follow your way. May they know that they have faithful companions on the way of love and service that leads to new life. Amen

TUESDAY: FOR THOSE WHO ARE PRISONERS In prison it is easy to forget that life in jail is not all that there is. There is always more, there are new ways and fresh hopes, routes out of past habits or problems into new relationships and patterns of living. May those in prison come to know Christ, have their eyes opened to see a new future with many signs pointing towards a new way of living free from the burdens and failures of the past.

Lord of life, you came and promised abundant life in and through Christ. Give to those who are in prison the faith to claim your promises, the trust and confidence to live in the knowledge of your saving grace, and your assurance that all can be redeemed. May those who are trapped in their past, weighed down by guilt and sorrow, find true repentance and the strength to turn to you and to follow your new and living way, as witnesses of that new life to others. Amen

WEDNESDAY: FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME As victims of crime it is very often difficult to move from a place of hurt, despair, anger and fear to a place of forgiveness and acceptance. Moving forward with damaged lives and without the burden of pain and blame can seem like an uphill struggle. May those who have been victims of crime move on to a new and living way with the help of God's mercy, Jesus' compassion and the Spirit's guidance and power.

Healing Lord, give light in the darkness to those who have been the victims of others. Bring healing and peace, lead them into the ways of wholeness and restoration, and give them new joy in the journey. Take their fear away and fill them with grace and renewed strength to seek and to serve you. May all those who have been the victims of crime and the wrongdoing of others, be comforted and set free from the darkness of past sufferings and pain and be inspired by your Spirit to find and to follow your new way of hope and love, and to see a new vision of their future in your hands. Amen

THURSDAY: FOR ALL WORKING IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM Those who administer justice and serve in our Criminal Justice System, may be worn down and wearied by the weight of criminality and violence they have to deal with on a daily basis. It can be easy to lose confidence in the work that they are called to do, or any sense that justice and mercy continue to come from the

Lord. It can often be difficult working through the criminal justice system to remember the partnership which is shared in the work of building a just and decent community.

God of power and might, of justice and mercy, we pray for all those involved in the administration of the justice system, pour out your Spirit of wisdom and truth on all those who feel that they have lost their way in a system that is under stress and pressure. Renew their vision, build their confidence and give them grace to exercise power and authority in new ways seeking transformation and restoration in the relationships that bind our communities together. Amen

FRIDAY: FOR THE FAMILIES Standing alongside a family member whom you know has hurt someone else, or walking with family members who may have been the victims of crime bring hidden challenges oft forgotten. May all those who have friends or family members in prison find strength and perseverance to seek new ways of offering support, and in turn, be offered renewed strength and vision by others. May those who work to sustain and encourage the victims of crime, as they try to build new lives, be themselves inspired by fresh visions and new to positively affirm the future.

Loving God, your Son healed the sick and comforted those in distress and so we lift to you the families of the victims and the perpetrators of crime. Send your Holy Spirit and give to them fresh hopes and visions to work for new, life affirming ways into your future, keep them strong in their commitment and in their love. Amen

SATURDAY: FOR OUR COMMUNITIES In our own lives it is easy to forget that we are all one in Christ. We are a Resurrection people, called to walk in Jesus' new and living way, the transformed life of hope within the communities where we live and work. We struggle with the issues and problems that arise for the victims of crime and to be a part of their restoration. It may be hard to support those leaving prison, to know what they have done and yet not hold this against them. We need God's strength and wisdom if we are to walk in God's new and living way.

Lord God, maker and ruler of all things, all of us can be narrow minded and short sighted and miss the new and living way that leads to eternal life. Open our eyes, give us your vision and help us to recognise one another as brothers and sisters, made in your image, companions on the journey. Inspire us and renew us, support and sustain us as we search for and find the new and living way that leads us to your perfect and eternal kingdom. Amen

Prisons Week was formed to pray for and raise awareness of the needs of prisoners and their families, victims of offenders, prison staff and all those who care. It consists of representatives of Christian denominations and Christian organisations.

Please pray each day during Prisons Week, but also ask yourself whether there is one thing that you as an individual or as a church can do to help any of the people that you are praying for.

For ideas about how to help, to make a donation or to order more of these prayer leaflets/posters, please visit our website at www.prisonswalk.org where you will also find additional materials and resources for the week. You may also write to:

Prisons Week, c/o Spurgeons, 74 Wellingborough Road, Rushden, Northants NN10 9TY

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The Methodist Church



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