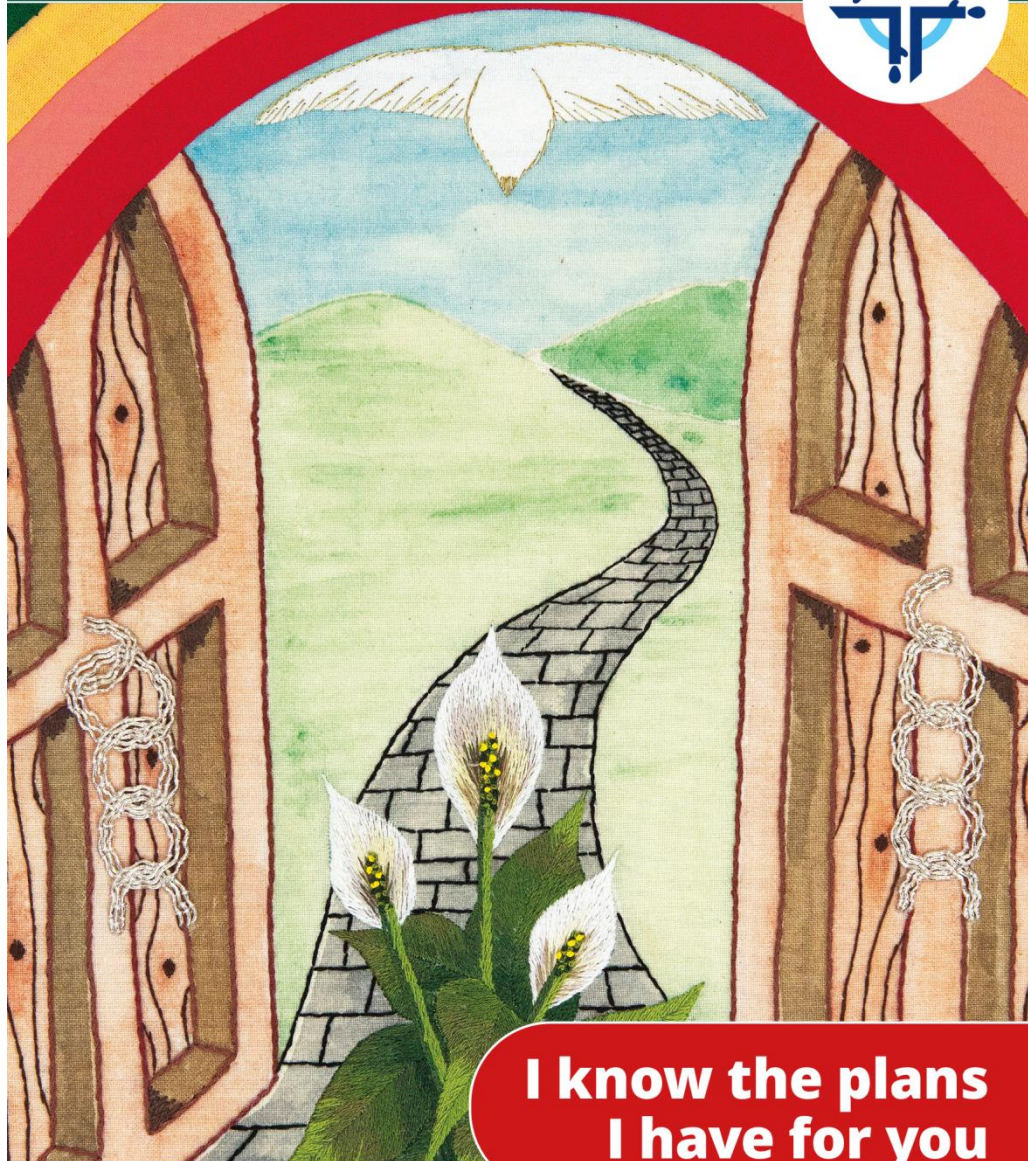


World Day of Prayer

A WOMEN LED, GLOBAL, ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT



**I know the plans
I have for you**

NOTES FOR ORGANISERS - 1

This is a basic PowerPoint. Feel free to change the font or background or to add pictures if you wish. But please do not change the actual words as these are subject to copyright.

You will need to add the words for most of the hymns.

NOTES FOR ORGANISERS - 2

The first two pages of the service booklet consist of notes designed to be read by participants before the service begins.

These have not been reproduced here but you may wish to consider how you can provide this information in some way.

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 for a moment of reflection.

WELCOME AND GREETING SONG

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.

Warmest greetings from the women of England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

We rejoice that, although we have many things in common, we are a diverse people. Over the years the British Isles has 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 we are a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-faith society. We are proud of our diversity and keen to preserve these differences of language and culture.

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.

SONG of PRAISE

Your hand, O God, has guided

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)

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.

Lucy Hole

A second 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.**

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Leader 1: God told the exiles from Judah to care for the people and the place where they had been sent. Often, we fall short of caring for God's world and God's people. So 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 faced by our sisters and brothers across the world 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

Silence

Leader 2: We think of your beautiful world and how we have taken it for granted and squandered its resources.

Silence

Leader 2: Gracious 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

Leader 2: God, in your mercy

All: 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.

VOICES OF 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 many 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.

SONG

Longing for light

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:

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 three British women who found themselves living in difficult situations – in ‘exile’ due to poverty, fear, isolation - 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.

SONG OF THANKSGIVING

Timeless God, you hold our story

REFLECTION / RESPONSIVE ACTION

Leader 3: We are going to spend some time reflecting upon God's promise to the people of Judah and what it might mean to us today. During the pauses, feel free to write or draw your thoughts in the space provided on pages 18 & 19 – 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.

What might God be saying to you?

What hope does God have for you and your future?

Pause

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.

The seventh 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.**

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.

Lucy Hole

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,

Leader 1: Let us pray as our Saviour taught us, using our own native language.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

**Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever.**

Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER in Welsh

**Gweddi'r Arglwydd
Ein Tad yn y nefoedd
Sancteiddier dy enw;
Deled dy deyrnas;
Gwneler dy ewyllys,
ar y ddaearfelyn y nef.**

**Dyro i ni heddiw ein bara beunyddiol
a maddau i ni ein troseddau,
Fel yr ydym ni wedi maddau'r
rhai a droseddodd yn ein herbyn;
a phaid â'n dwyn i brawf,
ond gwared ni rhag yr un drwg.
Oherwydd eiddo ti yw'r deyrnas
A'r gallu a'r gogoniant am byth.**

Amen

OFFERING

Leader 1: Our offerings for the World Day of Prayer movement and other Christian charities will now be received as we sing our next song. We remain seated as we sing.

SONG

Make me a channel of your peace

(During this hymn an offering will be taken)

PRAYER OF DEDICATION FOR OFFERING

Leader 2: Faithful God, knowing that your plans for our lives are good and your promises are 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.

SONG

The Day thou Gavest

The day thou gavest, Lord, is ended,
the darkness falls at thy behest;
to thee our morning hymns ascended,
thy praise shall sanctify our rest.

We thank thee that thy Church unsleeping,
while earth rolls onward into light,
through all the world her watch is keeping,
and rests not now by day or night.

As o'er each continent and island
the dawn leads on another day,
the voice of prayer is never silent,
nor dies the strain of praise away.

The sun that bids us rest is waking
our friends beneath the western sky,
and hour by hour fresh lips are making
thy wondrous doings heard on high.

So be it, Lord; thy throne shall never,
like earth's proud empires, pass away;
thy kingdom stands, and grows for ever,
till all thy creatures own thy sway.

John Ellerton (1826–1893)

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,
in the name of Jesus Christ and
in the name of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen

AFTER THE SERVICE

What is your hope for the future?

If possible, please share it on Facebook or Twitter using the hashtag #WDPHhope.

Help us to create a movement of passionate hope-bringers across the world.

How To Donate to WDP

England, Wales & Northern Ireland

- By cheque, made payable to WDP, sent to WDP, Commercial Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN1 2RR
- By online donation via the WDP website – www.wwdp.org.uk – minimum £10
- By TEXT message from your mobile phone. TEXT 2022WDP5 to 70085 to donate £5. *Any amount can be donated up to £40 just add the sum after 2022WDP and your text will cost the amount plus one standard rate message.*
- By cash to the branch secretary

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