

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2011

All things in common


churches
together

IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND[®]

Popeth yn gyffredin / Gach ní i gcomhpháirt

18–25 January

www.ctbi.org.uk/weekofprayer

An introduction to the days

The following pages provide some material for reflection, prayer and study for the eight days of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. This is based on the suggestion of the Jerusalem Churches' plan that we consider the great vision lived out by the Apostolic Church in Jerusalem of Acts 2:42-47. Our churches today are some distance from that vision and in this week we pray for deeper unity and healing. Through creative engagement with the Acts passage, and drawing on the history of God's saving acts before and since, we look for wisdom in the search for a Godly path ahead.

Two scripture passages are lined out below for use every day where appropriate. It is our suggestion that the Acts passage be used every day of the week in this or another form.

Some additional commentary is also offered for reflection during the week. This is particularly inspired by the challenges posed on Day 3 but can equally apply to the other days too.

A Song of Nehemiah: Nehemiah 9: 6-7, 9-11, 16-20

1. 'You are the Lord, you alone; you have made heaven,
the heaven of heavens, with all their host,
2. The earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them.
To all of them you give life, and the host of heaven worships you.
3. You are the Lord, the God who chose Abram and gave him the name Abraham;
'You saw the distress of our ancestors in Egypt and heard their cry at the Red Sea.
4. You performed signs and wonders against Pharaoh and the people of his land,
for you knew that they acted insolently against our ancestors.
5. You made a name for yourself, which remains to this day.
You divided the sea before them, so that they passed through on to dry land,
6. You threw their pursuers into the depths,
like a stone into mighty waters.
7. 'But they and our ancestors acted presumptuously
and stiffened their necks and did not obey your commandments;
8. They refused to obey, and were not mindful of the wonders that you performed among
them;
but they stiffened their necks and determined to return to their slavery in Egypt.
9. But you are a God ready to forgive, gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and you did not forsake them.
10. Even when they had cast an image of a calf for themselves
and said, "This is your God who brought you up out of Egypt",
11. You in your great mercies did not forsake them in the wilderness;
the pillar of cloud that led them in the way did not leave them by day,
12. Nor the pillar of fire by night
that gave them light on the way by which they should go.
13. You gave your good spirit to instruct them, and did not withhold your manna from
their mouths,
and gave them water for their thirst.

Worship and work in the early church: Acts 2:42-47 in canticle form

1. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.
2. Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles.
3. All who believed were together and had all things in common;
4. They would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need.
5. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts,
6. Praising God and having the goodwill of all the people; day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Commentary

As we pray for unity in Christ's Church, the memory of the apostolic Jerusalem Church at one as they 'broke bread' may evoke a sense of hurt and failure that the Church can no longer unite in Eucharist with bread and wine. Acts 2:42 in particular caused the group that prepared these notes some difficulty. For some this passage contained clear references to the ongoing practice of Holy Communion, for others this was a simple picture of the early church sharing a common life and fulfilling each other's daily needs. But it is as important that we explore the common ground as it is to contemplate the difference. The leaders of today's church in Jerusalem have been honest about the fractures that they live with in the work they have offered to us. They have also been positive in their hope and challenge for greater unity.

In exploring the common ground from the diverse traditions within CTBI we acknowledge that Jesus did himself break bread in a ritualised Passover meal, that table fellowship was an important aspect of his ministry, and that the ideas of the new wine of the kingdom and his presence as the bread of life run through the Gospels and epistles of the early church. We must also recognise in the Last Supper some disunity from the very beginning. Judas Iscariot and St Peter took betrayal and denial from the table. St Paul writes to the church in Corinth with a challenge to address disunity in the Lord's Supper.

The Old Testament records how notions of bread and wine have represented God's love and mercy offered to God's people throughout salvation history. From the manna showered on the desert comes the idea of God sustaining the people. The vineyard is an image of God's nurturing and faithfulness. These themes are collected together in the incarnation of Jesus Christ, his teachings and his actions.

The churches' remembering of Christ's body and blood inspire his followers today to commit themselves to living like him in a sacrificial way. We feed on him in order to become more like him, in spirit and in our material lives. Whilst we may need to lament the ways our fellowship is broken, we look forward to incorporation together as children of God's kingdom in the heavenly banquet.

Day 1

Theme: Devoted to teaching

YOU

1. What is the first bible story you can remember learning?
2. What has the church taught you about how to live?
3. What does the church need to learn from the world?

THE WORD

READ:	Acts 2:42-47	Worship and work in the early church
	Isaiah 51:4-8	Listen to me, my people
	Psalms 119:105-112	Your word is a lamp to my feet
	Romans 1:15-17	Eagerness to proclaim the gospel
	John 17:6-19	I have made your name known

FOCUS: A teaching will go out from me... (Isaiah 51:4)

REFLECTION

We live in reason's light,
yet stumble in the shade
of ignorance and willful folly
turning from truth:
fearful of its charge to us:
to change hearts and heads.

And another light, still brighter, shines
and even reason fears,
as faith presents persuasive views
of how we yet can be.

And hearts and heads accord,
and spirits soar,
devoted to the source:
this lamp of wisdom
lights our lives;
this light, the Word of God.

THE WORLD

God of light, shine on us now with nurturing light; teach us the ways to be, to be the way you will! Nourish our spirits in the glow of your grace! Sear away our sin by the brilliance of your mercy and blaze in us a burning desire for justice.

We pray for all in the shadow of doubt and the gloom of despair and the darkness of disaster: that a new light of hope bursts over them like a healing dawn.

Day 2

Theme: Devoted to fellowship

YOU

1. How is the stranger welcomed in your church?
2. What difference to friendship does shared faith bring?
3. What can create closer fellowship amongst your local churches?

THE WORD

READ:	Acts 2:42-47	Worship and work in the early church
	Isaiah 40:3-5	God's glory seen together
	Psalms 51:10-12, 15-17	The acceptable sacrifice
	1 Corinthians:1.4-9	Called into fellowship with Christ
	John 14:15-23	God makes a home with us

FOCUS: ...put a new and right spirit within me. (Psalm 51:10)

REFLECTION

To contradict loneliness costs.
Relationships come at a price.
Solo living is free but raw:
investing in togetherness
a charge worth paying.
All are changed in the process:
the lonely – to find life less so;
the already-connected –
to feel the fragility
we all face at some time :
when the future is feared
and the present too painful.
That broken-openness
is a welcome wound:
letting others come close,
letting God be there.

THE WORLD

When we find ourselves blessed with friends,
remind us of the sorrow of loneliness:
that we may pray for hearts breaking in solitude.
And when we find ourselves in that solitude,
bless us with the knowledge others offer that prayer for us,
and gather us in your grace to know the company of faith
across time and place.

Day 3

Theme: Devoted to the breaking of bread

YOU

1. In what ways is the Eucharist an act of remembrance? Is it more than an act of remembrance?
2. Does it have a universal significance for all Christians?
3. In what ways are you aware of being a eucharistic community?

THE WORD

READ: Acts 2:42-47	Worship and work in the early church
Exodus 16:13b-21a	It is the bread the Lord has given you to eat
Psalms 116:12-18	I will offer to you a thanksgiving sacrifice
1 Corinthians 11:17-34	When you come together

FOCUS: When you come together wait for one another... (1 Corinthians 11:33)

REFLECTION

Taken, Blessed, Broken, Given

Betrayal and denial at the door.
Taking the bread,
Saying thank you despite
Touching the edges of such a dark night;
Breaking the loaf,
And giving the pieces away.
Morsels pressed into hungry palms,
Your words resounding still:
Take it, this is my body ...

The sins of the world at the door.
You took the cup that would not pass,
Saying thank you despite
The deepening darkness all around;
You gave it to those that you called friends.
The circle breaking
As trembling fingers clasped the chalice,
Your words resounding still:
This is my blood of the covenant,
Which is poured out for many ...

For the ways that we betray you,
For the times that we deny you,

Help us to receive all that is still
Given from your nail pierced hands.
Bread of heaven came down,
Fruit of the vine poured out,
Feed us and fill us, O Lord
In both the blessing of life and its cost;
Thanking you in every season,
Our hands open
Ready to clasp the cup as it passes by us.

THE WORLD

Dear Lord
For the ways that I betray you
For the times that I deny you
Help me to receive all that is still
Given from your nail pierced hands
Feed me and fill me, O Lord
In both the blessing of life and its cost
Help me always to thank you in every
season
In Jesus' name I pray
Amen

Order of Service A

PREPARATION

During the service the following items will be needed:

A Bible

6-10 large candles*

Matches

2 tapers

A table, which should be visible from most parts of the congregation.

Optional items:

A collage/mosaic of pictures of ecumenical activity in the area and a sticker board or flat surface on which the collage can be assembled and displayed during the service.

3 or 4 pieces of charcoal*

Incense grains*

A fireproof vessel

Before the service:

The charcoal is lit and placed in the fireproof vessel, which is then placed on the table.

During the opening hymn:

The Bible and large candles (unlit) are brought into the church / worship area.

The Bible is placed on the central table or reading desk.

The candles are spaced evenly on the table, ready to be lit.

During each petition of the prayers for the unity of the Church a pair of candles is lit by representatives of the different congregations.

During the reading of Psalm 96 the mosaic is assembled on the sticker board / flat surface.

At the start of each litany / series of prayers a small spoonful of incense grains is placed on the live coals. (The sweet-smelling smoke which rises represents prayer rising to God. cf Psalm 141:2)

L: Leader

R: Reader

A: All

* If, at the place in which the service is held, candles / incense are not normally used, please check the sensitivity of the smoke detector(s) beforehand.

1: GATHERING

L: In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

A: **Amen.**

L: From all Christians in Jerusalem to the faithful of NN, in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace! (1 Thessalonians 1:1).

L: God who called all life into being

A: **The earth, sea and sky are yours**

L: Your presence is within and without us

A: **In this place and every place**

L: Every atom is full of your energy

A: **Every face carries your image**

L: Your Spirit gives each of us life

A: **With her we long for justice to roll like a river**

L: Righteousness like an ever flowing stream

A: **From Bethlehem to Birmingham, Jerusalem to Jakarta**

L: That the earth shall be filled with the glory of God

A: **As the waters cover the sea**

From Greenbelt 2009, Sunday morning worship. *Reproduced with permission.*

Hymn: “God who sets us on a journey”

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God who sets us on a journey
to discover, dream and grow,
lead us as you led your people
in the desert long ago;
journey inward, journey outward,
stir the spirit, stretch the mind,
love for God and self and neighbour
marks the way that Christ defined.

Exploration brings new insights,
changes, choices we must face;
give us wisdom in deciding,
mindful always of your grace;
should we stumble, lose our bearings,
find it hard to know what’s right,
we regain our true direction
focused on the Jesus light.

End our longings for the old days,
grant the vision that we lack –
once we’ve started on this journey

there can be no turning back;
let us travel light, discarding
excess baggage from our past,
cherish only what's essential,
choosing treasure that will last.

When we set up camp and settle
to avoid love's risk and pain,
you disturb complacent comfort,
pull the tent pegs up again;
keep us travelling in the knowledge
you are always at our side;
give us courage for the journey,
Christ our goal and Christ our guide.

Here incense may be offered

L: Let us pray to the Lord

A: **Kyrie eleison**

L: Gracious God, you have promised through your prophets that Jerusalem will be home to many peoples, mother to many nations. Hear our prayers that Jerusalem, the city of your passion, death and resurrection, may be for all a place to dwell with you and to encounter one another in peace.

We ask of the Lord

A: **Grant this O Lord**

L: Merciful God, may your life-giving Spirit move in every human heart, that the barriers that divide us may crumble, suspicions disappear and hatreds cease, and that, with divisions healed, your people might live in justice and peace.

We ask of the Lord

A: **Grant this O Lord**

L: Loving God, hear our prayers for your holy city, Jerusalem. End her suffering and make her whole. Make her your home once again, a city of peace, and a light to all peoples.

We ask of the Lord

A: **Grant this O Lord**

L: Open now our ears and hearts to hear your Word proclaimed and help us to live it more faithfully in all that we do and say, to the glory of your name and the increase of your kingdom, for you are blessed with your only begotten Son, and your Holy Spirit, both now and forever

A: **Amen.**

2: LITURGY OF THE WORD

L: Let us be attentive to God's word!

Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 58:6-10

Psalms: Psalm 96 (responsorial)

A: O sing the Lord a new song and bless his holy name.
or a hymn based on Psalm 96

At this point the Mosaic may be brought together

New Testament Reading: Acts 2:42-47

Alleluia and gospel acclamation

A: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia (sung)

R: Leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister and then come and offer your gift. [Matthew 5:24] (sung or said)

A: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia (sung)

Ha lle lu jah, ha lle lu jah; Ha lle lu jah, ha lle lu jah.

Ha lle lu jah, ha lle lu jah; Ha lle lu jah, ha lle lu jah.

Alleluia Cantemus Cuncti (A H D Troyte) arranged by John Bradley

R: Hear the Holy Gospel according to Matthew

A: Glory to you O God, glory to you

Gospel reading: Matthew 5:21-26

R: This is the Gospel of Christ

A: Praise to Christ our Lord

Homily / Sermon

Hymn: A hymn may be sung

3: RESPONSE

Prayers of Penitence

Here incense may be offered

R: With the Churches in Jerusalem
we recall that the believers devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and to fellowship. We confess our failure of faithfulness and fellowship.

Silence is kept

We pray to the Lord

A: Lord have mercy

R: With the Churches in Jerusalem
we recall that we came upon them and they saw many wonders and signs.
We confess a lack of vision that prevents us from seeing the glory of your work.

Silence is kept

We pray to the Lord

A: Lord have mercy

R: With the Churches in Jerusalem
we recall that all who believed held things in common and supported those in need.
We confess that we hold on to possessions at the expense of the poor.

Silence is kept

We pray to the Lord

A: Lord have mercy

R: With the Churches in Jerusalem
we recall that the believers spent much time in prayer and breaking bread at home with glad and generous hearts.
We confess our failure of love and generosity.

Silence is kept

We pray to the Lord

A: Lord have mercy

Assurance of God's Forgiveness

L: This is what was spoken through the prophet Joel, "In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved".

As we wait for the coming of the Lord we are also assured that in Christ we are forgiven, renewed and made whole again.

A: Amen

The Peace

L: Christ is our peace. He has reconciled us to God in one body on the cross; we meet in His name and share His peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

A: And also with you.

Hymn: “In Christ there is no East or West”

The Creed: The Apostles or Nicene Creed or another suitable form is said.

Prayer for Christian Unity

During each petition representatives (R1 & R2) from two different congregations come forward. Each lights a candle and makes the response which is then repeated by everyone.

Here incense may be offered

L: In Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. As ambassadors for Christ’s reconciliation, we present our petitions to God.

R1: As we open the Bible and pray together, whatever our Christian tradition,

R2: May everything become new and make visible our unity.

A: May everything become new and make visible our unity.

R1: As we help build good relations among Jews, Christians and Muslims, and tear down the walls of indifference and hatred

R2: May everything become new and make visible our unity.

A: May everything become new and make visible our unity.

R1: As we work for justice and solidarity, and move from fear to confidence

R2: May everything become new and make visible our unity.

A: May everything become new and make visible our unity.

R1: As we try to respond to the needs of bereaved families, those who are poor and those without hope and all who suffer in the name of our Lord

R2: May everything become new and make visible our unity.

A: May everything become new and make visible our unity.

R1: As we draw close to the cross of Christ, we draw close to each other, and as we attempt to overcome human suffering

R2: May everything become new and make visible our unity.

A: May everything become new and make visible our unity.

The Lord’s Prayer (in own language)

4: SENDING OUT

Closing Prayer

L: We are before you, Lord God,
aware of our disunity, pained by it, despondent,
aware of how we would like to be
but often forgetting the miles travelled together as pilgrims
and the moments on that journey
which made our hearts burn within us.

**A: God of reconciliation,
as we hear the challenge from the Churches in Jerusalem,
to commit ourselves anew to pray for the unity of your Church,
to overcome the things that keep us apart, and to work for your justice,
strengthen us to take up the challenge.
Take us forward from where we are,
to where you want us to be
and by your Spirit
end all crying and mourning
and lead us to the New Jerusalem
where we may truly rejoice with Christ.
Amen**

Blessing

L: May the God of hope
fill you with all joy and peace in believing,
so that you may abound in hope
by the power of the Holy Spirit.
And the blessing...

A: Amen

Sending

The congregation turns towards the door.

Revelation 21:1-4 is read.

Sending Song: “Behold, I make all things new”

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[pto]

or/

Closing Hymn: “Thy kingdom come O God”

joyfully

Be - hold, be - hold, I make all things new, be -

Be - hold, _____ be - hold I make all things new, be -

gin - ning with you and start - ing from to - day. Be -

gin - ning with you and start - ing from to - day. _____

hold, be - hold, I make all things new, my

Be - hold, _____ be - hold I make all things new, my

pro - mise is true, for I am Christ the way.

pro - mise is true, for I am Christ the way.

Behold, behold I make all things new,
beginning with you
and starting from today.
Behold, behold I make all things new,
my promise is true,
for I am Christ the way.

Order of Service B

Welcome and introduction to theme: ALL THINGS IN COMMON

Gathering song / hymn

Opening prayer

Psalm of awe and wonder: Psalm 96 (From *The Message*)

¹⁻² Sing God a brand-new song! Earth and everyone in it, sing!

Sing to God—worship God!

²⁻³ Shout the news of his victory from sea to sea,

Take the news of his glory to the lost,

News of his wonders to one and all!

⁴⁻⁵ For God is great, and worth a thousand Hallelujahs.

His terrible beauty makes the gods look cheap;

Pagan gods are mere tatters and rags.

⁵⁻⁶ God made the heavens—

Royal splendor radiates from him,

A powerful beauty sets him apart.

⁷ Bravo, God, Bravo!

Everyone join in the great shout: Encore!

In awe before the beauty, in awe before the might.

⁸⁻⁹ Bring gifts and celebrate,

Bow before the beauty of God,

Then to your knees—everyone worship!

¹⁰ Get out the message—God Rules!

He put the world on a firm foundation;

He treats everyone fair and square.

¹¹ Let's hear it from Sky,

With Earth joining in,

And a huge round of applause from Sea.

¹² Let Wilderness turn cartwheels,

Animals, come dance,

Put every tree of the forest in the choir—

¹³ An extravaganza before God as he comes,

As he comes to set everything right on earth,

Set everything right, treat everyone fair.

Worship continues with song / dance / drama

Bible Reading: Acts 2: 42-47

Poem: Taken, Blessed, Broken, Given

Betrayal and denial at the door.
Taking the bread,
Saying thank you despite
Touching the edges of such a dark night;
Breaking the loaf,
And giving the pieces away.
Morsels pressed into hungry palms,
Your words resounding still:
Take it, this is my body ...

The sins of the world at the door.
You took the cup that would not pass,
Saying thank you despite
The deepening darkness all around;
You gave it to those that you called friends.
The circle breaking
As trembling fingers clasped the chalice,
Your words resounding still:
*This is my blood of the covenant,
Which is poured out for many ...*

For the ways that we betray you,
For the times that we deny you,
Help us to receive all that is still
Given from your nail pierced hands.
Bread of heaven came down,
Fruit of the vine poured out,
Feed us and fill us, O Lord
In both the blessing of life and its cost;
Thanking you in every season,
Our hands open
Ready to clasp the cup as it passes by us.

Reflection question / activity

What do you need to receive from Jesus' nail-pierced hands today?

This question is written on a postcard, with an image of Jesus' nailed-pierced hands (an image of nail pierced hands is available for download at www.ctbi.org.uk/weekofprayer) and space for people to write on the cards.

At the front is a table, on which there is a loaf, a cup, a bible and a candle. People are then invited to place their card on the table as a suitable CD track is played or a soloist sings.

Reflection / Meditation / Address

Moment of prayerful reflection

Prayer for Unity

L: We are before you, Lord God,
aware of our disunity, pained by it, despondent,
aware of how we would like to be
but often forgetting the miles travelled together as pilgrims
and the moments on that journey
which made our hearts burn within us.

A: **God of reconciliation,
as we hear the challenge from the Churches in Jerusalem,
to commit ourselves anew to pray for the unity of your Church,
to overcome the things that keep us apart, and to work for your justice,
strengthen us to take up the challenge.
Take us forward from where we are,
to where you want us to be
and by your Spirit
end all crying and mourning
and lead us to the New Jerusalem
where we may truly rejoice with Christ.
Amen**

Affirmation

L: God who called all life into being

A: **The earth, sea and sky are yours**

L: Your presence is within and without us

A: **In this place and every place**

L: Every atom is full of your energy

A: **Every face carries your image**

L: Your Spirit gives each of us life

A: **With her we long for justice to roll like a river**

L: Righteousness like an ever flowing stream

A: **From Bethlehem to Birmingham, Jerusalem to Jakarta**

L: That the earth shall be filled with the glory of God

A: **As the waters cover the sea**

Prayer of Commitment

Said by all, with congregation facing exit

Take us from where we are, to where you want us to be; make us not merely guardians of a heritage, but living signs of your coming Kingdom; fire us with passion for justice and peace between all people; fill us with that faith, hope and love which embody the Gospel; and through the power of the Holy Spirit make us one. That the world may believe, that your name may be enthroned in our nation, that your church may more effectively be your body, we commit ourselves to love you, serve you, and follow you as pilgrims not strangers. Amen.

Closing song / hymn

Benediction



Day 4

Theme: Devoted to prayer

YOU

1. Bring to mind your earliest experiences of prayer.
2. In what way has your prayer life developed since?
3. Bring to mind an instance where you feel that you have received an answer to prayer.

THE WORD

READ:	Acts 2:42-47	Worship and work in the early church
	Jonah 2:1-9	Deliverance belongs to the Lord!
	Psalms 67:1-7	Let the peoples praise you, O God!
	Matthew 6:5-15	Your kingdom come, your will be done...

FOCUS: I called to the Lord... and he answered me. (Jonah 2:2)

REFLECTION

Prayer...

Is it sitting in silence, looking for answers,
alone in the stillness, reading God's word,
hoping for grace, seeking a message,
longing for unity founded in love?

Is it joining with others in praise and in worship,
learning from them new ways we could go,
sharing traditions and holding in common
the teachings of Jesus, the hope for our world?

Pardon our failures, Lord, strengthen our efforts,
transform our lives with the power of your love;
fill us with eagerness, Lord, for your service
together to bring in your Kingdom on earth.

THE WORLD

Loving Lord, we present ourselves to you in so many different ways,
with so many different identities and in so many different places.
We know that this diversity too often separates us and we ask you to show us
how we can share our prayer, our thanksgiving and our understanding of your love for
us.

Guide and encourage us in both joy and sorrow
and open our hearts and minds to experience your healing power.
We make this prayer in the name of Jesus who taught us to pray.
Amen

Day 5

Theme: All together

YOU

1. How often do you 'do your own thing', and why?
2. What was the task when you last chose to work with someone else?
3. What more could your church be doing with the 'church down the road'?

THE WORD

READ: Acts 2:42-47	Worship and work in the early church
Isaiah 55:1-4	Come to the waters
Psalms 133	How good it is to dwell together
Matthew 23:37, 24:4	Take care no-one leads you astray

FOCUS: Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered you as a hen gathers her chickens...? (Matthew 23:37)

REFLECTION

Indeed, how good it is to gather in unity
Indeed, how often would you gather us
Indeed, you call us, 'Come unto the waters'
Yet we create our own and separate springs
Ignoring your signs and wonders
Beguiled by ideas, keeping us apart.

Jerusalem, city of peace!
We cry peace, but there is no peace
As a hen gathers her chickens, you call us
But we make tests, of orthodoxy or reform
As the Mother Hen, Christ calls us
Let us strive to go together, in belief.

THE WORLD

O God, as you have called us to your service, make us worthy of our calling.
Establish us in the faith of your Church.
Lead us together on the Way,
that our hearts and minds may be filled with signs and wonders
that can only come from unity.
Grant to your Church that peace and unity
which is in accordance with your will;
to lead us together to heavenly places.

Day 6

Theme: All things in common

YOU

1. What does God require of you?
2. How could you respond?
3. How do you respond?

THE WORD

READ:	Acts 2:42-47	Worship and work in the early church
	Micah 6:8	The requirement of God
	Psalms 37:1-11	Trust in the Lord and do good
	Matthew 6:25-34	Strive first for the Kingdom of God

FOCUS: Everything they owned was held in common. (Acts 4:32)

REFLECTION

In many and various ways
have our ancestors interpreted
the Word that God spoke
through his only Son.

And they have all caught something of his light,
but not the whole light;
for the whole light is not within human grasp.

So we bring together what light we have,
all the flickering candles of our understanding,
that in their one bright flame we may see
what God requires of us.

THE WORLD

Lord of Justice...
forgive our narrow horizons of self...
Let your Word take root in us...
enabling the greater vision of your kingdom...

Day 7

Theme: All in their need

YOU

1. What has been your experience of need?
2. Does your experience help you to understand the needs of others?

THE WORD

READ: Acts 2:42-47	Worship and work in the early church
Isaiah 58:6-10	Share your bread with the hungry
Psalms 113	Equality and Justice for all
Matthew 14:13-21	The feeding of the five thousand

FOCUS: He raises the poor from the dust, and lifts the needy from the ash heap. (Psalm 113:7)

REFLECTION

This is a world of plenty,
but it is plenty for the few,
and many more are buried
in the dark tomb of need.

But the tomb has no dominion.
We are raised with the Lord
to life where need is quenched
and there is grace upon all.

THE WORLD

Father Creator, we thank you for the gifts you bestow upon us.
Forgive our complacency in the sight of injustices.
Strengthen our resolve to overcome our differences,
so that, together we may joyfully minister to those in need.

Day 8

Theme: The goodwill of all

YOU

1. How did you first experience God's goodwill towards you?
2. What are the things for which you need to forgive yourself?
3. What are the things for which you need to forgive others?

THE WORD

READ: Acts 2:42-47	Worship and work in the early church
Genesis 33:1-4	"Esau ran to meet Jacob, and embraced him ..."
Psalms 96 :1-4	"Sing to the Lord a new song ..."
2 Corinthians 5:17-19	"Therefore if anyone is in Christ he is a new creature ..."
Revelation 21:1-7	"Then I saw a new heaven and new earth ..."

FOCUS: I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of water of life without cost. (Revelation 21:6b)

REFLECTION

We love to hear stories of goodwill, yet so often righteous indignation rises up in us and almost without thinking about it, we live by ancient bitterness and unquestioned anger. We set our own standard rather than cherishing forgiveness above all else. In a world that assumes retribution, the Scriptures unveil to us a new order whereby all things are made new. We are clearly confronted with the need to change. "The old law of an eye for an eye leaves everyone blind." (Martin Luther King Jr in the context of the fierce racial violence of his day, quoting Gandhi). So, where to start? "You start with the one next to you." (Mother Teresa of Calcutta).

THE WORLD

Pray, then, in this way:
Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
Your will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And do not bring us to the time of trial,
but rescue us from the evil one.
For the kingdom and the power and the glory
are yours for ever.
Amen

Welcome to the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2011

2011 is year of journeying. We are invited to travel to Jerusalem, as well as back in time to the early church to be reminded of the earliest Christians' commitment to each other – to be one in life, faith, worship and action. But we also visit the churches of Jerusalem today; an ecumenical group in Jerusalem prepared the original material that CTBI has adapted. You will also find additional material written by the Britain and Ireland writers group.

Jerusalem today has become synonymous with the turbulence of the region – the disturbing news of violence and injustice – and of the conflicting narratives that demand us to listen. Yet the one narrative that can easily be lost is the faith of the diminishing numbers of Christians in the Middle East.

This year we are privileged to be offered a glimpse of that living faith that strives to be faithful in frightening and disturbing times. And they too have a challenge to us – to join with them to pray for the unity of the Church, in faithfulness to Christ who prayed that we might be one.

From another, very different context, Archbishop Desmond Tutu commented that “apartheid is too strong for a divided church” – a reminder that our praying for the unity of the church and our praying for a more just world, free from violence and fear, are not options, but integral to our continuing faithfulness to Christ.

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translations and PowerPoints, from
www.ctbi.org.uk/weekofprayer

All age service available at
www.rootsontheweb.com

As in 2010, the worship service is in 'pull out' format in the middle of this booklet, and there are two versions: "Order of service A" if you wish to use a liturgical form and "Order of service B" for a more informal approach.



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