

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2022

“We Saw His Star in the East...”

18–25 January

Daily Readings, Questions, & “Go and Do” Suggestions

Day 1

“We observed his star in the East” (Mt 2:2) *Raise us up and draw us to your perfect light*

Readings

- **Psalm 139:1-10** - Your right hand shall hold me fast
- **2 Timothy 1:7-10** - This grace... has now been revealed through the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus

Questions

Reflecting on the past year –

- **Global:** What could the role of the Church be in proclaiming the Good News of the Gospel in a world where there is so much injustice?
- **Local:** Where have you seen signs of hope in your community, especially during a time of pandemic?
- **Personal:** Where have you sought ‘the light’ in the midst of darkness?

Go and Do (see www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo)

- **Global:** Visit the website of Embrace the Middle East (<https://embraceme.org/take-action>) and see what actions you can take to be in solidarity with Christians of the Middle East.
- **Local:** Organise a candlelit vigil with the churches in your area as an act of unity for this week. It doesn’t have to be in person but each church could encourage members to put a candle in their window at an agreed day and time.
- **Personal:** Take time this week to star gaze. Let your eyes settle on an unfading star and pause in reverence and prayer before the Creator of light. You don’t have to go outside, you can search for and visit an online planetarium.

Day 2

“Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews?” (Mt 2:2) *Humble leadership breaks down walls and builds up with love*

Readings

- **Jeremiah 23:1-6** - He shall reign as king and deal wisely.
- **Philippians 2:5-11** - Who... did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited.

Questions

- **Global:** How have you seen the Church follow Jesus’ pattern of leading through service?
- **Local:** What Christian leader (either local or national) do you admire for the ability to inspire unity and a concern for justice? What qualities enable that person to lead effectively?
- **Personal:** When have you been inspired to take the lead in seeking justice or working towards unity?

Go and Do (see www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo)

Global: Focus on a number of examples of where you consider good leadership to be evident. Try to identify the shared principles of leadership in these examples and consider how they can be encouraged in the work of creating unity.

Local: Invite a local leader to a gathering of the churches in your area to hear more about their work and to find out how you can best support and encourage them.

Personal: Find out about or refresh your memory on the circle of concern and circle of influence (<https://www.habitsforwellbeing.com/the-circle-of-concern-and-influence/>) and consider how you can best exercise your personal leadership this week to help the cause of unity.

Day 3

“When king Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him” (Mt 2:3) *The presence of Christ, turning the world upside down*

Readings

- **Psalm 2:1-10** - Why do the nations conspire...?
- **2 Thessalonians 2:13-3:5** - But the Lord is faithful, he will strengthen you

Questions

- **Global:** Where have you seen the values of the Church disturbing society’s values for the common good?
- **Local:** Is your church or group of churches too comfortable in a discomfoting world? How could your church or group be disturbed into more meaningful action?
- **Personal:** When have you been disturbed into doing what was right?

Go and Do (see www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo)

Global: Covid-19 turned the world upside down and provided an opportunity to reimagine how things could be. Find out more about and get involved in the campaign to crack the crises (<https://crackthecrises.org>) and ensure this opportunity for transformation is not lost.

Local: Consider as churches together what situations of injustice or exclusion exist in your locality, work with others in your community to challenge and change the systems that need turning upside-down.

Personal: Take time today to sit in stillness and discern what injustice most disturbs your conscience, spend time praying, researching and planning how you can take action about it (if you are not already involved in doing so).

Day 4

“And you, Bethlehem... are by no means least” (Mt 2:6) *Though small and suffering, we lack nothing*

Readings

- **Micah 5:2-5a, 7-8** - From you shall come forth ... one who is to rule in Israel
- **1 Peter 2: 21-25** - Now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls
- **Luke 12:32-40** - Do not be afraid, little flock

Questions

- **Global:** This material was being prepared as violence once more raged in Jerusalem and Gaza. How can the worldwide Christian community best support those Christians who share this contested place to be light in its darkness, transformers of fear, agents of peace?
- **Local:** How might our local churches become “Bethlehems” – places where Christ can be born, welcomed and honoured?
- **Personal:** When have you recognised the life of God growing in people and places to which you have previously paid little attention?

Go and Do (see www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo)

Global: Visit Amos Trust (<https://www.amostrust.org>) to find out more about how to create peace with justice in the Middle East.

Local: Plan as churches together to pray for peace in the Middle East on the 24th of every month. You can use these resources from Christian Aid to aid your prayers -

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/resources/worship/ecumenical-prayer-vigil-peace-gaza> .

Personal: Bring the fears that keep you in division from other traditions before the Good Shepherd in prayer. Meditate on the words of the Good Shepherd – ‘do not be afraid, little flock.’

Day 5

“Ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising” (Mt 2:9) *Guided by the one God*

Readings

- **Psalm 121** - I lift up my eyes to the hills, from where will my help come?
- **Matthew 2:7-10** - Ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising

Questions

- **Global:** As a global community we continue to face many challenges. How do we seek God’s guidance in our response to those challenges?
- **Local:** How is God guiding your Christian community at this time? Where are you being called to act?
- **Personal:** Reflect on a time when you have felt or seen God’s guidance. What was that like?

Go and Do (see www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo)

Global: Start (or continue) a conversation around your Christian community about how you are responding to the challenges of climate justice. As churches, take part in global prayer and action for climate justice (<https://www.prayandact4climate.org>).

Local: Plan a Climate Sunday service between the churches in your locality. Visit climatesunday.org for resources and inspiration.

Personal: Seek out a community to be part of to support you in your action responding to global challenges. For example if you like craft you could turn your skills into activism in community with the craftivist-collective.com.

Day 6

“They saw the child with Mary his mother, and they knelt down and paid him homage” (Mt 2:11)
Gathered in worship around the One Lord

Readings

- **Psalm 84** - How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts!
- **Mt 28:16-20** - When they saw him, they worshipped him.

Questions

- **Global:** What are you doing as part of your own pattern of worship to pray for the worldwide church?
- **Local:** Within your worship as a local Christian community what are the barriers you face to greater unity and how might they be overcome?
- **Personal:** Can you remember a time when you were able to worship “in spirit and in truth”? What was it like?

Go and Do (see www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo)

Global: Use the ecumenical prayer cycle to pray with communities across the global Church - <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/prayer-cycle>

Local: Partner with churches in your area to participate in a biblical dialogue to learn with a church community across the world. Visit Just Scripture to find out more - <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/pray/join-in/just-scripture>

Personal: Find and join an online service from a church of a different tradition. Join in this act of worship and reflect on what riches God has shown you through this different experience of worship together.

Day 7

“Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh” (Mt 2:11) *The search for unity*

Readings

- **Hosea 6:1-6** - (v6 For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice)
- **Matthew 6:19-21** - (v21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also)

Questions

- **Global:** Climate justice is being recognised as an expression of social justice with which churches can act together on a global scale. Why is this the case?
- **Local:** Sometimes we talk of Christian Unity being advanced more easily when local churches work together on a specific project, often one involving an expression of social justice. How have you experienced this in your local area?
- **Personal:** How do you consider the importance of church as a place for offering worship and as a place from which to call for social justice?

Go and Do (see www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo)

- **Global:** Take time today to campaign for global justice. Visit the websites of CTBI agency partners (see <https://ctbi.org.uk/membership/>) to take part in their current campaign actions for social justice.
- **Local:** Identify projects in your local area that need more support, and work together as churches to assist them.
- **Personal:** Consider an issue of social justice that you've not been involved with previously and take time to find out more and take action.

Day 8

“They left for their own country by another road” (Mt 2:12) *Beyond the familiar routes of separation to God's new paths*

Readings

- **Psalms 16** - You show me the path of life.
- **Matthew 11:25-30** - Because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent, and have revealed them to infants.

Questions

- **Global:** What other ways of journeying together could we explore that would lead us into a better future?
- **Local:** What do we take for granted about our daily rhythms? What blessing might someone of another tradition receive from the worship in your church? How might the worship of your church be perceived by someone of another tradition?
- **Personal:** How does it feel when your familiar ways or traditions are challenged?

Go and Do (see www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo)

Global: Find out how communities from all over the world joined in pilgrimage for climate justice in 2021. Plan as churches together to continue the journey to a better future for the planet and for us all. Find out more at christianaid.org.uk/campaigns

Local: Organise a local pilgrimage between the churches in your area, for example, you could walk to each of the church buildings or find your nearest pilgrim route.

Personal: Journey familiar routes by another way, for example walk 50% more slowly on your errands today, what do you notice? How do you see things differently?

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