
Providing material for prayer and action

CCOW Prayer Email

Week of 31 May

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Staff illness meant that the prayer email that should have come out last weekend didn't - but we have carried much of it over to this week, with some additions. There is, however, a lot to cover this week, too. So we'll be sending you a special 'extra' bulletin early in the coming week ... and then hope to get back to our regular schedule.

Reflection: Pentecost

Elizabeth prepared some years ago a [Pentecost powerpoint](#) with beautiful pictures from around the world, each captioned with John 3:16 "For God so loved the world" in a language of the place being portrayed. The photographs and languages reflect the wonderful diversity of the church of God, the many brought together in one. Do use it throughout this week for your reflections. There's also a new [video version](#) produced by the Anglican Alliance..

As we see these images and look around our world today, our hearts cry out, and we pray for ourselves and for all people:

- Come, Holy Spirit - convict each of us of the sin in our lives that separates us from God and from our brothers and sisters

- Come, Holy Spirit - spur us to repentance, that turning away from sin which is a gift of grace and the way of new life
- Come, Holy Spirit - comfort us with the knowledge of the love and forgiveness of God, offered to each of us in Christ Jesus.
- Come, Holy Spirit, help us to follow in the way of the Christ you anointed to proclaim good news to the poor, liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, and to give liberty those who are oppressed,
- Come, Holy Spirit - enrich us with your fruits of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control
- Come, Holy Spirit - strengthen us to speak God's word boldly, to witness to God's love in our words and lives
- Come, Holy Spirit - unite all who are one in Christ, that we may rejoice as one and weep as one and learn together from the insights you give each of us about the Lord whom we all serve

Praying for the Climate

Monday is the 1st of June, and Christians around the world will be using [the latest prayer points from Pray and Fast for the Climate](#). Prayers are requested for the rescheduled UN climate talks, in response to the alarming heat wave in the Arctic and increased deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon, and for areas affected by storms and floods. There are thanksgivings, too - for disinvestment announcements, the scaling up of renewables, a new tool to help churches reduce their carbon footprint, and good news about the EU's COVID recovery plan. Please join in the prayers.

Continuing to Support Refugees and Migrants

We pray with grieving hearts for those who have fled danger in one place, only to find it in another. We pray especially for refugees and migrants who, when trying to reach Europe, have been [intercepted](#) and returned to Libya (as [in this case](#)), despite that [country's being manifestly unsafe](#) .. for refugees in [overcrowded camps in the Greek islands](#) (and those being pushed back before they get there), and for refugees in Daadab and the camps for [Rohingya in Bangladesh](#), as the [Coronavirus emerges](#) in both those places.

Prayer and support for refugees and asylum seekers locally also remains vitally important, and Joanna has done an [update on some of the current issues](#).

As her piece makes clear, some of the public policy issues affect not only refugees and asylum seekers, but also other migrants. One has been much in the news recently - the [NHS surcharge of £400/yr \(due to increase to £624 in October\) that is levied](#) on most migrants who do not have indefinite leave to remain, even if they are already paying taxes and National Insurance contributions. The Government this week, in response to public pressure, has agreed to [waive the surcharge for health and social care workers](#).

Less visible, but equally worthy of attention are the 'No Recourse to Public Funds' provisions that ban many people who have a time-limited right to live in the UK from receiving [public funds](#), [including](#) job seeker's allowance, universal credit, housing benefit, child tax credits, access to local authority housing or homelessness assistance, and many other vital safety nets. As [this \(free\) Financial Times piece reports](#), at a time of pandemic and high unemployment, the 'No Recourse to Public Funds' provisions are creating genuine hardship, as well as difficult situations for local councils. Stephen Timms, MP, [raised the issue with the Prime Minister this week](#), also, citing the case of a couple in his constituency, "a hard-working, law-abiding family ... being forced by the current arrangements into destitution" Organisations working with migrant [are also raising awareness of the issue](#).

The 'No Recourse to Public Funds' provisions are also being challenged in court - with some success. The High Court [recently ruled](#) that the current regime - the Rules and associated instructions to caseworkers - doesn't sufficiently take into account the Home Office's obligations under Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights, " as interpreted by long-standing case law of the UK courts." While this will not end the Home Office's ability to attach NRPF conditions to visas, "it will...require aspects of the regime to be amended." The Court will issue an order setting out how the Home Office will need to comply. At the very least, it would appear that caseworkers will be told that in situations of imminent destitution, NRPF conditions should not be imposed or, if they have been, should be lifted.

But could more be done? In response to the COVID-19 crisis, [Portugal recently](#) "decided that all immigrants with residence permit applications that were pending at the Aliens and Borders Office (SEF) on 18th March will receive permission for temporary residence and have access to the same rights as all other citizens, including social support. The measure also includes asylum seekers."

Please pray for all who are experiencing difficulties because of their immigration status, all standing alongside and supporting them, and all seeking to work out fair and just structures for migration.

Actions:

- Support the [UN Refugee Agency's COVID appeal](#) or other appeals to assist refugees in countries around the world.
- If you or anyone you know is in difficulty because of NRPF, the [NRPF Network has an online tool](#) that lets you see where it might be possible to find help.
- Ninety-eight MPs [have already written requesting temporary removal of 'No Recourse to Public Funds' conditions](#). If your MP didn't sign the letter, could you write to him or her, asking him/her to raise the issue? Email us for suggestions.

Supporting Fair Trade (Part 1)

We continue to hear about the profound difficulties that declining orders and lockdown restrictions are causing small producers. In [India](#), because sugar factories aren't getting paid, they are in turn unable to pay farmers. In [Sri Lanka](#), tea producers have been badly affected, and Fair Trade cooperatives are needing to offer assistance with food, and cash. Some [Latin American farmers](#) are harvesting and exporting at normal levels, but others are facing difficulties. Craft producers are finding fewer outlets. Please do pray for all Fair Trade producers - that they may stay safe and be able to access what they need for daily life and for the maintenance of production.

And please do continue to buy Fair Trade products. A number of people have asked us - "So how can we buy Fair Trade during lockdown?" If you'd like a fairly full list of options, do take a look at our brand-new guide to ["Using Fair Trade in Your Church"](#) - it's got links to all kinds of outlets (on and offline) selling Fair Trade food, beverages, gifts, and cards. The lists are as useful for individual as for churches and other groups. We're quite excited by the opportunities they offer!

If you'd like a quick summary, here are a few thoughts:

- it's still possible, of course, to buy a number of Fairtrade products from **supermarkets and local independent shops**, whether you're going in yourselves or ordering online. If you are shopping online in a supermarket, enter 'Fairtrade' into the website search. Often that will bring up a list of the Fairtrade products your supermarket carries.
- Several local Fair Trade shops are gearing up to re-open ... and one, **Fair Trade at St Michael's**, is now offering an order and collect service. You can order by email and collect the products on Mondays. Find out more about that [here](#).
- **Traidcraft** remains an excellent 'one stop shop' for Fair Trade goods - which includes staples such as pasta, fruits and nuts, jam, honey, and cereal, as well as extras like biscuits, cake, chocolate, and sweets. They also carry gifts, cards, and environmentally friendly household goods - including quite a full line of Bio-D products in addition to their own brand. Take a look at their [website](#).
- There are also a number of **other online retailers** carrying Fair Trade goods, including [Ethical Superstore](#) (primarily Fairtrade foods, alongside a range of ethical and organic products), the [Oxfam shop online](#) (Fair Trade, ethical household products ... and lots of charity shop gems), [One World Shop](#) (a broad mix), [Fair and Funky](#) (ditto), and [Shared Earth](#) (primarily non-food gifts, cards, crafts, etc).

Coming up - Environment Sunday, World Oceans Day, Tax Justice Sunday

The 5th of June is World Environment Day and Environment Sunday is the closest Sunday to it, which is the 7th. The 8th is World Oceans Day - and the 14th is Tax Justice Sunday. We'll have resources for Environment Sunday in our next email; resources for World Oceans Day are [here](#). and for Tax Justice Sunday, [here](#).

