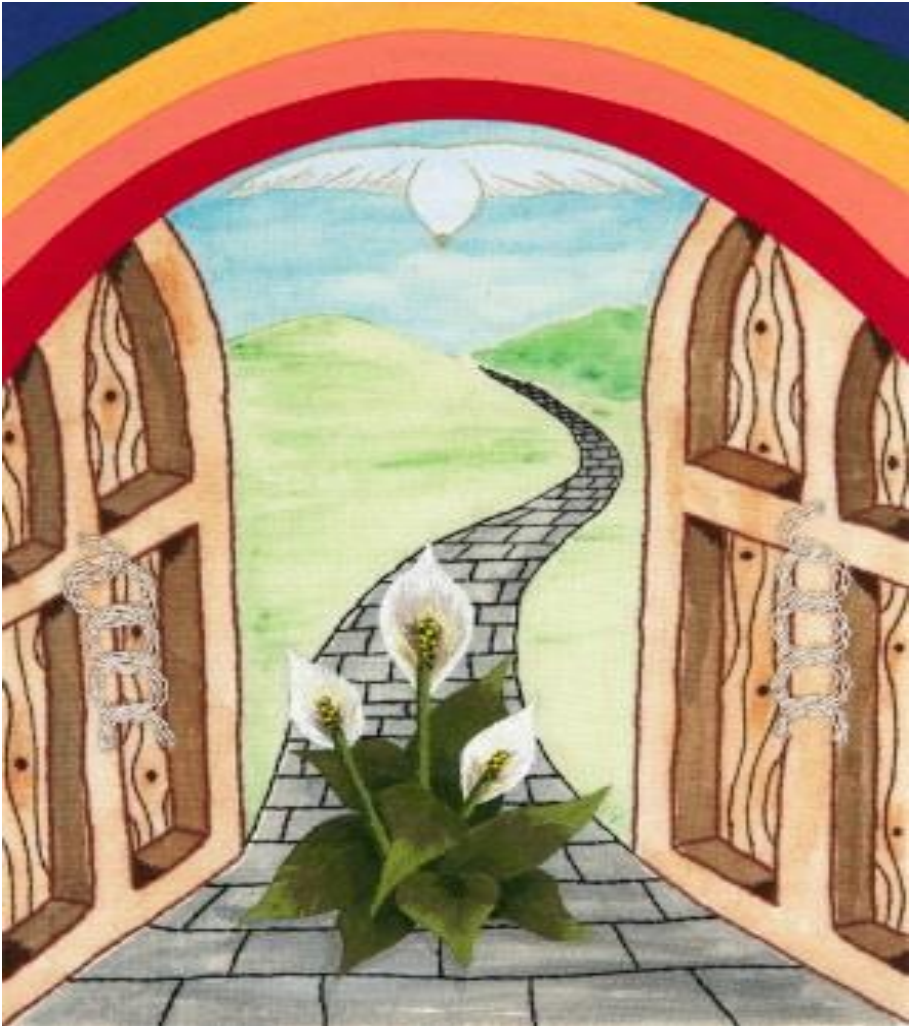


Friday 4th March 2022

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

‘I Know the Plans I Have for You’



**Service written by the Christian women of
England, Wales and Northern Ireland**

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GREETINGS FROM THE SCOTTISH CONVENOR

‘I know the plans I have for you.’

As I write this, Lockdown has ended but we still need to take precautions and follow regulations. New ways of working on ‘Zoom’ have kept us united in ‘Informed prayer and prayerful action’ and fellowship for meetings and services. ‘I know who holds the future.... I’ll trust the God of miracles, give to him my all.’ The words of this hymn come to me when I hear the theme of this year’s service ‘I know the plans I have for you’ (Jeremiah 29:1). In these strange, changed times these words comfort and encourage us and give us hope.

10 days of Prayer leading up to the World Day of Prayer were supported by representatives of all the denominations, showing the ecumenical basis of our prayer movement and will become a regular event. The 2021 services reached many people on Zoom, Face-book and the WDP website.

June 12 -19, 2022 will still be the International Conference but it will be held using an online format. WDP will not be the only international conference to be held in Scotland and many have been made more aware of the need to care for creation. This surely is God’s plan for us (Gen 1:26-28).

Please keep us in your prayers and give support as you are able (check the website regularly for updates – www.wdpscotland.org.uk).

May we go forward in faith, hope and fellowship at local, area and international levels to continue our Ecumenical, International Prayer Movement.

May God bless you all.

Margaret Broster

A letter from WDP International Committee Executive Director

Dear WDP sisters and friends,

“I Know the Plans I Have for You”
Prepared by WDP England, Wales and Northern Ireland
March 4, 2022

In the midst of all the uncertainties we are living under this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the WDP 2022 theme emerges like a balm of confidence. It is an invitation to place our trust in God in times of suffering.

The program is based on the letter that the prophet Jeremiah wrote to the exiles in Babylonia (Jeremiah 29:1-14). The exiles were in a context of suffering, uncertainty, and opposing views on how to respond to the moment. Today, we come together to hear the stories of women who feel excluded, listen to the fear of a child refugee and learn to see the context of a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi-faith society in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (EWNI).

For Jeremiah, God’s plan was clear, and we share this assurance by singing it. What is your WDP hope? Let the children and the youth guide your response. Then, come to celebrate hope by lighting a candle on behalf of the seven regions of the world, knowing that our prayerful action can bring to life the promises of God who, like a Mother and Father, cares for us all.

We are given a seed of hope to ponder where it needs to be planted in our lives and in our communities. Take this opportunity, to raise awareness on the needs of your community and offer the gifts of prayers and commitment. A seed, nourished by prayers of intercession and actions of love, bind us together around the world.

We want to thank all the women and young women who came together as World Day of Prayer to develop the worship service and educational materials. We appreciate the EWNI Committee’s effort to reach out to form a collaborative and diverse group. If your WDP Committee wants information about projects and initiatives recommended by EWNI WDP Committee, please contact us.

May God, who plans no harm, sustain the world in love and hope.



Rosângela Oliveira,
WDPIC Executive Director

Preparation Notes

Plan well in advance of the day of the service: Invite an intergenerational group of girls and women to lead the service.

PREPARATION

A table should be placed in a prominent and easily accessible position in the worship area. It should be covered in a blue cloth (symbolising the sea around our islands), with elements of green for the land and grey/brown for our towns and cities. On the table are placed a Bible open at Jeremiah 29:11 and seven candles. At various points in the service the candles will be lit.

A globe or world map could be placed in the centre of the table, encircled by differently coloured paper figures (symbolising our diversity) and symbols and pictures of England, Wales and Northern Ireland could be displayed nearby. See www.wdpscotland.org.uk for examples.

REFLECTION /RESPONSIVE ACTION

There are several ways this can be done. People could be given pieces of card /paper on which to write their thoughts in the pauses. They could share thoughts with the person sitting next to them or they can simply think and pray silently. It is important to give people enough time in the pauses to think.

BEFORE THE SERVICE

Give each person in the congregation a seed, or a small packet of seeds, as they arrive.

HYMNS – Numbers offered are from various Hymn books:

CH4 – C of Scotland ver. 4 / StF – Sing the Faith / MP – Mission Praise

SF – Songs of Fellowship/ JP – Junior Praise / Lau – Laudate

SA – Salvation Army songbook

Commissioning Prayer

Towards the end of the service (p16) there is the option of using this prayer, by kind permission of England, Wales & N. Ireland (EWNI) World Day of Prayer. Some groups use this and find it very meaningful and helpful.

Worship Service

A message from England, Wales & N. Ireland

We have used the phrase “God our Mother and our Father” in this service not intending to be provocative but only to draw attention to the wider imagery of God and to try and take a small step towards an understanding of God beyond gender. We have similarly avoided using either male or female pronouns but talk of God as God and not “he” or “she”. WDP is a women-led movement and perhaps by introducing some balance to a predominantly masculine view of God we can encourage women and men to be open to new and deeper experiences of the love God has for all creation. The only places in the service where we have used ‘he’ and ‘him’ are in Lina’s and Emily’s stories, where we have kept the words they themselves used.

OPENING PRAYER

Reader 1: In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, God said, ‘Let there be light!’

A candle is lit as we say together;

All: **God, our Mother and our Father,
we light a candle of hope
to celebrate with all your people
as we watch and wait for your plans and promises to be fulfilled.**

Reader 1: The people walking in darkness have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep darkness
a light has dawned.

All: **God of hope,
In our busy-ness may we find space
to see you at work in our lives and our world.
May we be people who radiate your hope
as we worship in celebration today. Amen.**

(Pause – moment of reflection)

WELCOME AND GREETING

Leader 1: Welcome to our World Day of Prayer service, celebrated today all over the world in seven regions. This is reflected in our service as we light seven candles.

And warmest greetings from the women of England, Wales and Northern Ireland: three countries which form part of the United Kingdom. Together with Scotland, they are known as the British Isles, which is situated in north-western Europe.

We rejoice that, although they have many things in common, they are a diverse people. Over the years the British Isles have welcomed people from all corners of the Earth, some who have chosen to come, and others who are refugees fleeing from persecution in their own lands. Today the country is a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-faith society. England, Wales and Northern Ireland are proud of the diversity and anxious to preserve the differences of language and culture and we rejoice with them in this.

We rejoice in the variety of natural beauty found in the British Isles: its mountains and craggy moorland, its fertile fields and pastureland, its rolling downs and spectacular coastal scenery; its small islands.

The theme of our service today is God's promise, found in the book of Jeremiah: 'I Know the Plans I Have for You'. Focusing on freedom, forgiveness, justice and God's peace, let us see how this promise can be a sign of hope for all people.

HYMN: **Let all the World in every corner sing**

(CH4 122 / Lau 716 / StF57) Words: George Herbert, Music: Basil Harwood

Leader 1: The prophet Jeremiah lived some 600 years before the birth of Christ, at a time of great political crisis. The southern kingdom of Judah had been invaded by the Babylonians and many of its people taken from Jerusalem into exile. The people had lost the land they believed God had given them and they longed to return, but the future looked bleak. Our chosen passage is part of a letter from Jeremiah, setting out

God's plan for the exiles: they are to stay where they are and make new lives for themselves in this foreign land.

BIBLE READING – Jeremiah 29: 1 - 14

Reader 2: 'These are the words of the letter that the prophet Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem to the remaining elders among the exiles and to the priests, the prophets, and all the people Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. This was after King Jeconiah, and the queen mother, the court officials, the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, the artisans, and the smiths had departed from Jerusalem.' (*Jeremiah 29:1-2*)

Reader 1: 'Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, that they may have sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let the prophets and the diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams that they dream, for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in my name; I have not sent them, says the Lord.' (*Jeremiah 29:4-9*)

Reader 2: 'For thus says the Lord: Only when Babylon's seventy years are completed will I visit you and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me, says the Lord, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven

you, says the Lord, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.’(Jeremiah 29:10-14)

SONG ‘For surely I know the plans’ (*sung twice*)

Words and music by Lucy Hole, composed especially for the 2022 WDP EWNI program, ©WDPIC. Used with permission.

For surely I know the plans I have for you.
The Lord said:
Surely I know the plans I have for you.
Plans for your welfare, plans to not harm you,
And to give you hope again.
For surely I know the plans I have for you.

A 2nd candle is lit as we say together;

All: **God, our Mother and our Father,
we light a candle of hope
to celebrate with all your people
as we watch and wait for your plans and promises to be
fulfilled.**

PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

Leader 1: God told the people of Judah to care for the people and the place where they had been exiled. Often, we fall short of caring for God’s world and God’s people. Let us bring those times to God and ask God’s forgiveness.

Leader 2: Merciful God, we come to you in confession.
We are aware that much of the suffering our sisters and brothers across the world face is a result of our colonial past. We acknowledge this and are sorry that, as a country, we have often put ourselves first, at the expense of others.
Silence

Leader 2: Gracious God, forgive us

All: **God, in your mercy, forgive us**

Leader 1: We think of your beautiful world and how we have taken it for granted and squandered its resources.
Silence

Leader 2: Generous God, forgive us
All: **God, in your mercy, forgive us**
Silence

Leader 2: Our fellow sisters and brothers cry out to you; we have failed to love them well. We have not loved our neighbours as you have taught us. Sometimes we have not even loved ourselves.
Silence

Leader 2: Compassionate God, forgive us
All: **God, in your mercy, forgive us**
Silence

All: **God, in your mercy, help us to act on your call for repentance.**
Silence

Leader 2: Jesus, thank you that through your sacrifice we are forgiven. Holy Spirit, transform our hearts and minds, so that we may live and love as Jesus showed us.

All: **Amen** *Pause for reflection*

STORIES OF 3 WOMEN

Leader 1: The people of Jeremiah's time found themselves in a place where they did not want to be: away from their homeland and excluded from their culture, worship and homes.

There are many people who have settled in the British Isles after having fled their homeland and culture. In the land of prosperity there are those who are poor. And in the midst of crowded cities many are lonely. How can we tell all their stories? We cannot. But we can hear voices telling us to listen to what it means to feel excluded in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

So what does it mean to feel excluded in England, Wales and Northern Ireland?

Immediately three women, seated in different places on the edges of the worship area, jump up and call out the answers to this question.

- Lina:** Living in poverty, regularly missing a meal so that my children might not go hungry.
- Natalie:** Living in fear because my partner abuses me, physically, emotionally, and sexually.
- Emily:** Living in loneliness and isolation because of my age, disability, ethnic origin or sexuality.

HYMN: ‘**Longing for light.**’ (CH4 543 / StF 706)

During the singing of the hymn, Lina, Natalie and Emily are seen walking to the table.

When the hymn has finished, they light the third candle and say together

Lina, Natalie & Emily:

**God, our Mother and our Father,
we light a candle of hope
to celebrate with all your people
as we watch and wait for your plans and promises to be
fulfilled.**

STORIES OF HOPE

Leader 1: There are times in our lives when we find ourselves in situations where we do not want to be. Sometimes, like the exiles in Babylon, we cannot see a way forward and long for God to intervene. When God does, it is often in ways that we could never have imagined and not at all as we expected.

Listen to the true stories of the three women who found themselves living in difficult situations, and of how God’s plans for them have blessed them in very unexpected ways.

LINA’S STORY

My name is Lina (*Lee-nah*) and I have helped my son to bring up my four grandsons after their mother left them. My son struggles with mental health issues and cannot work, so there is very little money for even their basic needs. I used to go without food myself in order to buy food for him and the boys.

Five years ago, my grandsons attended an event at my local church, where they were welcomed warmly. Since then, this church has become our wider family. They help us with regular donations of food from the Foodbank and have helped us with clothing and holidays for the family.

One member of the congregation is a retired teacher and helped the grandchildren with their homework on a Wednesday night. Through the love of this church, we have found a safe space, people who love us and will not let us down. I thank God for the way that he has worked out his plans to bless us, to give us hope and a future, through my local church.

Lina lights the fourth candle

The music 'For surely I know the plans' is played once as we say together;

**All: God, our Mother and our Father,
 we light a candle of hope
 to celebrate with all your people
 as we watch and wait for your plans and promises to be
 fulfilled.**

NATALIE'S STORY

It doesn't always feel like fear when I am with him. Mostly I feel uneasy, like I am treading on eggshells, unsure of what he is going to do next or what he is going to make me do next. His indifference towards me stings. His unkindness shrivels me up inside. His threats make me paranoid. God is a weapon he uses to control me. I am a shell of who I used to be.

When I was pregnant, he hurt me so badly that the baby was born early. In the days I spent in the hospital, not knowing if my child would live, God spoke to me; "Stop praying for your child to live. Instead, pray for my will to be done." I said, "Yes" to God, who offered only to be present, with no promises that everything would be okay. And yet....

.... my baby is now 13 years old, happy and healthy. My life has been filled with more joy and beauty than I ever thought possible and I am free from the man who abused me so terribly. No longer do I fear; God has good plans for me.

Natalie lights the fifth candle.

The music 'For surely I know the plans' is played once as we say together;

**All: God, our Mother and our Father,
 we light a candle of hope
 to celebrate with all your people
 as we watch and wait for your plans and promises to be
 fulfilled.**

EMILY'S STORY

I had plans for my life. I would go to University and become a teacher. But when I was 16, I was diagnosed with brain tumours and needed lots of surgery. One operation saved my life but caused me to lose my hearing. I was terrified in my world of silence. All thoughts of a career in education vanished. I struggled to understand what people said to me as I watched their lips move. I struggled to understand sign language, too. I felt caught between the hearing world and the deaf world, fitting into neither. I became very isolated and withdrawn. I wanted to end my life - but God had other plans. As I gradually accepted that my plans could not happen, I asked God to use my life for his glory, and he began to show me his plans. He wanted me to use my story for him. He knows the plans he has for me and I have learned that I do not need to know them. I need to trust him. I am better at lip reading and sign language now, although I still struggle to understand what people say sometimes. But I know that, whatever I go through, God whispers his peace and love into my heart. And I do not need to be able to hear to know his whisper.

Emily lights the sixth candle

The music 'For surely I know the plans' is played once as we say together;

**All: God, our Mother and our Father,
 we light a candle of hope
 to celebrate with all your people
 as we watch and wait for your plans and promises to be
 fulfilled.**

Short pause for reflection

Reader 1: The people walking in darkness have seen a great light ...

Reader 2: Jesus said: "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life" (John 8:12)

Leader 1: God's promises of freedom, forgiveness, justice and peace are fulfilled in Jesus. He is the life-giving light which even the deepest darkness cannot extinguish. It is through Jesus that we are able to come close to God and discern God's plans for us.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Leader 2: God of the past, the present and the future,
we thank you that you love us faithfully and uniquely.
You loved us before we knew anything about you:
you care for us in every moment of our lives;
you know our deepest thoughts, our highest hopes and our
greatest fears;
you know the best and the worst in us, and still you love us.
Thank you that you never let us go.
Thank you for the plans and promises you have made for us,
which give us hope for today and tomorrow.
God of our past, our present and our future,
receive our thanks and praise,
which we offer in Jesus' name.

All: Amen.

HYMN: **For the beauty of the earth**

(CH4 181 / Lau 726 / StF102 / MP 152 / JP 48 / SF 112)

Words: Folliot Sandford Pierpoint, Music: David Evans

REFLECTION /RESPONSIVE ACTION

Leader 3: As we reflect upon God's promise to the people of Judah, at each pause, feel free to write or draw your thoughts – or simply think silently.

“For surely I know the plans I have for you,” ‘says the Lord,’ plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you.” (Jeremiah 29:11)

As you came in you were given a packet of seeds (or a seed).
A seed is full of potential and hope.
Hold your seed(s) and ponder.

What might God be saying to you?

What hope does God have for you and your future?

Pause to think and write down or draw your thoughts.

We pray for what is in our hearts...

Silence for personal prayer

Leader 3: What stops you from hearing God's call?

Pause

We pray that we might hear God's voice...

Silence

Leader 3: Seeds need the right conditions to grow.

Where do seeds of hope need planting in your life?

Pause

Where do seeds of hope need planting in your community?

Pause

Where do seeds of hope need planting in your country?

Pause

How can these seeds of hope be nourished
in your life; in your community; in your country?

Pause

We pray for these places and situations...

Silence

Leader 3: Take these seeds and plant them as a reminder of God's
constant love and your hopes.

A seventh candle is lit as we say together;

**All: God, our Mother and our Father,
we light a candle of hope
and participate with all your people
in responsive prayerful action
to bring to life the plans and promises you have for us**

SONG 'For surely I know the plans' (sung twice).

For surely I know the plans I have for you.

The Lord said:

Surely I know the plans I have for you.

Plans for your welfare, plans to not harm you,

And to give you hope again.

For surely I know the plans I have for you.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

- Leader 2:** Let us pray:
For all who are hungry, who do not have enough to live with dignity; that they may find generosity in their communities.
Silence
- Leader 2:** God, in your mercy
All: **Hear our prayer.**
- Leader 2:** For all who are abused in any way, whose homes or places of study or work are places not of safety but of fear; that they may be strengthened and freed from abusers and fear.
Silence
- Leader 2:** God, in your mercy
All: **Hear our prayer.**
- Leader 2:** For all who live in loneliness or isolation; that they may know friendship and community.
Silence
- Leader 2:** God, in your mercy
All: **Hear our prayer.**
- Leader 2:** For all who are shunned, from whom people turn away; that they may be included and know themselves loved as children of God.
Silence
- Leader 2:** God, in your mercy
All: **Hear our prayer.**
- Leader 2:** For all who have been displaced, who live in exile and in fear of losing everything they have ever known; that they may know God's peace and strength in their lives.
Silence
- Leader 2:** God, in your mercy
All: **Hear our prayer.**
- Leader 2:** Let us commend ourselves and all for whom we pray, to the mercy and protection of God. In the name of our Saviour Jesus Christ,

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Leader 1: Let us pray as our Saviour taught us. (in your own tradition)

**Gweddi'r Arglwydd
(in Welsh)**

Ein Tad yn y nefoedd
Sancteiddier dy enw;
Deled dy deyrnas;
Gwneler dy ewyllys,
ar y ddaearfel yn y nef.
Dyro ni heddiw ein bara
Beunyddiol
a maddau ni ein troseddau,
fel yr ydym ni wedi maddau'r
rhai a droseddodd yn ein herbyn;
a phaid â'n dwyn brawf,
ond gwared ni rhag yr Un drwg.
Oherwydd eiddo ti yw'r deyrnas
a'r gallu a'r gogoniant am byth.
Amen

**The Lord's Prayer
(In English)**

Our Father, who art in heaven
Hallowed be thy name
Thy Kingdom come
Thy will be done on earth
As it is in Heaven
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our debts
As we forgive our debtors
And lead us not into temptation
But deliver us from evil
For the kingdom, the power and
The glory are yours
For ever and ever
Amen

OFFERING (*During this hymn an offering will be taken*)

HYMN: 'Make me a channel of your peace.'

(CH4 528 / StF707 / SA 751 / MP 456 / JP 161/ SF 381)

Words traditionally ascribed to St. Francis of Assisi. Music by Sebastian Temple arranged by Martin Neary © 1967, 1997, OCP. All rights reserved. Dedicated to Mrs Francis Tracy.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION FOR OFFERING

Leader 2: Faithful God, knowing that your plans for our lives are good and your promises to be trusted, we offer these gifts in praise and thanksgiving. May they be used according to your will for the benefit of all your people.

Commissioning Prayer *(Optional)*

Pass the large lit candle from the table to a representative of next year's host church and say the following prayer:

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the World Day of Prayer which is taking place throughout the world today, and has been prepared by the Christian women of England, Wales & N.Ireland.

Many Christians gather together to praise you and we thank the Priests/ Ministers/ Pastors and people of for hosting this world-wide service of prayer in Scotland. With joy we pass this candle towho representswho will host next year's service, prepared by Christian women of Taiwan.

HYMN: **The day thou gavest** (CH4 220 / StF 147 / MP641 / JP 236)
John Ellerton Tune: St Clement

BLESSING and DISMISSAL

Leader 2: We thank you, loving God, that we have been gathered in your presence and shared in worship.
Now may we go forth into the world, confident that we are your children, knowing that you have called us by name.
In our daily life may we align ourselves to your will, seeking direction to follow your plan and patience in the waiting.
In the challenges and joys we face, may we be assured we do not face them alone.
Let us go in peace, hope and love,
in the name of God, our Mother and our Father,
in the name of the Son and
in the name of the Holy Spirit.

All: **Amen**



Bible Study - Jeremiah 29:1-14

Preparation

The Bible Study is designed to be a creative group conversation. Read the section ****Creative Ways of Reading, Listening and Reflecting** to choose the group exercise to be used and prepare beforehand the materials, for example: puppets, scenery, background music, Biblical map and current global map, photos of situation that can be perceived as experiences of exile.

Read the section **A Word on God our Mother and our Father** in the Worship Service to be aware of the context for the opening prayer.

Opening Prayer

God, our Mother and our Father, we come to you today to study your true word. We declare we are open to hear from you and to accept your good plans for our lives. We love you and thank you for your Son Jesus Christ. Amen.

Setting the Scene

The seventh century BC was a period of great turmoil for Israel, Judah and the surrounding nations. The brutal Assyrian Empire, which had brought the kingdom of Israel to its knees, was failing. In its place, the powerful Babylonians were gaining influence. It was into this very unstable world that Jeremiah was born, around 650BC. His prophetic calling came around 627BC. God had chosen him while he was still in the womb and he was to be appointed as a prophet to the nations. Young Jeremiah felt ill-equipped for so great a task, but God touched his lips and assured him of his powerful presence (**Jeremiah 1:4-10**). His ministry proved to be very demanding and required great courage. It involved imprisonment and hardship. The Bible passage chosen for our World Day of Prayer service shows the fierce opposition that Jeremiah had to face.

The book of Jeremiah was written around the time of the Judean exile in Babylon (*modern-day Iraq*). Judah had been conquered and their holy city of Jerusalem lay in ruins. Their temple - the place they believed God to reside - had been destroyed. An elite community of the people of Judah - the king and queen mother, the leaders, nobility and craftsmen - had been carried off into exile. Their future looked bleak. Psalm 137 shows their desperate homesickness and longing to return eventually to Jerusalem.

Without their temple, they could not offer sacrifices – a practice which was an integral part of their faith.

Read Jeremiah 29:1-14

Creative Ways of Reading, Listening and Reflecting

**Resources for the Group Exercises can be found on the WDP website at www.wdpScotland.org.uk

- Read the passage from Jeremiah aloud twice or even three times, very slowly. After each reading, silently reflect upon the verses and spend a few minutes listening to God. In this way, you will allow the Word of God to flow into your heart and mind.
- Dramatise the reading, maybe by using puppets and basic scenery and playing background music.
- **Look at a map of the geographical area of Babylon and Jerusalem in biblical times and in the 21st century. Identify the journey taken by the exiles. Draw a map to represent your life journey and trace God's plans throughout. Share your hopes for your own life and that of your church and community.
- **Look at photos representing forms of exile. Try to imagine what it feels like to be exiled from the community, if you were for example a refugee, a prisoner, elderly, unemployed, a lonely or a homeless person. Choose one situation that may resonate with you and say why.

Our chosen passage is part of a letter that contains God's message to Jeremiah for the exiles. Jeremiah exhorted the exiles to build houses, plant gardens, have a family and seek the welfare of the city, where God had sent them to live. God also alerted them not to listen to false prophets and diviners who were promising that they would soon be returning home. God's message was clear: pray on behalf of the city that you live in, seek their welfare and you will find your welfare. Jeremiah urged them to accept their current situation and be prepared to settle down.

Questions for you to think about and share:

- How do you think the exiles reacted to the news that they must be prepared to settle in a foreign land? What would your reaction have been?
- What were the conditions they had to follow before they could return home? How would you have felt after hearing about God's plans?

After the exhortation, a promise! 'I know the plans I have for you.' God had not forgotten his promise to bring the people back to their own land, but it would be 70 years before this would be accomplished. Seven years would have seemed a long time to most, but 70? The exiles' dreams must have been shattered with the reading of this letter. Many would have felt without hope. After so many years, it would be the next generation going home to Judah!

Hope and a future

God's words *did* contain hope. For their part, the people of Judah had to rebuild their relationship with God that had been broken through sin and disobedience to his commandments. When they searched for God earnestly through prayer and worship, they would find him. He also wanted them to build a relationship with the local inhabitants.

They would achieve this in community and through prayerful action. Their time of waiting in Babylon would be difficult and frustrating, however, when this time was over their future would be restored and their families could return to their homeland, as God had promised.

Hope for today's world

Across today's world, millions of people are in exile, having left their countries because of war, persecution, fear and hunger. Others are on a dangerous and difficult journey to what they hope will be a place of safety. For so many there is little possibility that they will be able to return home in the near future.

Questions for you to think about and share

- Is it possible for someone to feel that they are in a kind of exile, even if they are safe in their own country?
- How do we pray with those experiencing exile and maybe help them? How can we bring hope to people in situations from which they feel there is no way out?

Prayerful Action

Jeremiah's letter exposed the political and social tensions of his time, but

also a promise to guide them to their future: I know the plans I have for you. We need to work towards a society where there is justice for all, especially for those who are the most vulnerable. Across the world we need to work together to address the big problems we face, such as global warming, poverty, diseases, forced migration, refugee crisis or lack of love for those with whom we disagree. We believe that God has plans for each of us, plans for good and not for harm. It is our turn to put in actions our hope for the future. God is always with us, even when it may be difficult to understand.

Listen to a story of prayerful action. The full version of the story is in the Children's and Youth Programme.

I am Grace. I'm 24. My hope is...that all those who seek safety in the UK are welcomed, embraced, and given the support they need. When the news in the UK began to fill with stories of people crossing the Mediterranean in dinghies and risking their lives to reach Europe, I couldn't ignore it. My heart broke that people had been forced to flee their homes and were risking their lives to reach our continent.

My God is a God of justice and this was a serious and harmful injustice that was happening on my doorstep. In September 2017, I moved to Calais to volunteer with the Refugee Community Kitchen. I ended up staying for 6 months, working as a driver and distribution lead. God gave me an amazing support network – both in Calais and from home. I think people found hope in friendship.

- Grace's hope is for refugees. What's your hope?
- Grace was passionate about restoring worth to refugees and her passion led her to serve in a practical way. What steps can you take this week which will help transform an injustice.
- We want to create a movement of passionate hope-bringers across the world. Share an issue that you're passionate about by writing it on a piece of paper, sharing it with the group, and then uploading it on social media using #WDPhope.
- May we be inspired by this reading from Jeremiah to trust that ultimately God will bring a perfect plan to fruition in our lives. We pray that God, our Mother and our Father, will use us to help others when life seems too great a struggle.

Artwork

Artist: Angie Fox



Angie Fox is an Embroiderer and Vestment Designer.

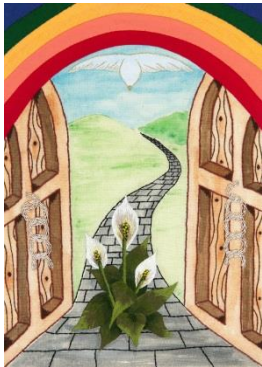
Growing up in Norfolk, she learned to knit and sew from her mother.

Angie is married to Peter, an Anglican Priest. They have 3 sons and 2 grandchildren and live in Castle Donington near Derby.

A love of traditional worship has inspired her in designing and making church vestments. She now designs and makes bespoke vestments to order. “I get some of my best designs when I should be listening to my husband's sermons!” she laughs.

“I am thrilled to be chosen to represent, in art, the prayers of the women of my country. I have so many memories of organising and participating in WDP services at home and abroad and I love the feeling of togetherness, knowing that, all over the world, the same prayers are being offered in many languages, and cultures, churches and meeting places.”

Artist's Explanation



Medium: Textile – Embroidery, Appliqué and Metalwork

Following the theme given, I have used several images to depict the key words as follows:

Freedom: an open door to a pathway across an endless open vista

Justice: broken chains

God's Peace and Forgiveness: the dove of peace and a peace lily breaking through the pavement

Over all, a rainbow which has come to represent all these things from the story of Noah through to the modern day. It is a symbol of the overreaching love of God.

Country Background Information

1. Places and Spaces

England, Wales, and Northern Ireland form part of the United Kingdom along with Scotland. Although there is much that we share, we are also diverse, with different languages, cultures and governments.

We are steeped in history. Many of our cities have beautiful ancient buildings, dating back to medieval times, including cathedrals and churches built by our Christian ancestors.

Since the 1600's the UK has grown economically through its trading exploits and this brought a great deal of governmental benefit and economic stability to our trading partners, as well as to ourselves. It resulted in industrialisation and enabled great discoveries in science, maths, medicine and industry to be made. The culture of the UK has radically changed since those days with the emphasis now on aid and encouragement.

2. People, Diversity and Migration

Our population is approximately 65 million people mostly living in the dense urban areas of the cities. These populations have been enriched over the centuries as the influence of economics attract people from both far and near. Integration of all peoples constantly weigh on the mind of government with legislation in place to discourage discrimination.

3. Finding Our Place in the World

In 2020, having left the European Union (EU) the people of the United Kingdom face new challenges to establish our place in the world. The emphasis being on taking care of the world and making it more sustainable for the future. With a downturn in religious observance, like much of Western Europe, the church continues to be at the forefront of projects to help those in need, both locally and on the world stage.

4. How We Live

Each Part of the UK have their own character and culture, and many of these have similarities that span across all the countries. We attempt to

hold on to traditions of etiquette, politeness and common courtesy, and the self-deprecating, witty, sometimes sarcastic British sense of humour has been exported throughout the world.

Arts, Culture and Sports

England, Wales and Northern Ireland have been influenced and shaped by an array of extraordinary talents, through science, music, theatre, poetry, literature, dance, festivals and other forms of art.

Music is a vital part of our culture, and across the nations it is expressed in many different forms. With song poetry and hymns recited around the world originating from the countries.

We are also a nation of sports lovers, participating in all sports that are compatible with our environment and even some suitable for when the sun shines.

Food and Drink

The slightly damp climate in these three countries means that traditional food is more often comforting and warming. Stew and dumplings, hot pies and sweet puddings have been enjoyed for hundreds of years. There is a strong sense of social identity with people meeting up in cafes, restaurants and public houses. Our tastes have expanded to cover food from all over the world, particularly from Chinese and Indian.

More information about food and drink, including recipes, can be found on EWNI WDP website <http://www.wwdp.org.uk/>

5. Women and Family

Since the 1950's the birth rate has fallen and infant mortality now stands at 4 per thousand. Social services and other groups have been formed to help improve the lives of those living in poverty and to support those with disabilities, whether they be mental or emotional.

In education, women have made greater use of the universities, now making up more than half of those studying for first degrees.

Life expectancy for women in the UK is 82 years.

6. World Day of Prayer in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

As a single World Day of Prayer organisation, the three voices of England, Wales and Northern Ireland, have come together to present this years'

service, recognising our differences but also our common ground. The first World Day of Prayer service was held here in 1932. The first services were held in the London area and the wave of prayer moved across the west of England to Wales and Northern Ireland. In those days, travel was not as easy as it is now so it was more sensible for the women of England and Wales to set up their own National Committee and then later, joined with Northern Ireland.

There are now about 3,000 branches holding more than 4,000 services every year. In 2019, 275,000 copies of the order of service were printed. In response to what we saw as a need to involve younger participants, our WDP now organizes an annual Y Pray? event in May, when younger women are encouraged to join us for a weekend of prayer, fellowship and entertainment.

CONTINUE TO PRAY FOR

- Our involvement with young people
- our environment
- peace in our Nation
- that **all** may live in unity, in love and in peace.

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World Day of Prayer Movement

In 1910 more than 400 women met for the World Mission Conference (Edinburgh) bringing their experience and wisdom developed through years of ecumenical partnership in many countries. WDP was born. Today World Day of Prayer is an ecumenical prayer movement bringing together millions from over 100 countries to pray, worship and learn each year.

Through World Day of Prayer, people are encouraged:

- to become aware of the whole world and no longer live in isolation
- to be enriched by the faith experience of Christians of other countries and cultures
- to take up the burdens of other people and pray with and for them
- to become aware of their talents and use them in the service of society
- to affirm that prayer and action are inseparable and both have immeasurable influence in the world

Scottish Committee Mission Statement

As representatives of the churches in Scotland, and members of a world-wide movement of Christian women, we work to promote prayerful living and worship for men, women and children, and to raise awareness of the lives and concerns of others throughout the world, especially those who write the service.

We encourage ecumenical planning for World Day of Prayer services, facilitating them by preparing material supportive of the annual international theme and country. We generate resources in support of Christian literature distribution and projects giving practical help to people in the writing country.

More information can be found on our website www.wdpscotland.org.uk and on our facebook page 'World Day of Prayer Scotland'.

Friday 3rd March 2023

Service written by Christian women of Taiwan

'I have heard about your faith'

Donations made in 2021

Scottish Bible Society	£5,500
Feed the Minds	£5,500
Charities of Vanuatu	£7,000
International and European work of WDP	£2,500

For a full set of accounts for the year ending 31st December 2021, please contact the Treasurer, **Suzanne Foster**, or view on WDP (www.wdpScotland.org.uk) or OSCR (www.oscr.org.uk).

Plans for this year's funds

The principal aims of the WDP Scottish Committee are to promote the annual WDP service by producing and distributing materials; and to support societies giving physical or spiritual help to people in the writing country. By keeping our costs as low as possible, we can maximise the amount given.

If you are a taxpayer, you can Gift Aid your donation. You can get a declaration form from your service organiser or from the website.

Please give generously!

Offerings must be paid into a bank, with the bank giro slip provided, or cheques (**payable to WDP Scottish Committee**) sent to the WDP Treasurer, **Suzanne Foster**, by the end of April 2022 at the very latest.

There may be circumstances when the uplifting of an offering is not appropriate (some hospitals, residential homes or schools), but donations to cover the cost of materials are always welcome and can be sent at any time. Should a service be cancelled, a retiring collection uplifted in a church, or donations, would be most acceptable.

The Committee would like to thank the many volunteers up and down the country who help to organise and take part in services. Your contributions cannot be measured. Thank you!

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Irene Houston	Salvation Army
Kathryn Howe	Salvation Army Rep for Young Women
Mary Kidd	Methodist Church
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Elizabeth Mackay	United Free Church
Helen Mee	United Reformed Church Synod
Mary Pickstone	Church of Scotland Faith Impact Forum
Margaret Roy	Religious Society of Friends
Mary Welsh	Bishops' Conference of Scotland (RC) and Scottish Christian Forum
Christian Williams	Congregational Federation
Ann Wren	Scottish Episcopal Church and Mothers' Union
Vacant	Scottish Baptist Women's Fellowship
Vacant	Church of the Nazarene