Hear our prayer

December 2018 – March 2019

‘Prayer is a revolutionary act’
Week beginning 2 December
Climate change talks

‘Make me to know your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths.’
Read: Psalm 25:4

Pray the United Nations climate talks (COP24) taking place from 2-14 December 2018 in Katowice, Poland would prioritise those most affected by climate change. Pray for the necessary agreements to be made on how countries will decrease their carbon emissions to ensure that the global temperature rise is kept below 1.5C.

Pray for the effectiveness of the Christian Aid ‘Big Shift’ campaign, as it continues to call on banks to account for how they invest, and ask them to shift out of investing in fossil fuels. Pray for courage for all who raise their prophetic voice in campaigning for another way for the world.

Liberating God, help us to let go of what has held us captive, to reinvest with hope in a world where all creation can flourish Amen.
Week beginning 9 December

South Sudan

‘By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.’

Read: Luke 1:78-79

Blessed are the peacemakers. Pray for a blessing on peacemakers such as Bishop Paride (pictured), who, as part of the South Sudan Council of Churches, has been calling for peace for years. Give thanks for his work and witness. Pray for peace in South Sudan, and for the Christian Aid partners working there to help communities forge a flourishing future, despite a context of conflict.

Pray for our partner UNIDO, who seek to build peace and enable healing for victims of war in Unity State, South Sudan. Give thanks for the practical help they have provided for families to get back on their feet; providing seeds, farming tools and fishing gear as well as agricultural training, water and sanitation.

Prince of peace,
We give thanks for the prophetic voice of your church in South Sudan
We pray for a lasting peace and strength to walk the long road of rebuilding and reconciliation.
Amen.
**Week beginning 16 December**

**Lebanon**

‘And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.’

Read: Philippians 4:7

Give thanks for our work in Lebanon for over 30 years. Pray for the work of our partners with those who have been twice displaced, from Palestine and then from Syria.

Pray for healing for children like nine-year-old Hassan (pictured) who has lived in refugee camps all his life. He hasn’t seen his mum in four years, after his family was separated by war in Syria. Give thanks for the treatment provided for young people like Hassan, deeply affected by the war in Syria, by our partner Association Najdeh’s children’s centre. Pray they would be able to help many more children as a result of our Christmas appeal.

*May the peace of God That passes all understanding Guard the hearts and heal the minds of all children traumatised by war. In the merciful name of God we pray, Amen.*

**Week beginning 23 December**

**Be a peacemaker this Christmas**

‘...and he shall be the one of peace.’

Read: Micah 5:5

Give thanks for Diana Abbas (pictured), a psychologist who works closely with children who are traumatised by conflict. Pray that Diana would know the support and solidarity of communities in the UK and Ireland this Christmas, as we share her story as part of the Christmas appeal.

Pray that Diana would have all the support and resources she needs to continue this vital work. Pray for the resources for more psychologists, for a children’s playground, so that they can play safely, and for educational materials and games for Association Najdeh.

*One of Peace, lead us in your ways to make, build and enable peace this Christmas. Amen.*
Week beginning 30 December
New year, renewed hope.

‘And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful.’
Read: Colossians 3:15

Vilia (pictured) sits outside her hurricane-resistant home with her sons. Her home became a refuge for 54 people during Hurricane Matthew in 2016. You may remember her story from Christian Aid Week this year.

This week we take time to reflect on the year that is ending, calling to mind the places and events that have played most on our minds or weighed on our hearts. Take time to flick or click through the pages of the prayer diaries for the year gone by.

Remind yourself of the wonderful work of God being done through Christian Aid partners that you have supported in prayer. Take a moment to thank God that despite the challenges, there is always hope. May you be refreshed and renewed for the new year.

Thank you, God, for your will at work in the world renew our resolve, this new year, to be agents of change bringers of hope and partners in doing your will on earth as in heaven. Amen.
Week beginning 6 January

Epiphany

‘When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy.’
Read: Matthew 2:10

Christmas does not go out with a whimper but with a burst of epiphany light. Now that the decorations are packed away, we are invited to lift our gaze to the stars, to the light of the world, and anticipate that overwhelming joy of arriving at the destination.

We celebrate the arrival of light. Electricity, through solar power, is providing much-needed light for communities across the world. And it’s demonstrating there is another way, beyond fossil fuels.

For example: Massaran (pictured) demonstrates the solar lamp (which her mother bought from a shop set up by our partner Mali-Folkecenter) she uses to do her homework by.

Pray for the epiphany needed for renewable energy to become the default and norm for the world this year, as we take the essential steps to respond to climate change.

Lead us by your light, O Lord, To an unexpected revelation that might spark a needed revolution and overwhelm the world with joy. Amen.
Week beginning 13 January

Iraq

‘May the LORD bless his people with peace!’
Read: Psalm 29:11

Pray for Christian Aid’s work with six long term partners in Iraq. Pray that those who are most vulnerable – displaced people, refugees and host communities – would be strengthened to better cope with crises and live peaceful lives together.

Grant peace, O God, for those young lives who have known nothing but the disruption of conflict. Amen.

Week beginning 20 January

Nicaragua

‘To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.’
Read: 1 Corinthians 12:7

There was much political unrest in Nicaragua in 2018 which has given rise to many social and economic challenges in the country. Pray for protection and wisdom for our partners as they work to support and enable communities there.

Give thanks for those who share their gifts and insights for the common good of all, such as our partner Adapta Nicaragua. Pray for their vision – to help 1,000 low-income producers of cocoa and honey in Nicaragua – to be realised. May they enable these farmers to be less vulnerable to unpredictable weather and increase the productivity of their crops, leading to greater potential for investment.

Merciful God, may there be peace and prosperity in the beautiful country of Nicaragua in your name, Amen.
Week beginning 27 January

Bangladesh

‘The joy of the Lord is your strength’
Read: Nehemiah 8:10

Give thanks for the substantial programme of work of Christian Aid’s 17 partners in 20 of the most vulnerable districts of Bangladesh. Pray we would continue to help marginalised communities access land, water, forests, and basic government services, and that we would see local and national institutions be more accountable in their decision-making.

Praise God and pray for the work of Christian Aid partner, Dustha Shasthya Kendra (DSK), helping communities adapt to a changing climate. DSK helped Preetilota (pictured) and her husband Shonnashi set up and run a Crab Fattening project. Thank God that, because crab fattening takes a very short time and few expenses, they have found it very profitable at more than 50% profit per month.

Creator God,
For all who dread the waters rising in Bangladesh
we pray for peace, protection and preparation.
And for an awakened conscience for a watching world
To do all it can to support those least responsible
Yet most affected by a changing climate. Amen.
Week beginning 3 February

Bolivia

‘For you, O Lord, are my hope, my trust, O LORD, from my youth.’
Read: Psalm 71:5

Give thanks for the 30 years of Christian Aid’s work in Bolivia, particularly with those living in Amazonian areas, vulnerable to poverty and inequality.

Give thanks for the social enterprise work being developed as part of the Bolivia programme. Pray that it would be successful in providing a source of income for artisan wood workers, meaning they can stay living in their communities rather than having to move to the bigger cities where their standard of living would be lower. The beautiful piece pictured is one of the popular items the artisan workers make; pray that their work would continue to flourish.

Carpenter Jesus,  
Thank you that the artisan workers in Bolivia  
No longer have to make a difficult choice  
They can develop their craft and remain on the land they love. May their work, lives and communities flourish. Amen.

Week beginning 10 February

Zambia

‘The last will be first.’
Read: Mark 10:17-31

Pray for Mina Sakala Mwale, her husband Boniface Mwale, and all small-scale farmers in Zambia. Give thanks for the microfinance they can access set up by Christian Aid’s Joint Country Programme.

Pray for Christian Aid’s work with Dan Church Aid and the Norwegian Church Aid in Zambia in a Joint Country Programme (JCP); may this partnership ensure that resources are well used and the work has a greater reach. Praise God for this witness of unity and collaboration.

Pray for the advocacy work of the JCP to be effective, calling for transparency and equity in how resources are used throughout the country.

Thank you loving God, for the joy of lives turned around and empowered to flourish May that be the experience of many and not the minority in Zambia, Amen.
Week beginning 17 February

Syria

‘Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.’
Read: Luke 6:21

Pray for the work of Christian Aid partners in Syria, working to bring hope and life in the most challenging of circumstances. Continue to pray for peace and give thanks for the stories of hope.

Pray for our partner in northern Syria; that they would continue to support and help women and young people have a better future through entrepreneurship training. Praise God that through previous training, 30 young people and women received small business start-up grants so they can now provide for their families, and contribute positively to their communities.

Lord, give the people of Syria hope, for peace and justice to prevail, for there to be new beginnings for all people living in that land, for freedom to replace fear and for there to be a better tomorrow. Lord, bless your people. Amen.
Week beginning 24 February

Myanmar

‘Do to others as you would have them do to you.’
Read: Luke 6:31

Pray for safety, and for humanitarian agencies to also be able to get help to those in need in Myanmar.

Pray for a lasting solution to this prolonged and tragic situation.

God of peace,
We pray for your wisdom to prevail in Myanmar,
For all to only do unto others what they would have them do.
In your mercy, hear our prayer.
Amen.

Pray for those hundreds of thousands living in refugee camps in Bangladesh, after fleeing Myanmar for safety after government-sanctioned violence. Pray for food supplies, clean water and medical care and for adequate shelter.

Pray for the Bangladesh government and aid agencies to have the resources they need to provide for the ongoing needs of those displaced.

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Week beginning 3 March

Transfiguration

‘And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white.’
Read: Luke 9:29

Edwin Morgan’s poem, The Transfiguration, ends with the powerful words:
‘Our hands made new to handle holy things,
The source of all our seeing rinsed and cleansed
Till earth and light and water entering there
Gave back to us the clear unfallen world...’

Week beginning 10 March

Count Your Blessings

‘Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil.’

Lent has begun. This year, our Count Your Blessings journey takes us to the Philippines to pray with communities living in the wilderness of a changing climate.

Lope and Eva (pictured) are keen community-oriented, environmental enthusiasts and passionate about putting a stop to illegal fishing and climate change. Pray for their vital and prophetic work to flourish, and give thanks that while previously the family struggled to fish and make ends meet, now their livelihood is thriving.

Pray that our partner, ICODE, who have supported Lope and Eva, would continue to help communities in the Philippines adapt and prepare for the effects of climate change on their lives.

Lead us into Lent, Jesus, to count our blessings as we journey with you and with those you love in the Philippines.
Amen.
Week beginning 17 March

Philippines

“"Come," my heart says, "seek his face!" Your face, LORD, do I seek.’
Read: Psalm 27:8

Praying with communities in the Philippines this Lent we meet Mary Ann and her family (pictured above). As one of many living at the sharp edge of a changing climate, she describes the conditions since Typhoon Haiyan (known as Yolanda in the Philippines):

‘Since Yolanda, the weather has really changed. The typhoons now are stronger and the waves are always big. I've experienced several dangerous situations. My thinking is if it’s my time to die then it’s my time.’

Mary Ann had to wait three days to find out if her children were safe after Typhoon Haiyan in 2011.

Pray for Mary Ann and her family. Pray that we might renew our commitment to do all we can to bring a big shift to a dependence on fossil fuels.

Empower, inspire and challenge us all to make and call for the Big Shift required for the care of creation and glory of God.
In your name we pray,
Amen.

Week beginning 24 March

Emergencies

‘For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the LORD.’
Read: Isaiah 55:8

Floods, mudslides, tsunami, conflict are just a few of the many humanitarian emergencies that Christian Aid partners have responded to over the past year.

Give thanks for our effective, fast, long-term and community-led approach to emergencies and for our sister agencies in the Act Alliance who we work through when we don’t have partners immediately in the area affected.

O God,
Have mercy on the lands where the earth has given way.
Where the weather has destroyed livelihoods.
Prosper those who rebuild houses, and strengthen those who rebuild hope so that entire communities may face the future without fear.
Amen.
Week beginning 31 March
Sierra Leone

‘You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with glad cries of deliverance.’
Read: Psalm 32:7

Bring your lament to God that women in Sierra Leone are more likely to die in childbirth than complete high school.

Give thanks for our partner RADA, who are helping to make a difference to that reality by providing support to women to advocate for their rights, and practical help in terms of nurses’ stations, solar lights, and savings and loans to support women to plan for labour and beyond.

Give thanks for the generous legacy to Christian Aid that has made this maternal healthcare work happen. And pray for all who are preparing for Christian Aid Week in May, which this year focuses on this project in Sierra Leone; pray for creativity, energy and abundant support for all.

May the glad cries
Of healthy and safe deliverance be heard more and more in Sierra Leone as a result of Christian Aid Week
Amen.
To pray is to be intentionally present to God, as God is always present to us. It is to be open to the prompting of God’s spirit in our hearts and minds, to be at one with the divine love at the heart of all creation – if that’s not revolutionary, I don’t know what is!

Prayer is a revolutionary act because it is a declaration that we believe change is possible.

Prayer is a revolutionary act because it declares that we are not merely individuals with our own views and needs, but that we join in with a worldwide body, connected to each other and connected through God.

Prayer is a revolutionary act because it is a declaration: that we believe change is possible, and that we join in with a worldwide body, connected to each other and connected through God. God longs to draw to our attention the poor, the captive, the blind and the oppressed. To pray is the starting point of proclaiming the year of the Lord’s favour – prayer leads to jubilee. Prayer can be an act of solidarity, holding before God those who need support and in doing so reminding ourselves of our own need for prayer.

True prayer leads not to a sense of having done our bit, but to a profound longing to transform the world, restoring it to the good creation which is God’s gift to the created.

Prayer is a revolutionary act because it is poetry in the face of a world where words are used as weapons, or only have value for passing exams in an education system of narrow curricula aimed at feeding more human material into a broken system. Poetry allows us to decant the complexity of human experience, and express it in just a few words.

Rev Michaela Youngson is President of the Methodist Conference
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