

## WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

This leaflet is for personal daily devotional use, reflecting on the theme of

### THE GOOD SAMARITAN

against the background of **Burkina Faso**, a landlocked country in West Africa, south of Mali and north of Ghana. Of its population of 21 million, 80% are Muslim and nearly 20% Christian (mostly Roman Catholic). There are also some traditional religions.



The ***Chemin Neuf Catholic and Protestant Churches*** are working together in growing friendship with Muslims, in a country where people are suffering from terrorist attacks, lawlessness, human trafficking and ethnic cleansing, leaving 3,000 dead and 2 million displaced. Invited to produce material for the 2024 Week of Prayer they have suggested that this parable has wide application. The increase of violence in the Holy Land and beyond now gives added poignance.

***Churches Together in Britain and Ireland*** invite consideration of this theme in our own ways as local communities. Whilst in Edinburgh we have no regular group meetings between churches, as people of *Old Saint Pauls* we are invited to study and pray over the *Octave* between

*The Feast of the Confession of Peter 18th and the Conversion of Paul 25th*

On *Friday 19th* at 12.20 our monthly

**Ecumenical Eucharist**

will also reflect this theme.

**DAY 1 Thurs 18** A lawyer stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he said, “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” (Luke 10.25)

**Help us, Lord, to have a life turned towards you.**

If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s. For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both of the dead and the living. (Romans 14. 8-9)

*Personal:* How do you see God’s dream for you unfolding in your life?

*Local:* What might be weakening our witness as churches to God’s promise of abundant life?

*Global:* What more could faith communities be doing to build on their pastoral experiences and global reach to further the work of peace and reconciliation?

*Prayer*

God of life, You have created us to have life, and life in all its fullness. Help your wounded Church to be a source of hope and healing. As we follow Jesus’ way with determination, may we lead others to you.

**DAY 2 Fri 19 (NB Ecumenical Eucharist 12.20-12.50 Memorial Chapel)**

Jesus answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself.” (Luke 10:27)

**Help me, Lord, to receive your love, that I may make you manifest in loving well, both myself and my neighbour.**

So now, O Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you? Only to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord your God and his decrees that I am commanding you today, for your own well-being. (Deuteronomy 10. 12-13)

**DAY 2 Fri 19 (continued)**

*Personal:* How do you see yourself? How do you think God sees you?

*Local:* Does God’s view of you change your view of those around?

*Global:* How does God’s view of you change how you respond to the news?

*Prayer*

Lord, give us the grace to know you deeply, in order to love you entirely. May the gift of your Holy Spirit enable our eyes, ears and minds to receive the unconditional love with which you love us. Purify our hearts that we may always be ready to love our neighbour, however different, as ourselves.

**NB Ecumenical Eucharist 12.20 -12.50 Memorial Chapel**

**DAY 3 Sat 20** “Who is my neighbour?” (Luke 10.29)

**Lord, open our hearts to those we do not see.**

Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. The commandments, ‘You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.

(Romans 13.8-10)

*Personal:* Why do you think the lawyer asked his second question?

*Local:* Who are the people who are excluded from your community and why?

*Global:* How can your church be neighbour to people in other parts of the world with whom you have little contact.

*Prayer*

God of love, who writes love in our hearts, instil in us the courage to look beyond ourselves, to see our neighbour in those different from us and to be the unexpected neighbour, that we may follow Jesus.

**DAY 4 Sun 21** When he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

*(Luke 10.31)*

**May we never turn away from those in need.**

Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight with the wicked fist. Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice to be heard on high. Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush, and to lie in sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast, a way acceptable to the Lord? Is not this the fast that I choose; to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and to bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? Then the light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly. *(Isaiah 58.4-8a)*

*Personal:* What gets in the way of you doing good?

*Local:* Who are the people who behave like the Good Samaritan in your community?

*Global:* How can you widen your vision of being a good neighbour globally?

*Prayer*

Lord Jesus Christ, may our eyes never look away but be open to the world around us. As we travel through life, may we stop and reach out to bind up the wounded, and in so doing experience your presence in them.

**DAY 5 Mon 22** He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. *(Luke 10.34)*

**Lord, help us to see the wounds and find hope.**

O children of Zion, be glad and rejoice in the Lord your God; for he has given the early rain for your vindication, he has poured down for you abundant rain, the early and the later rain as before. The vats shall overflow with wine and oil. I will repay you for the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the hopper, the destroyer and the cutter, my great army, which I sent against you. You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, who has dealt wondrously with you. And my people shall never again be put to shame. *(Joel 2.23-27)*

**DAY 5 Mon 22 (continued)**

*Personal:* What wounds do you see?

*Local:* Where are you recognising signs of hope in your community?

*Global:* What can we give, so we can be part of God's work of healing a broken world?

*Prayer*

Gracious God, the source of all love and goodness: enable us to recognise the needs of our neighbour. Help us to be honest about our need for healing. Change us, so that we might love everyone. Help us to overcome the obstacles of division and build a world of peace for the common good.

**DAY 6 Tues 23** Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. *(Luke 10.34)*

**Lord, turn our churches into 'inns', welcoming those in need.**

'Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on - since you have come to your servant'. *(Gen. 18.4-5)*

*Personal:* When have you seen Christ in someone who was not like you?

*Local:* Are there churches or spaces that act as an 'inn' near you?

*Global:* Is your country welcoming towards those in need?

*Prayer*

God of unity, in Jesus you show us the meaning of hospitality. Help us to become a community, generously welcoming those who feel abandoned. May we become closer to each other as we express your unconditional love.

**DAY 7 Wed 24** Jesus said: “Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour?” (Luke 10.36)

**Lord, show us how to respond to our neighbour.**

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation in love, any sharing of the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus. (Phil.2.1-5)

*Personal:* How can you ‘do mercy’ today?

*Local:* What borders and walls of separation need to be broken down in your locality?

*Global:* How should the Church share the gift of mercy with the world?

*Prayer*

Holy God, your Son Jesus Christ came among us to show us the way of compassion. Help us by your Spirit to follow his example, to serve the needs of all your children, and so witness together as Christians to your ways of love and mercy.

**DAY 8 Thurs 25.** Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise”. (Luke 10.37)  
**Lord, may our mercy be a sign of your Kingdom.**

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

(Rom.12.9-13)

*Personal:* What does this call of Christ imply for your relationships with members of other churches?

*Local:* What is it that people recognise in the flavour of what we do together as the Church that is meaningful?

*Global:* What might merciful unity look like on a global scale?

*Prayer*

Mothering God, who holds the world in loving embrace; may we care for each other as you do. Holy Spirit, giver of life, open us to each other and strengthen our bonds of communion, and grow us in mutual affection. Prince of Peace, give us the resolve to live out the Gospel faithfully, that we may be radical welcomers and reconcilers.