

Crossing



Barriers

www.ctbi.org.uk/weekofprayer



Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2017

Welcome



Berlin Wall and watch tower

There are many reasons to celebrate this year's Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. As the resources take our focus to Germany we remember especially the 500th Anniversary of the German Reformation and the call to reconciliation.

This is a time of great change and uncertainty around the world as we confront difficulties such as climate change, migration of people across the planet and conflict spreading in many places. In the European context we see many of these issues finding expressions on our streets and these are indeed a cause for prayers for unity.

We need to pray for a greater vision of a united Church. With so many global and local issues confronting all of us every day, the churches witness needs to be strong and clear in its call for unity. We need to be resolute in standing together to witness to a Christ centred Church, in standing with those on the margins who have no voice and no power. Prayers for unity need to become daily prayers, so that we deepen Christ's life in each one of us.

I commend these superb resources, both the Sunday worship and the weekday prayers which have been written by a group from around Britain and Ireland. The resources are rich because they have been prayed into being and have been used in worship prior to being offered to you.

I hope you have a rich and meaningful experience of prayer during this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

Bob Fyffe, General Secretary, Churches Together in Britain and Ireland

Introduction to this year's theme

The material for worldwide use this year was produced by the churches in Germany.

For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

(2 Corinthians 5: 14-20 NIV)

Background

There are fifty million Christians in Germany who, traditionally, have mostly belonged to the Roman Catholic Church or one of the Protestant State Churches. Recent developments, particularly the reception of refugees and asylum seekers, have begun to change this



Checkpoint Charlie



Artwork on the Berlin wall

balance and other Christian traditions are finding expression. Whilst that which unites the churches is stronger than that which divides, there are still areas of difference in which the churches remain self-absorbed or construct new walls. As the churches in Germany discerned how to commemorate the 500th anniversary of Luther making public his 95 theses, a way was sought whereby they could stand together. After extensive and sometimes difficult discussions, the churches agreed that the way to commemorate this reformation event should be with a Christusfest – a celebration of Christ. The churches of Germany found inspiration in *Evangelii Gaudium*, the Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis, which encourages acts of repentance and reconciliation, because ‘the Love of Christ compels us’ (II Corinthians 5.14).



The text from II Corinthians announces that God has, in Christ, reconciled the world to himself. The love of Christ compels us to be ambassadors of this reconciliation. This calls for a moment of repentance before we draw from the well of forgiveness. Such repentance acknowledges schism and division, names the reasons and acknowledges the walls of human sinfulness. Reconciliation is enacted by dismantling the walls. Those who have been reconciled in Christ are called, in turn, to proclaim this reconciliation,

in word and deed, to all the world. The world needs ambassadors of reconciliation who will break down walls, build bridges and open doors to new ways of life.

Being such ambassadors requires the churches to offer concrete acts alongside our prayers. The world stands in the midst of a refugee crisis. Tangible acts of help are just as necessary as praying together, in order to offer those who are fleeing their terrible situations some hope and consolation. God gives hope even in the most hopeless of situations. With the fall of the Berlin Wall,

Germany experienced how a seemingly insurmountable wall could be brought down. The fall of this wall is a symbol of hope that, with the love of God, nothing is impossible.



This 2017 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity gives voice to the desire for a celebration of the love of Christ as a means and motive for reconciliation. It enables the celebration of the love of God's grace as reflected in Luther's theme of 'justification of humanity through grace alone'. This booklet will help the churches to address the pain of deep division within the Church of Christ. By openly naming our guilt, the churches of Germany seek to encourage us to reach out towards opportunities for reconciliation. We hope that the wellspring of God's gracious reconciliation will overflow so that we may find peace and so that bridges may be built. It is our prayer that people and churches will be compelled, by the love of Christ, to live reconciled lives and break through the highest walls.



DAY 1

Starting Point

When Paul was converted to Christ he came to a radical new understanding: one person has died for all. Jesus said, 'No greater love has anyone than to lay down their life for their friends.' The Franciscan Maximilian Kolbe was imprisoned in the concentration camp at Auschwitz and in 1941 willingly gave up his life so that another prisoner could live. Through Paul's preaching we see the death of Christ on the cross as the means of our reconciliation with God. Christian churches share in this same commission of proclaiming the Gospel message of reconciliation.



Maximilian Kolbe

Reflection

I. Friendship

If this is friendship...
...to discover light through anguish
...to overcome punishment with wholeness;
...to embrace healing through being bruised and crushed
tortured and killed;

if he died in this way,

for us

his friends,
for once, for all;
then can I believe?

Isaiah 53: 4-12

He gave his life as an atoning sacrifice.

Psalms 118: 14-29

God did not abandon me to death.

1 John 2: 1-2

Christ died for all.

John 15: 13-17

Giving his life for his friends.

One has died for all

Questions

- What qualities do you value in your friends?
- What do Jesus and Kolbe teach us about friendships and how can that transform our own friendships?
- Can we apply this to the way our churches relate to one another?



Berlin Wall art

Prayer

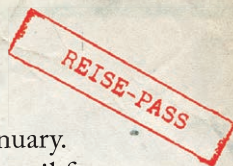
God of inextinguishable life,
you never 'unfriend' us!
Yet our relationships are often fragile
and fickle -
for we would hold on to life
for fear of losing it.
By your Spirit, give us the courage

to lean on our ever faithful friend,
Jesus
so that we might understand
more deeply
how we gain life by laying it down.
In the name of Jesus we pray.
Amen.

Go and Do

(see www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo)

- Plan to mark Holocaust Memorial Day on the 27th January. Share a joint action or prayer in your churches. The Council for Christians and Jews (CCJ) produces worship material on behalf of CTBI.
- The number of users of Facebook passed 1 billion in 2015. What has friendship become in the age of Facebook? Consider the ideas shared in Rory Varrato's TEDx talk. Contact a friend today who you haven't been in touch with for a while.
- Find out how churches in your area are befriending those who are new to your community including those seeking refuge. Visit our Go and Do links for inspiration and guidance.



DAY 2

Starting Point

In recent years, social isolation and increasing loneliness have become important issues in Germany as in many contemporary societies. Recognising that “we love because God first loved us”, Christians are called to develop new forms of community life. In these we share our means of livelihood with others and nurture support between generations. The Gospel call to live not for ourselves but for Christ, is also a call to reach out to others and to break down the barriers of isolation.

Micah 6: 6-8

God has told you what is good.

Psalms 25: 1-5

God of my salvation, show me your ways.

1 John 4: 19-21

We love because God first loved us.

Matthew 16: 24-26

Those who lose their life for my sake will find it.

Reflection

II. Re-source

Like entering a new galaxy,
in order to find my source
must I first lose all sense of self?

Is not the paradox of self-loss that
in order fully to find the other
first I must know, love and
embrace self.

Only then may I fold my self
into the great galaxy of the ‘I am’.



Fall of the Berlin Wall

Live no longer for themselves

Questions

- In what ways can we live for others in our daily life?
- How does our culture tempt us to live only for ourselves?
- What are the ecumenical implications of the call to live no longer for ourselves?

Prayer

Loving God,
in Christ you freed us for a life
that goes beyond ourselves.
Shaped and moulded by your Spirit,
enable us truly to become
sisters and brothers in Jesus Christ
our Lord,
now and forever. Amen.



A delegation of women Church leaders from CTBI discovered how much Greece, in the middle of its own economic crisis, is doing to help refugees. (see www.focusonrefugees.org)

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

- Take time to care for yourself today.
- Send an appropriate care package to the refugee camps at a European crossing point such as Calais.
- Organise to watch the *Age of Loneliness* documentary with a small group and discuss how to address the problem of loneliness in your church and wider community.

DAY 3

Starting Point

Meeting Christ turns everything upside down. Paul had that experience on the road to Damascus. Transformed by their encounter with Christ, in 1741 the Christians of the Moravian Church answered the call to regard no-one from a human point of view. They chose to 'submit to Christ's Rule'. In submitting ourselves to the rule of Christ today, we are called to see others as God sees them, without mistrust or prejudice.

1 Samuel 16: 6-7

The Lord looks not at outward appearances but at the heart.

Psalms 19:7-13

The commandment of the Lord is clear, enlightening the eyes.

Acts 9:1-19

Saul becomes Paul.

Matthew 5:1-12

The Beatitudes.

Reflection

III. Re-human

Is it possible, that we have de-humanised terrified children and fleeing mothers for the sake of tranquillity?

Is it possible that we have be-littled ourselves so much that reality means more through a screen than a touch?

Is it possible that we have been seen so completely that through a slight-seismic shift divinity becomes more visible through our humanity?



Berlin Wall art

We regard no one from a human point of view

Questions

- Where can I identify Damascus experiences in my life?
- How are marginalised groups such as refugees regarded in your locality?
- What changes when we view other Christians or people of other faiths from the Godly perspective?

Prayer

God, three in one,
Alpha and Omega,
Source and destination,
Forgive our self-obsession
And smug satisfaction.
Turn us from Saul to Paul,
Living your gracious love
And growing into the unity you offer.
Amen.



Senior UK Church leaders and representatives investigated the refugee problem first hand at Idomeni on the Greek-Macedonia border

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

- Watch the clip on YouTube to view how Damascus has been devastated by conflict.
- Pray for the Damascus road conversion required for peace to be realised. Prayers are available from Christian Aid.
- Take action on behalf of those escaping conflict and seeking a safe place to call home.

Dates

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is traditionally observed from 18th to 25th January (the octave of St Peter and St Paul). However, some groups choose other times of the year, particularly around Pentecost which is a symbolic date for the unity of the church.

Order of service

The order of service in the centre of the pamphlet can be pulled out and photocopied if you wish. Alternatively, all resources can be downloaded from the CTBI website and you are welcome to further edit or adapt them for local use. Please acknowledge the source of material as Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, Week of Prayer for Christian Unity resources.

Christian Unity wall

Please add details and photos of your events, prayers and messages of unity to the Christian unity 'wall' at www.weekofprayer.org by posting to Twitter using the #wpcuwall hashtag. Posts appear automatically (after a slight delay).

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ECUMENICAL WORSHIP SERVICE

Order of Service

Reconciliation – The love of Christ compels us
(2 Corinthians 5:14-20)



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GATHERING

A hymn is sung while a Bible or Lectionary is brought forward in a procession.

Either

Leader In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

All Amen.

or

Leader In the name of God, Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer.

All Amen.

Leader Grace and peace to you from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ.

This year many Christians will be commemorating the anniversary of the Reformation in Germany. As Luther discovered himself reconciled to Christ by faith, we remember that God has reconciled us through Jesus Christ whose love compels us to be ministers of reconciliation.

CONFESSING

Leader The Church always needs to grow closer to Jesus, for as we grow in love for Jesus we grow in love for each other. But as we have sought to do this we have instead grown apart and become divided. Mindful that Jesus himself prayed that we may all be one, that the world might believe, let us confess our sins and seek healing for the wounds we have inflicted on each other as a result of our division.

A period of silence follows.

We acknowledge before God that we have failed to be his living stones and have built walls of division.

Before each of the following petitions a member of the congregation brings a stone forward, from different parts of the church to build a wall and makes the relevant plea for forgiveness.

Reader 1 This stone is 'lack of love'.
Gracious God,
the love of Christ compels us to seek forgiveness for whenever we
have failed to love.

Reader 2 This stone is 'hate and contempt'.
Gracious God,
the love of Christ compels us to seek forgiveness for our hate and
contempt for one another.

Reader 3 This stone is 'false accusation.'
Gracious God,
the love of Christ compels us to seek forgiveness for denouncing and
falsely accusing one another.

A Kyrie or another short invocation is sung.

Reader 4 This stone is 'discrimination'.
Gracious God,
the love of Christ compels us to seek forgiveness for all forms of
prejudice and discrimination against one another.

Reader 5 This stone is 'persecution'.
Gracious God,
the love of Christ compels us to seek forgiveness for persecuting and
torturing one another.

Reader 6 This stone is 'broken communion'.
Gracious God,
the love of Christ compels us to seek forgiveness for perpetuating
broken communion among our churches.

A Kyrie or another short invocation is sung.

Reader 7

This stone is 'intolerance'.
Gracious God,
the love of Christ compels us to seek forgiveness for acts of religious
intolerance in history and today.

Reader 8

This stone is 'religious wars and conflicts'.
Gracious God,
the love of Christ compels us to seek forgiveness for all wars and
conflicts that we have waged against one another
in his name.

Reader 9

This stone is 'division'.
Gracious God,
the love of Christ compels us to seek forgiveness for living our
Christian lives divided from one another and astray from
our common calling for the healing of all creation.

A Kyrie or another short invocation is sung.

Reader 10

This stone is 'abuse of power'.
Gracious God,
the love of Christ compels us to seek forgiveness for our abuse
of power.

Reader 11

This stone is 'isolation'.
Gracious God,
the love of Christ compels us to seek forgiveness for the times
when we have isolated ourselves from our Christian sisters
and brothers and from the communities in which we live.

Reader 12

This stone is 'pride'.
Gracious God,
the love of Christ compels us to seek forgiveness for our pride.

All

**Lord, our God,
look upon this wall that we have built,
which separates us from you and from one another.**

**Forgive us our sins and heal us.
Help us to overcome all walls of division
and make us one in you. Amen.**

*The following words from Ezekiel and the Peace may be spoken here
or after the Readings and Sermon.*

Leader May God give you a new heart and a new spirit
 remove your heart of stone
 give you a new heart of flesh
 put a new Spirit within you
 so that you may walk in God's ways and love
 God's commandments.
 (Based on Ezekiel 36:25-27)

THE PEACE

Leader Christ is our peace, he has made us one and has broken down in his
 flesh the dividing wall of hostility. (Eph. 2.14)
 The peace of the Lord be with you always.

All And also with you.

A sign of peace is exchanged.

A hymn or song is sung or a piece of meditative music is played.

HEARING

Epistle

2 Corinthians 5:14-20

For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all;
therefore all have died. And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer
for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them. From now on, therefore,

we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

Responsorial Psalm: 18:26-32 (*may be sung*)

I love you, Lord, my strength.

You are loving with those who love you:
but the cunning you outdo in cunning.
For you save a humble people
but humble the eyes that are proud. **R./**

You, O Lord, are my lamp,
my God who lightens my darkness.
With you I can break through any barrier,
with my God I can scale any wall. **R./**

As for God, his ways are perfect;
the word of the Lord, purest gold.
He indeed is the shield
of all who make him their refuge. **R./**

For who is God but the Lord?
Who is a rock but our God?
the God who girds me with strength
and makes the path safe before me. **R./**

Alleluia (sung)

Gospel Reading

Luke 15:11-32

Jesus said, "There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' So he divided his property between them. A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and travelled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands."' So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate. Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.' Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes; you killed the fatted calf for him!' Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.'"

Alleluia (sung)

SERMON

CREED

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and became truly human.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father [and the Son],
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

If the words from Ezekiel and the Peace were not used earlier, they should be included here.

Leader May God give you a new heart and a new spirit
 remove your heart of stone
 give you a new heart of flesh
 put a new Spirit within you
so that you may walk in God's ways and love God's commandments.
(Based on Ezekiel 36:25-27)

THE PEACE

Leader Christ is our peace, he has made us one and has broken down in his
flesh the dividing wall of hostility. (Eph. 2.14)

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

All And also with you.

A sign of peace is exchanged.

RESPONDING

Leader All that divides us from God died with Christ on the cross.
As we are again one with him, we commit ourselves,
in the power of his Spirit,
to break down our divisions and become one with each other,
so that Christ's name be glorified, the kingdom come and God's
will be done.

*A song of reconciliation or hymn of the glory of the cross while the wall is dismantled and
formed in the shape of a cross.*

INTERCESSORY PRAYERS

*After each petition, a person lights a candle from a central source of light (for example a
Paschal candle). Remain standing around the cross.*

Reader 1

Almighty God,
you sent your son Jesus Christ to reconcile the world to yourself.
We praise you because through your Gospel,
in all parts of the earth a community of love has been
gathered together,
and that in every place your servants call upon your name.
May your Spirit awaken in every community a hunger and
thirst for unity.

Lord, in your mercy,

All

Hear our prayer

(Spoken/Sung response)

Reader 2

Gracious God,
we pray for our churches. Fill them with all truth and peace.
Where faith is corrupt, purify it;
where people go astray, redirect them;
where they fail to proclaim your Gospel, reform them;
where they witness to what is right, strengthen them;
where they are in need, provide for them;
and where they are divided, reunite them.

Lord, in your mercy,

All

Hear our prayer

(Spoken/Sung response)

Reader 3

Creator God,
you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus
Christ your Son.
Look with compassion on the whole human family;
take away the arrogance and hatred that infect our hearts;
break down the walls that separate us, and unite us in bonds of love.
Even through our weaknesses, work to accomplish your purposes
on earth,
so that every people and nation may serve you in harmony around
your heavenly throne.

Lord, in your mercy,

All

Hear our prayer

(Spoken/Sung response)

Reader 4

Holy Spirit, Giver of Life,
we are created to become whole in you
and to share this life on earth with our brothers and sisters.
Awaken in each of us your compassion and love.
Give us strength and courage to work for justice in
 our neighbourhoods,
to create peace within our families,
to comfort the sick and the dying,
and to share all we have with those who are in need.
For the transformation of every human heart, we pray:

Lord, in your mercy,

All

Hear our prayer

(Spoken/Sung response)

THE LORD'S PRAYER

The Lord's Prayer is said or sung in the form most appropriate to your context.

SENDING

A Hymn is sung

The assistants spread the candlelight throughout the congregation until each person has a lighted candle.

Leader

Jesus is the light of the world, a light that darkness cannot overcome.
Carry his light into the world, into the dark places where fighting,
discord and division impede our united witness.
May Christ's light effect reconciliation in our thoughts, words
and deeds.

BLESSING

Leader We call out to you, most merciful God:
Bless and encourage all those who seek reconciliation
so they may know and proclaim your mighty deeds of love.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, your son, our Lord.

All **Amen**

Either

Leader May the blessing of Almighty God,
the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit
be upon you and remain with you always.

All **Amen**

Or

Leader May the blessing of Almighty God,
Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer
be upon you and remain with you always.

All **Amen**

Leader Go in Peace to love and serve the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

An organ voluntary or other suitable music is played, during which a retiring collection is taken.

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Dedication

Stephen Brown and Gwynn ap Gwilym

This year's Week of Prayer for Christian Unity material is dedicated to the memories of the Revd Stephen Brown who passed away in February 2016 and the Revd Canon Gwynn ap Gwilym in July 2016.

Both Stephen and Gwynn had served as dedicated members of the CTBI Writers Group for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity for many years, making enormous contributions through their creativity and collegueship which will be greatly missed but never forgotten.

Acknowledgements

CTBI WPCU 2017 Writers

Each year Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) works in collaboration with various writers from within the four nations to produce these materials for your use. In acknowledgment of this collaboration we have listed below the colleagues who have helped us accomplish this task for 2017:

The Venerable Dr Tim Stratford	-	Moderator of the CTBI WPCU writers group and Archdeacon of Leicester
Bob Fyffe	-	General Secretary, CTBI
Revd Peter Colwell	-	Deputy General Secretary, CTBI
The Revd Dr Adrian Burdon	-	Superintendent Minister, The South Fylde Circuit of the Methodist Church
Revd Dr David Cornick	-	General Secretary of Churches Together in England (CTE)
Ruth Harvey	-	Consultant and Facilitator of Shoreline Conversations and member of the Iona Community
Philip Mellstrom	-	Worship Development Worker, Church of Scotland
The Revd Dr Adrian Morgan	-	Assistant Curate of Gorseinon in the Diocese of Swansea and Brecon and Chaplain to Gower College Swansea
Fr Damian McNeice	-	Master of Ceremonies for Dublin Archdiocese
The Revd Canon Dr Daniel Nuzum	-	Hospital Chaplain, Church of Ireland
Jenny Sheehan	-	Lay Preaching Commissioner, URC Southern Synod
Wendy Young	-	Church Resources Officer, Christian Aid

DAY 4

Starting Point

During this year, the work of Martin Luther and other reformers is being commemorated by many Christians. The Reformation changed much in the life of the Western Church. Christians of all traditions showed heroic witness and were renewed in their Christian lives. Scripture tells us we can be frozen to the spot when we look back. It is important not to be limited by what happened in the past. The Holy Spirit can open us to a new future in which division is overcome and God's people made whole.

Genesis 19:15-26

Don't look back.

Psalms 77: 5-15

God is always faithful.

Philippians 3: 7-14

Forgetting what lies behind.

Luke 9:57-62

Keep your hand on the plough.

Reflection

IV. Remember

To linger over-long
in the haze of time,
so stifling the past
in nostalgia
or blame-fumed fury
en-shrouds, tomb-like,
as with salt,
moments otherwise free to soar.

But to re-imagine the past,
leaning deep into memory,
so freeing the now
to birth the not yet
to draw out
flavours of the future
as with salt,
to taste and see goodness...

this is how it is
to remember.



On top of the Berlin Wall

Everything old has passed away

Questions

- What do you value in your own past and what holds you back from becoming the person God would have you be?
- What could we learn by reading together the history of our divisions and mutual mistrust?
- What must change in my church so that divisions can be overcome and that which unites can be strengthened?



Brandenburg Gate during the fall of the Berlin Wall

Prayer

Liberating God,
we look back in nostalgia,
but often frozen to the spot
unable to move.
Free us to travel with you into
the future

that, learning from and treasuring
the past,
we may journey with you, hand to
the plough,
into the transformation of life
in you.
Amen.

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

- Look through an old photo album and reflect on those places and people who have shaped and taught you.
- Plan with your local congregations to go on a pilgrimage walk around your churches or visit a local heritage site or place of historical interest. Notice the stories of your shared history.
- Remember Rwanda and respond to the current events in Burundi.

DAY 5

Starting Point

In this 500th anniversary of the Reformation in Germany we are reminded of both the achievements and tragedies of our history. The love of Christ compels us to live in a new way, actively seeking unity and reconciliation. God lives in us by the power of the Holy Spirit and lets us share in the life of the Trinity. This new life becomes visible when we allow it to take shape and live it out in 'compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.'

Ezekiel 36:25-27

Receiving a new heart from God.

Psalms 126

Being filled with joy.

Colossians 3:9-17

Being renewed in Christ.

John 3:1-8

Being born in the Spirit.

Reflection

V. Re-new

Created, each one of us, beautiful
and blessed,
in the image and likeness of the
One who created us.
God is our refuge, and still takes
sanctuary in us.

Graced by humility to retrieve the
lost kindness in our own eyes
can we see ourselves and others as
God sees us.

In solidarity we walk with those on
the road, whose burden is heavy
and whose loss is great.

Can we bless the imagining
of ourselves
which is so often smaller than God's
so that each of us might see
that future
and that stature that we are called
to become.

Make us attentive still to good news
and small occasions.
To the grace of what is possible.
That we may neither miss our
neighbour's gift
nor our enemy's need.

Everything has become new

Questions

- 'I am a new creation' writes Paul. So what has changed in your life?
- In the ongoing reformation of your life, what else needs to change?
- What do you notice God is doing in the ongoing reformation of the Church?



Brandenburg Gate today

Prayer

Holy God, maker of heaven
and earth,
in you we are a new creation.
Give us new hearts to overcome

all that endangers our unity.
Through Jesus Christ and by the
power of the Holy Spirit.
Now and forever. Amen.

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

- Spend time connecting with creation today, for example, by watching a nature documentary, visiting a local park or going for a walk in a woodland.
- Give thanks for the progress made towards a Global Climate Change deal and continue to campaign for climate justice. Is your church an eco-church or eco-congregation?
- Connect with those new to your community by inviting their involvement in any local environmental projects, for example community gardens, allotments, recycling, tree planting.

DAY 6

Starting Point

After the Holocaust the distinctive task of the German churches is to combat anti-Semitism. Similarly all churches are called to reconciliation in their communities. This means resisting all forms of human discrimination, for we are all held in God's covenant. Reconciliation has two sides being both fascinating and terrifying at the same time. It draws us in so that we desire it: within ourselves; with one another; and between our different confessional traditions. We see the price and it scares us. For reconciliation means renouncing our desire for power and recognition.

Genesis 17:1-8

God makes a covenant with Abraham.

Psalms 98

The world has seen the victory of God.

Romans 5:6-11

God reconciled us to himself through Jesus Christ.

Luke 2:8-14

Proclamation of the good news.

Reflection

VI. Covenant

This I do not know:
Whether I must change,
repent – reform
before reaching for reconciliation;
Or if, rather,
being reconciled with my
brothers and sisters
is a necessary condition
for reformation.

This I know:
That human time,
rarely straight-lining,
rather, spirals;
that the troublesome
grit-of-separation
seeps into the cavities
of the walls of division,
growing layers of wisdom:
pearls of reconciliation.

And this more I know:
That the covenant
binding us with God
is a gift of God's time.

God reconciled us to himself

Questions

- Where have you encountered the hurt of discrimination or prejudice? Reflect on this experience.
- Where have you witnessed, colluded in, or experienced discrimination within the church?
- How can God use you as a reconciler in such a situation?



Chapel of Reconciliation, Berlin

Prayer

God of promise,
you call us into a covenant
that binds us into your inclusive love;
yet we build walls that disturb
and disrupt this.

Lead us to a renewed understanding

of your promise to us,
that is never cancelled,
but which reconciles us to you,
through Christ.

Amen.

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

- Read about the work of reconciliation in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.
- Explore the different ways people can be discriminated against.
- Take action to challenge any myths that have grown up concerning those who seek asylum.

DAY 7

Starting Point

The reformers such as Martin Luther and others who remained in communion with Rome, such as Ignatius of Loyola, sought to bring about renewal in the Western church. However, what should have been a story of God's grace was also marred by human sinfulness. Reconciliation between God and humanity is key to our Christian faith. Paul was convinced that the love of Christ compels us to bring God's reconciliation to bear in all aspects of our life. Today this leads us to examine our consciences in relation to our divisions. As the story of Joseph demonstrates, God always gives the grace needed for the healing of broken relationships.

Genesis 50:15-21

Joseph is reconciled with his brothers.

Psalms 72

God's kingdom brings righteousness and peace.

1 John 3:16b-21

God's love compels us to love one another.

John 17:20-26

Jesus prays for the unity of his church.

Reflection

VII. Reformed

You shape us –
each and every one;
some are more malleable than others,
and yet more
near broken,
fragile,
cracked.

But a fault line runs through us all;
Perhaps that's how we see the light,
the spark of the divine in each of us?

As we each embrace
that which is broken in us,
we find that in our wounds –
that is where we discover each other.
Not that my pain is yours,
or yours mine;
but that none of us,
not a single one,
go through life without being
scarred.

If we were each to bring our
broken pieces
and bit by bit,
lay them down
side by side;
we would see Your craftsmanship,
reforming that which is broken,
into that which is
healed

loved
and one day
whole.

The ministries of reconciliation

Questions

- Where have you experienced the fracture of a community you have belonged to?
- What were the barriers that hindered reconciliation?
- How can those barriers be broken down?



Berlin Wall art

Prayer

God of reconciliation,
Through Christ you call us to a unity
that is not an option.
Yet we fall back tenaciously on our
old ways:
conflict, division and
fractured relationships.

Confront and convict us of
this failure;
Break through the walls of
our excuses,
And set us free to participate in your
ministry of reconciliation.
This we pray in Jesus' name.
Amen.

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

- Ask someone for something you need today.
- View the Rusty Radiator Awards and seek to challenge stereotypes about who the needy are.
- Give those who are new to your community an opportunity to contribute
- for example ask them to share in the cooking of a community meal.

DAY 8

Starting Point

What if? What if the prophecies in the Bible actually came true? What if God's justice and peace reigned, a peace which was more than simply the absence of war? What if there really was no more mourning, no more tears, and no more death? It would be the culmination of the reconciliation that God brought about in Jesus Christ. It would be the Kingdom of God.

Micah 4:1-5

In the last days justice will reign.

Psalms 87

Glorious things are spoken of God.

Revelation 21:1-5a

God will make a new heaven and a new earth.

John 20:11-18

Meeting the risen Christ leads to personal mission.

Reflection

VIII. Be-holding

If seeing is believing
can we look
not turning our face away
from the mourning
the crying
the pain
staring into the grave
meeting the gaze of what we fear

If seeing is believing
can we look
turning our face towards
resurrection
reconciliation
and reformation
to the day when
every tear will be wiped away

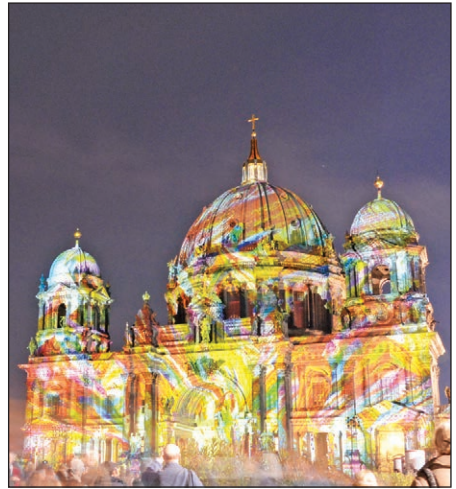
Every tear

the tears of those living in terror
the tears of those fighting in anger
the tears of those grieving from loss
the tears of those aching
with compassion
the tears of God for the pain of
the world

If seeing is believing
can we look
if through blurred eyes
beholding
all things
are being
made new.

Questions

- How do you envision the Kingdom of God?
- Which songs, stories, poems, liturgies and pictures from your traditions give you the feeling of participating in the reality of God's eternity?



Berlin Cathedral during Festival of Light

Prayer

Jesus Christ,
your torn and abused body,
found its peace in death.
Yet you are risen on Easter day.
Give us the courage to comprehend

your saving and transforming love
in the wounds as well as the healing.
So that we can find new and
deeper joy
in the good news of your risen life!
Amen.

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

- Watch the short film *Tree of Life* - an example of what was meant for destruction bringing restoration.
- Seek out stories, songs, poems or pictures from those seeking refuge in your community or country that describe their hopes for the future.
- Give thanks for the work of the ACT Alliance, 140 churches and faith-based organisations working together in over 100 countries to create positive and sustainable change in the lives of poor and marginalised people.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2017



An East German border guard defects

Prayer

Triune God,

We thank you for this week of Prayer
that has brought us together as Christians
and that has enabled us to experience
your presence in different ways.

Grant us ways to praise your holy name together

So that we continue to seek reconciliation and grow towards unity.

www.ctbi.org.uk/weekofprayer

www.weekofprayer.org

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