

OCTOBER 2023 – JANUARY 2024



CARE
FOR WHAT
YOU BELIEVE

CARE Prayer Diary

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A thriving economic, commercial and culturally diverse city, by 2050 Mumbai will have become the world's largest city with 42.4 million inhabitants. Having doubled since 1991, Mumbai's population of 22 million – 9 million living in slums – is the densest of any city with 73,000 people per square mile, and many have to travel far for work. Less than four percent are Christians.



'Who has measured off the heavens with his fingers?
Who else has weighed the mountains and hills on a scale?
Who is able to advise the Spirit of the LORD?
Who knows enough to give Him advice or teach Him?
No, for all the nations of the world are but a drop in the bucket.
He picks up the whole earth as though it were a grain of sand ...
The people below seem like grasshoppers to Him!
"To whom will you compare me? Who is my equal?" asks the Holy One.'
ISAIAH 40:12-25 (NLT)

The CARE Prayer Diary is written by Rev. Celia Bowring.
To read online please visit:

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Rev. Celia Bowring

OCTOBER 22 – 28

COMPASSION AND CARE FOR LIFE



- SUN 22** } Loving Father, even before the moment of conception You know and love every individual. In a world where unborn children are often unprotected and many sadly lost to us, we give thanks that they are safely in Your everlasting embrace. Please comfort those who grieve. Amen.
- MON 23** } Thank You, Lord, for the nurses, doctors, social workers, therapists, administrators, cleaners, volunteers and many others who are involved in hospice care – providing compassionate end of life care and supporting those who are left behind. Please raise up more of them to look after the 300,000+ people each year who need this specialised help. In Jesus' name. Amen.
- TUES 24** } God, our Comforter, please reveal Your love to individuals with a life-limiting disability or illness, who suffer in so many ways and cannot enjoy many of the advantages sometimes taken for granted by able-bodied people. Show them how precious they are to You, especially through those who care for them day by day. In Your mercy. Amen.
- WED 25** } Lord, we pray about the plans to legalise assisted suicide in Westminster and Edinburgh. May there be thorough consideration of the dangers and implications of allowing doctors to facilitate this and the care of every individual made paramount. In Your mercy. Amen.

'You formed my inward parts; You knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made ... my frame was not hidden from You, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.'
PSALM 139:13-15 (ESV)

- THURS 26** } **We give thanks for CARE's 'Open' ministry**, offering retreats for women after an abortion or other pregnancy loss, and pastoral training for church leaders. Please increase and bless this important work, especially in Northern Ireland where it has recently been launched. For Christ's sake. Amen. (weareopen.org)
- FRI 27** } **NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER FOR LIFE**
Father, we pray for protection for all unborn children, and for women facing unplanned pregnancy to receive compassionate, practical support. Please grant comfort and peace to anyone touched by baby loss. In Your mercy. Amen. (*Join prayer event – ndop4life.org.uk*)
- SAT 28** } God of justice, please equip and guide with Your wisdom all who seek to restore and reform legislation about abortion, so that unborn life is acknowledged and better protected. Help CARE to support MPs and others challenging efforts to change the law across the UK. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Although the 1967 Abortion Act passed on 27 October was only intended to prevent dangerous back-street abortions, almost 9.5 million abortions have since taken place in the UK: 560,000 in Scotland, 9.2 million in England and Wales and since it became legal there, about 100 in Northern Ireland. Currently campaigners want to allow abortion for any reason.

OCT 29 – NOV 4

CHILDREN IN CRISIS



- SUN 29** } Loving Lord, may there be an ever-increasing recognition of society's responsibility to protect and nurture children. Please strengthen parents, carers, teachers, social workers, health professionals, youth and children's leaders, and many others who seek their welfare. In Jesus' name. Amen.
- MON 30** } Father, please bring hope to the increasing number of children and adolescents who are experiencing heightened anxiety, depression and other mental health problems – often reaching crisis point and waiting for hours in A&E. We pray the NHS would expand services to meet this urgent need. In Your mercy. Amen.
- TUES 31** } Lord, we lift to You young people who feel afraid and despairing because of bullying, abuse on social media, or who are vulnerable to gang culture, experience domestic violence or are targeted for grooming and sexual exploitation. Please draw them to those who can provide a way out of these crises. Through Your mercy. Amen.
- WED 1** } God our Provider, we pray for effective government action that can reduce child poverty levels: re-examining benefits, extending free school meals, tackling childcare costs and addressing long term causes of the deprivation so many families experience. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

'Father to the fatherless, defender of widows ... who places the lonely in families ... Praise the Lord our saviour! For each day He carries us in His arms. Our God is a God who saves!' PSALM 68:5,6,19,20 (NLT)

- THURS 2** } **Merciful Saviour, thank You that Your Church continues to care for children who are vulnerable** to poverty, exploitation, abandonment, hunger, disability, inequality, health problems, lack of education and other hardships. Please empower Your people to bring relief and share Your truth, hope and love. By Your grace. Amen.
- FRI 3** } Sovereign God, please grant those with influence, power and wisdom to face the current 'polycrisis' – multiple, simultaneous threats to the security and wellbeing of especially the poorest people of our world. We pray for children affected by conflict, climate change, COVID's aftermath, food and energy shortages and rising inflation. In Your mercy. Amen.
- SAT 4** } **Thank You, Lord, for the many charities and agencies that offer advice and material, emotional and social support** to children and young people and their families through initiatives providing food, refuge, guidance, mentoring, help with health and many other problems. Please provide the human and financial resources they need to continue. For Christ's sake. Amen.

'The number of vulnerable children was increasing before the pandemic. But since then, the crisis has accelerated. Over one million UK children are growing up with reduced life chances. Public services are often unable to help them before it is too late. In our most deprived communities, too many go into care, have poor health and employment outcomes, get excluded from school or end up in prison.' (House of Lords report November 2021)

NOVEMBER 5 – 11

CITIES



- SUN 5** | King Jesus, we look forward to the day when You return in glory, to bring us to 'the Holy City, the new Jerusalem coming down from heaven where God will forever dwell among His people' (Rev. 21). Help us to rejoice in this hope as we serve You each day. For Your glory. Amen.
- MON 6** | Lord, we remember Ukrainian cities like Mariupol, Sievierodonetsk, Maryinka, Popasna, Rubizhne, Avdiyivka and Bakhmut that have been destroyed. Please watch over the inhabitants of the many other cities and towns under Russian attack and give them courage and faith in You to live through this terrible trial. For Jesus' sake. Amen.
- TUES 7** | God of compassion, we pray for the billions of city dwellers who are living in slums, shantytowns, and on streets. Please bless every effort to improve these environments, their infrastructure and services and inspire and equip Christian churches and other initiatives to share Christ's love generously through word and deed. In Your grace. Amen.
- WED 8** | Christ our Saviour, thank You for every cathedral, church, chapel, fellowship, and other Christian group that gathers in Your name throughout the cities of the world. We rejoice that the gospel is being spread in truth, love and power and drawing people into Your kingdom. Grant that Your Church may grow in unity, mercy, grace and humility. To the praise of Your glory. Amen.

'Seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.' JEREMIAH 29:7 (NIV)

- THURS 9** | Creator God, we lift to You the cities and urban areas in the UK and name those we know well before You. Please guide those who govern and serve there to provide for every aspect of citizens' lives; financially, socially, politically, spiritually and environmentally. In Jesus' Name. Amen.
- FRI 10** | **Thank You, Lord, for the rich cultural life of cities** where innovation thrives and arts, architecture, language and customs, spiritual life, literature, music, sport and many other aspects of human creativity and activity flourish. May these bring goodness and truth into people's lives, especially as Christians act as 'light and salt' in their spheres of influence. In Christ's name. Amen.
- SAT 11** | Almighty God, please grant wisdom to everyone involved in the planning of towns and cities – that populations may be protected from unpredictable events, economy and governance carried out with integrity, housing, education, transport, technological and healthcare needs met and so that people can live free from oppression, poverty and fear. In Christ's name. Amen.

Due to birth rates and longer life spans, our world could be home to close to 9.8 billion people by 2080 (today it is about 8 billion), two-thirds of them living in cities and urban centres. UN forecasts say that India will become the most populous country followed by China, USA, Nigeria and Pakistan.

'LEST WE FORGET'



SUN 12 } REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

Lord, we honour those who died during world wars and conflicts. Comfort those who mourn and grant peace and healing to all who have been wounded in body, soul and spirit. Thank You for those who help us not to forget. In Jesus' name. Amen.

MON 13 } Loving Saviour, we lift to You our persecuted brothers and sisters suffering harassment, torture, imprisonment and death simply because of their faith. May their testimony be remembered and bear fruit. In Your mercy. Amen.

TUES 14 } **WORLD DIABETES DAY – Access to Diabetes Care.**

Father, we remember the 537 million adults worldwide – one in ten – who are living with diabetes, half of them undiagnosed. Please grant success to those working to raise the profile of this disease, improve access to treatment and drive down the numbers of those affected. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

WED 15 } Our Creator and Redeemer, we grieve at how belief and faith in You has diminished in our land, with only five per cent of people attending church and less than half in the nation considering themselves as Christian. Please revive, renew and restore us! In Your mercy. Amen.

'What great nation is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that I set before you today? Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children and your children's children.'
DEUTERONOMY 4:8-9 (ESV)

THURS 16 } **INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR TOLERANCE: "Respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of our world's cultures, our forms of expression and ways of being human."**

Spirit of love and peace, please teach us to treat others with openness and engage with gentle, reasonable debate when we disagree. We pray for laws that guard against hatred whilst protecting freedom of speech. In Your mercy. Amen.

FRI 17 } **Lord, we are thankful for the UK's estimated 5.7 million unpaid carers**, many of whom face financial hardship, cannot hold down a job and are affected by poor health, isolation and other difficulties. Please provide for this hidden army and draw them to Yourself. In Jesus' name. Amen.

SAT 18 } God of grace, You care for people who are caught up in serious situations that may briefly appear in the news but are quickly forgotten as public interest moves on. Please encourage journalists and other communicators who report on these important stories. In Your mercy. Amen.

In 2022 there were 217,000 online articles about Will Smith slapping someone at the Oscars but only 1,847 on Angola's worst drought in 40 years where 4 million people face starvation and are fleeing their homes as 'climate refugees', human rights are threatened and violence and corruption are rife.

NOVEMBER 19 – 25

MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS



SUN 19 | God our Healer, Your Word says that You are the giver of life and that ‘the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, the Lord will raise him up.’ (James 5:15.) We pray for Christians whom we know who suffer poor mental health. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

MON 20 | **UNIVERSAL CHILDREN’S DAY: improving child welfare worldwide, promoting and celebrating children’s rights and promoting togetherness and awareness amongst all children.** Heavenly Father, please prosper every initiative seeking to enhance children’s lives; that they may have the freedom and opportunities to develop into the persons You created them to be. Send help to those for whom this seems to be an impossible dream. For Christ’s sake. Amen.

TUES 21 | Redeeming God, we remember the significant proportion of people in custody, where resources are so inadequate, who struggle with mental health issues. Please help those responsible for their care – governors, healthcare professionals, prison officers, chaplains, counsellors and others – to identify and support those at risk. Please demonstrate Your great mercy! Amen.

WED 22 | Lord Jesus, we pray for people with dementia who are also experiencing depression, anxiety and apathy. Please encourage family members and carers as they try to improve their life-quality, help them engage with others who seek to comfort and reassure them. In Your mercy. Amen.

‘A broken reed He will not break off. And a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish. He will not harm those who are weak and suffering; He will faithfully bring forth justice.’ ISAIAH 42:3 (AMPLIFIED BIBLE)

THURS 23 | Loving God, may those suffering from post-traumatic stress – within our military, police and emergency services; victims of assault, modern slavery, abuse and injury; and survivors of natural disasters, conflict and displacement from home – find relief and help. In Your mercy. Amen.

FRI 24 | **Thank You, Lord, for the compassion and skill of mental health care workers** who support individuals who are living with mental health problems, substance abuse, emotional and psychological challenges, and other issues. Please uphold them through Your merciful love. Amen.

SAT 25 | Father, we pray about the reported 75 per cent of children and young people experiencing mental health problems who are not getting the help they need. Thank You for those working with charities that offer listening, mentoring and practical support to overcome anxiety and find healing. By Your grace. Amen.

‘Mental pain is less dramatic than physical pain, but it is more common and also more hard to bear. The frequent attempt to conceal mental pain increases the burden: it is easier to say “My tooth is aching” than to say “My heart is broken”.’ (C.S. Lewis, ‘The Problem of Pain’)

POLITICAL
ISSUES IN
SCOTLAND



SUN 26 } Father, please grant wisdom, integrity and strength to those who are elected and employed to serve in Scotland's 32 council areas – providing public services such as housing and planning, social care, roads and transport, economic development, environmental protection, and waste management. In Christ's name. Amen.

MON 27 } Lord, we pray about Scottish Government plans to ban 'conversion practices' (aiming to change, suppress and/or eliminate a person's sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression) – that politicians would recognise the importance of protecting parental and religious freedoms and not criminalise mainstream Christian views on sexual ethics. In Your mercy. Amen.

TUES 28 } God of justice and freedom, thank You for the UK Government's unprecedented blocking of the Gender Recognition Reform Bill in January. We pray that such plans to allow 16-year-olds to change their legal sex will not be revived and place vulnerable girls and women at risk. In Jesus' name. Amen.

WED 29 } Saviour, we pray for the government to pass laws to prohibit someone paying for sex which would help to reduce demand for prostitution and human trafficking, and support individuals who are exploited and abused in Scotland's commercial sex trade. In Your mercy. Amen.

'Search for peace, and work to maintain it. The eyes of the LORD watch over those who do right; His ears are open to their cries for help ... The LORD hears His people when they call to Him for help. He rescues them from all their troubles.' PSALM 34:14-17 (NLT)

THURS 30 } **ST. ANDREW'S DAY**
Sovereign God, please revitalise and renew the Scottish Church. Grant that its leaders and people will pursue unity and courageously proclaim Your grace and truth, calling for righteousness to prevail within the government and across communities throughout Scotland. For Your name's sake. Amen.

FRI 1 } **Thank You, Lord, for the significant influence of the many Christians who are engaged in every sector throughout Scottish society.** Please especially help MSPs and others seeking to bear witness to Your truth and light regarding important moral and justice issues within the prevailing secular atmosphere in the Parliament at Holyrood. By Your grace. Amen.

SAT 2 } Dear God, we intercede that a majority of MSPs will vote against the Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill. Please raise up medical experts, representatives of disability groups and other opinion-shapers to convince them about the dangers of this form of euthanasia. In Jesus' name. Amen.

St Andrew was declared Scotland's patron saint in 1320. It is said that Andrew believed himself unworthy to be crucified on a cross like Christ's, and died on a 'saltire', or X-shaped cross, which remains the proud symbol of Scotland today on the national flag, in white on a blue background.

HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS



DECEMBER 2-8: NATIONAL GRIEF AWARENESS WEEK

SUN } ADVENT BEGINS

3 Holy Spirit, please inspire our minds to grasp the wonderful width, length, height and depth of God's love as we prepare to celebrate Christ's coming to our world as a baby and look for His return at the end of the age. Help us to share this good news with others. In Jesus' holy name. Amen.

MON } Lord our Comforter, we remember people who have been bereaved and are experiencing grief in its various forms. Please enable them to find support from family, friends, church and other pastoral carers, therapists and medical professionals. In Your gracious mercy. Amen.

TUES } O God, please help all who are involved in strikes across the NHS to work together to find solutions to difficult issues such as pay and conditions, heavy workloads, inadequate staffing levels and concern for patient safety. Grant them Your just and compassionate wisdom. For Christ's sake. Amen.

WED } Father, we pray that more people will study medicine, train as nurses and pursue other healthcare careers to enable the NHS to be better able to face the challenges of staff shortages and increasing demand for its services. Please help those who are currently training to develop their skills, progress in their learning and become increasingly resilient and efficient. By Your grace. Amen.

'May the favour of the Lord our God rest on us; establish the work of our hands for us – yes, establish the work of our hands.' PSALM 90:17 (NIV)

THURS } God of compassion, please bless the work of medical missions that send emergency teams in response to disasters around the world, to serve in refugee camps and deliver healthcare and training to the poorest communities. We pray for physical protection, material provision and spiritual and emotional strength to keep working in distressing situations. By Christ's mercy. Amen.

FRI } **Thank You for GPs, nurses, therapists, health visitors, midwives, healthcare assistants and others who carry out crucial roles in looking after people in the local community and social care.** We pray for increasing effective collaboration between these public health systems and hospitals that will benefit patients and their carers. In Jesus' name. Amen.

SAT } Lord our Healer, thank You for the expertise of those in Allied Health Professions such as physio- and other therapists, dietitians, paramedics, radiographers, podiatrists and osteopaths who contribute vital treatments and support to patients. Please grant them discernment and skill in their healing work. Through Your kindness and mercy. Amen.

Health professionals are defined as those who study, diagnose, treat and prevent human illness, injury and other physical and mental impairments according to the needs of the populations they serve. The NHS employs 1.2 million full time equivalents, mostly working in hospital and community services.

DECEMBER 10 – 16

NORTHERN IRELAND CHALLENGES



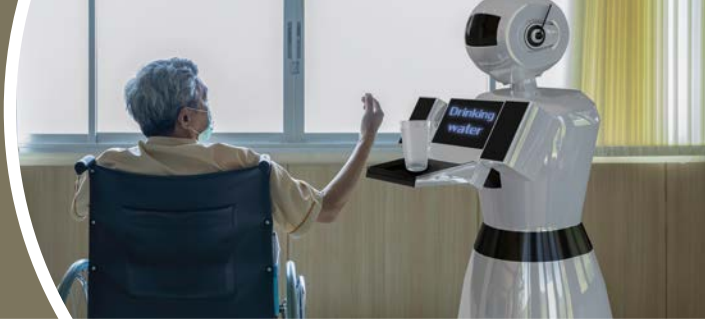
- SUN 10** | Lord, we praise You that You reconciled the world to Yourself through Christ, no longer counting people's sins against them. We pray for Christian ministries of reconciliation in Northern Ireland to be increasingly fruitful, as they appeal for grace and unity across the political and faith divides. In Jesus' name. Amen.
- MON 11** | Loving Saviour, we pray that those affected by abortion and other baby loss will contact Christian initiatives that offer confidential support. Please bless CARE's 'Open' ministry working with pregnancy centres, providing retreats for women, and pastoral training for leaders. In Your mercy. Amen. (weareopen.org.uk)
- TUES 12** | Father, we remember people who are struggling to cope with the cost-of-living crisis, as Northern Ireland has some of the UK's most deprived areas. Please provide and help them to meet their bills and be able to enjoy the Christmas celebrations. In Your mercy. Amen.
- WED 13** | Sovereign God, we intercede for the Northern Ireland Executive to be effective in its government responsibilities: to fix a budget, oversee security, encourage business and employment, and maintain core public services. Please grant wisdom to ministers and civil servants and bring hope to all who are working for peace and prosperity. For Christ's sake. Amen.

'I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Saviour.' 1 TIMOTHY 2:1-3 (ESV)

- THURS 14** | Jesus our Redeemer, please bring freedom and hope to the rising numbers of people (particularly from Romania) trafficked and sexually exploited in Belfast. We pray for the National Referral Mechanism to effectively identify victims and provide the right legal, social, health and living support for them. Through Your great mercy. Amen.
- FRI 15** | **We thank You, God, for the many Christmas carol services, nativity plays and other events** taking place, and pray that those who attend church this one time in the year will feel especially welcomed and blessed. Let Your Word go out in grace and truth to accomplish Your purposes. In Jesus' name. Amen.
- SAT 16** | Lord, we pray for gambling laws in Northern Ireland – which has the highest rate of gambling harm in the UK – to be seen as a public health issue and reformed. May individuals be better supported and rescued from dangers of financial ruin, mental health crises and family breakdown, may children be protected and advertising for betting curbed. For Your name's sake. Amen.

'CARE Northern Ireland is working to see politics renewed and lives transformed. When politics works well, society flourishes. We believe that God has a better story for our society than what we are currently experiencing, and we want to make sure that it is being spoken into the ears of the lawmakers and legislators in Stormont to bring about changes that will help society flourish in the way God intended it to.' (Ian Bingham, Head of CARE NI: ian.bingham@care.org.uk)

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)



AI: capability of computers and machines to perform a wide range of tasks, simulating human perception, problem-solving, learning, decision-making, and reasoning.

- SUN 17 } Lord, we praise You for all that You made in the beginning – commissioning humans to develop Creation's wonderful potential. We pray for those involved in scientific discoveries and technological inventions to search for Your truth and pursue Your ways of love in all they do. For Your glory. Amen.
- MON 18 } Almighty God, we pray about the way in which robots and AI are increasingly taking over work from people. Please help all those involved in this development to recognise the implications for the future and the impact on jobs beyond those that are repetitive, monotonous or dangerous. In Your mercy. Amen.
- TUES 19 } Father, please grant success to those developing AI systems in the NHS that analyse and diagnose serious conditions more quickly and accurately, maximising the expertise of health professionals caring for their patients. For Jesus' sake. Amen.
- WED 20 } Creator of all, we greatly need Your wisdom to maintain strong ethical standards to protect us from developments in AI, changing our world and challenging what it means to be human. Please bless those working to benefit humanity and restrain anyone with evil intentions. In Jesus' name. Amen.

'For the LORD gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding. He stores up sound wisdom for the upright ... He guards the paths of justice, and preserves the way of His saints. Then you will understand righteousness and justice, equity, and every good path.' PROVERBS 2:6-9 (NKJV)

- THURS 21 } **Thank You, Lord, for the advances in AI that are transforming so many areas of our lives.** We pray that machines working in hazardous areas, processing information, and providing customer service and other everyday tasks will increasingly benefit people globally. For Jesus' sake. Amen.
- FRI 22 } God our Provider, we ask for guidance for researchers, scientists and technicians who are applying AI to agriculture to enable farmers to identify and solve problems, maximise yields and use machines for faster, efficient sowing and harvesting. May this increase food production in developing countries. In Your mercy. Amen.
- SAT 23 } Father we intercede for the generations who will face the moral and practical implications of advanced AI (creating more sophisticated humanoid machines and enhancing humans to live longer and perform better). May many trust in Your Son and receive the Spirit's insight, 'to do justly, love mercy and walk humbly' with You. Amen.

'I fear the consequences of creating something that can match or surpass humans ... limited by slow biological evolution, who couldn't compete and would be superseded ... A super-intelligent AI could develop a will of its own, that is in conflict with ours ... extremely good at accomplishing its goals – if they aren't aligned with ours we're in trouble.' (Prof John Lennox – Mathematician, bioethicist and Christian apologist.)



Loneliness: a subjective, unwelcome feeling of lack or loss of companionship ... when there is a mismatch between the quantity and quality of the relationships we have and those we want.

SUN 24 } Father, please draw lonely people into community with others. We pray for those with mental health issues, those living alone and feeling isolated, and others who feel excluded for not fitting in. In Christ's name. Amen.

MON 25 } **CHRISTMAS DAY**
Word of God made flesh to dwell among us; we rejoice that You have reconciled us with the Father and are adopted into His family, one with You as Your Spirit lives in us! As we celebrate Your birth today may many gladly accept this wonderful gift of eternal salvation. By Your grace. Amen.

TUES 26 } Lord, during this Christmas season we remember those who are far from home, family, friends and all that is familiar. Thank you for technology that allows us to see and talk to one another across the world. Please grant comfort and joy through this and other blessings from Your hand of mercy and grace. Amen.

WED 27 } Good Shepherd, please help Christian believers to understand more of Your infinite love. Please ripen Your Spirit's fruit in our lives so we can share Your compassion and grace, especially to those who have difficult burdens to bear. For Your name's sake. Amen.

'Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other ... We have seen with our own eyes and now testify that the Father sent His Son to be the Saviour of the world ... We love each other because He loved us first.' 1 JOHN 4:11-19 (NLT)

THURS 28 } God, we pray for Baroness Barron, Minister for Loneliness, and member of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Tackling Loneliness and Connected Communities. We pray for her work with the British Red Cross to increase social connection across the UK. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

FRI 29 } **Lord, thank You for church initiatives and organisations like Age UK** that provide lunch clubs, day centres, befriending services, transport, shopping and home help, social activities, exercise classes, and IT training for older people. We pray that those who would benefit will be linked up with these resources in their locality. In Christ's name. Amen.

SAT 30 } Compassionate Father, we lift to You the rising numbers of children and young people who say they often or always feel lonely. Please draw many to put their trust in You and help family, friends, teachers, counsellors and others to understand and begin to find remedies for the root causes of their sadness. In Your mercy. Amen.

In 2022, approximately 7 per cent of people in Great Britain experienced chronic loneliness – feeling lonely 'often or always'. This has risen from 6 per cent in 2020, indicating that there has not been a return to pre-pandemic levels of loneliness. This is highest for 16 to 24-year-olds (one in ten), and for people who have lower neighbourhood belonging and trust.

Loneliness costs UK employers £2.5 billion a year. (campaigntoendloneliness.org)

DEC 31 – JAN 6

THE GOSPEL AND SOCIETY



SUN 31 } Father, thank You for the churches demonstrating Your love in the local community through: foodbanks, street pastors, debt advice, groups for toddlers, children and teenagers, support for asylum seekers and homeless people, and many other activities. Please bless all who serve in this way. In Your grace. Amen.

MON 1 } **NEW YEAR'S DAY**
Merciful Father, as this new year begins may our eyes be fixed on Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. May our souls be refreshed by the living water of Your Spirit and our paths illumined by Your Word. Please forgive our sins, and lead us in Your righteousness to love and bless this needy world. In Christ's name. Amen.

TUES 2 } Sovereign God, we commit to You every Christian who seeks to serve You in the sphere of national and local politics. As we anticipate a General Election in 2024, please raise up many men and women who love You to stand as candidates and become MPs. In Jesus' name. Amen.

WED 3 } Lord, we are grateful that many of our schools remain open to the truth of the gospel and many children and young people have opportunities to learn from the Bible, experience the reality of prayer and praise and invite You into their lives. Bless the work of Christians working in schools, local church representatives and intercessors. In Your mercy. Amen.

Jesus said, "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house." MATTHEW 5:14,15 (ESV)

THURS 4 } Lord, we thank You for the witness and work of Christians in all walks of life. Please inspire and enable us to speak and act increasingly with the wisdom, integrity and compassion that comes from You alone, so that we might be effective 'light and salt' in society. In Jesus' name. Amen.

FRI 5 } God of compassion, please strengthen and encourage all who work as chaplains: with the armed forces, police and emergency services, in prisons, hospitals, hospices, education establishments, sports teams, transport hubs, town centres and other places. In Jesus' name. Amen.

SAT 6 } **EPIPHANY: celebrating the Wise Men's visit to worship the infant Jesus.**
Merciful God, we praise You that the gospel of salvation has been revealed not only to the Jewish people but to those from every tribe, nation, people and tongue! We pray for evangelistic missions, Bible translation work and mercy ministries to bear fruit throughout the earth. To Your glory! Amen.

'When the song of the angels is stilled, when the star in the sky is gone, When the kings and the princes are home, when the shepherds are back with their flocks, The work of Christmas begins: To find the lost, to heal the broken, to feed the hungry, to release the prisoner, to rebuild the nations, To bring peace among people, to make music in the heart.' (Howard Thurman: 1932-81, theologian & US civil rights leader.)

FINANCIAL
HARDSHIP



- SUN 7 } Just God, please raise up leaders of integrity in politics, finance, business, and others with influence who will bring an end to the unfair systems, exploitation, corruption, and disregard for people that cause hopeless poverty across the world. For Jesus' sake. Amen.
- MON 8 } Lord, we ask that problem gamblers will seek help before they reach crisis point and risk losing everything. We pray for stronger legislation, particularly in Northern Ireland, to protect vulnerable adults and children and require betting companies to act responsibly and to help gamblers in trouble. In Your mercy. Amen.
- TUES 9 } Dear God, please direct the nearly 10 million people in the UK who are heavily in debt due to owed rent, credit cards, utility bills and other demands, to seek out Christian and other organisations that offer free advice and support. We pray that everyone who is involved in helping them to get through a crisis will receive Your wisdom. For Christ's sake. Amen.
- WED 10 } Gracious God, please grant success to those who are campaigning for forgiveness of the crushing debt that many low-income countries owe to foreign governments, banks and their investors, draining resources that could otherwise meet their populations' needs. In Your mercy. Amen.

'There are always going to be poor and needy people among you. So I command you: Always be generous, open purse and hands, give to your neighbours in trouble, your poor and hurting neighbours.' DEUTERONOMY 15:11 (THE MESSAGE)

- THURS 11 } We pray for 'fuel-poor' households that spend a tenth or more of their income on energy bills – 13 per cent in England, 25 per cent in Scotland, 14 per cent in Wales and 24 per cent in Northern Ireland – because of low income, high fuel prices, poor energy efficiency, unaffordable housing costs and poor quality private rental housing. Have mercy on them, Lord. Amen.
- FRI 12 } Good Father, we give thanks for all that You give. Where we are enriched, please inspire us to be generous, especially to those in need. Where we lack, help us to trust in You. May we always look out for our neighbours and care for them as You do. For Jesus' sake. Amen.
- SAT 13 } Lord, we pray that those responsible for the UK tax and benefit system will soon find effective ways to reduce inequality: allocating resources wisely and fairly, meeting people's essential needs and providing opportunities for individuals to succeed in every area of their lives and so benefit society. In Jesus' name. Amen.

'The number of UK households struggling with heavy debt has increased by two thirds since 2017, according to new analysis. Debt Justice, a charity that campaigns against unjust debt, has found that about 12.8 million adults in the UK are falling behind on bills or finding repayments a heavy burden.' (debtjustice.org.uk)

JANUARY 14 – 20

CONFLICT RESOLUTION



- SUN 14** } Prince of Peace, where disputes, wrongdoing and pride have fractured relationships within the Church and dishonoured Your name before the world, may people seek Your forgiveness, healing and wisdom. Equip leaders to establish truth, justice and resolution wherever possible. In Jesus' name. Amen.
- MON 15** } Sovereign God, we bring to You the 32 countries that are currently locked in conflict: in civil war and terrorist insurgency in many parts of Africa, Afghanistan, Iraq, Myanmar, Syria and Yemen; the Russo-Ukrainian War, and drug wars in Mexico and Colombia. Please bring an end to this tragic bloodshed, destruction and enmity. Through the great compassion and mercy of Christ. Amen.
- TUES 16** } Lord, we ask for calmness, courage, and discernment for crisis negotiation teams involved in emergency situations involving hostage taking, barricade situations, and suicide attempts that seriously threaten victims and perpetrators. Please rescue them from danger. By Your grace. Amen.
- WED 17** } Father, we intercede for adults and children caught up in unsafe domestic disputes and abuse. May police, social workers and others provide protection and support. We pray for wise, caring and workable solutions to be found amid brokenness and pain. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

'Wisdom from above is first of all pure, peace-loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and the fruit of good deeds. It shows no favouritism and is always sincere. Those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness.' JAMES 3:17-18 (NLT)

- THURS 18** } Dear God, we pray for the rising number of young people involved in gangs and exposed to knife crime, drug-taking and other offences. Please grant success to organisations like Ben Kinsella Trust, Lives not Knives, The Peace Alliance and XLP that are helping those who are susceptible to these problems. In Your mercy. Amen.
- FRI 19** } **Thank You for the UN Peacekeeping teams involved in 12 operations across three continents.** Please help them to be an effective force for peace, promoting human rights, protecting civilians, assisting in disarming, demobilising and reintegrating former fighters and restoring the rule of law. In Christ's name. Amen.
- SAT 20** } Lord, we pray for effective interventions in workplace disagreements, so that employees' complaints are heard, and reasonable decisions taken that protect and honour both people's rights and responsibilities. Please help those involved in human resources, conciliation and arbitration services to solve problems without needing to resort to legal action. By Your grace. Amen.

'Forgiving and being reconciled to enemies or loved ones are not about pretending that things are other than they are, about turning a blind eye to the wrong. True reconciliation exposes the awfulness, abuse, hurt, the truth and could even sometimes make things worse. It is risky but worthwhile, because in the end only honest confrontation with reality can bring real healing. Superficial reconciliation can bring only superficial healing.' (Archbishop Desmond Tutu: 1931-2031) 15



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