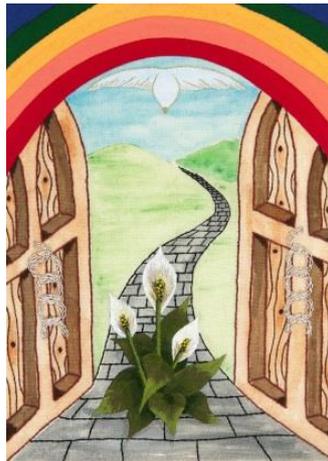




## World Day of Prayer Worship Service 2022 EWNI (England Wales & Northern Ireland)

**“I Know the Plans I have for You”**



World Day of Prayer 2022 EWNI Artwork by Angie Fox (artist)

Explanation of Artwork:

**Freedom:** open door to a pathway across an endless open vista

**Justice:** broken chains

**God’s Peace and Forgiveness:** the dove of peace and a peace lily breaking through the pavement

**Love:** rainbow, a symbol of the overarching love of God.

The 2022 service was written by the EWNI World Day of Prayer Committee. This worship service was prepared and adapted for use in Canada by the Women’s Inter-Church Council of Canada. *WICC has an inclusive language policy, however we strive to honour the integrity of women’s stories.*

## WORSHIP SERVICE

### WELCOME AND GREETING

**Leader 1** Welcome to our World Day of Prayer service, celebrated all over the world in the seven regions of our World Day of Prayer family: Asia, Africa, Caribbean/North America, Europe, Latin America, Middle East, and Pacific. This is reflected in our service as we light seven candles.

Warmest greetings from the women of England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Together with Scotland, they form the United Kingdom, known as the British Isles, which is situated in north-western Europe.

We rejoice that, although they have many things in common, England, Wales and Northern Ireland are proud to be multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-faith societies, anxious to preserve differences of language and culture. Over the years the British Isles have welcomed people from all corners of the Earth. Some have chosen to come, and others are refugees fleeing from persecution in their own lands.

We rejoice in the variety of natural beauty found in the British Isles: its mountains and craggy moorland, its fertile fields and pastureland, its rolling downs and spectacular coastal scenery, its small islands.

The theme of our service today is God's promise, found in the book of Jeremiah: 'I Know the Plans I Have for You'. Focusing on freedom, forgiveness, justice, and God's peace, let us see how this promise can be a sign of hope for all people.

### OPENING PRAYER

**Leader 2** In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, God said, 'Let there be light!'

**Candle #1**      *Leader 2 lights the first candle.*

**All**            **God, giver of life,  
we light a candle of hope  
to celebrate with all your people  
as we watch and wait for your plans and promises to  
be fulfilled.**

**Leader 2** The people walking in darkness have seen a great light;  
on those living in the land of deep darkness  
a light has dawned.

**All**            **God of hope,  
In our busy-ness may we find space  
to see you at work in our lives and our world.  
May we be people who radiate your hope  
as we worship in celebration today. Amen.**

*(Pause – moment of reflection)*

## **SONG 1**

**Candle #2**            *Leader 1 lights the second candle.*

**All**            **God, giver of life,  
we light a candle of hope  
to celebrate with all your people  
as we watch and wait for your plans and promises to  
be fulfilled.**

## **PRAYERS OF CONFESSION**

**Leader 1** God told the people of Judah to care for both the people and the place of exile. Often, we fall short of caring for God's world and God's people. Let us bring those times to God and ask forgiveness.

Merciful God, we come to you in confession.  
We are aware that much of the suffering our sisters and brothers around the world face is a result of our colonial past. We acknowledge this and are sorry that, as a country, we have often put ourselves first, at the expense of others.

*Silence*

Gracious God, forgive us

**All**            **God, in your mercy, forgive us**

**Leader 1** We think of your beautiful world and how we have taken it for granted and squandered its resources.

*Silence*

Generous God, forgive us

**All**            **God, in your mercy, forgive us**

*Silence*

**Leader 1** Our sisters and brothers cry out to you; we have failed to love them well. We have not loved our neighbours as you have taught us. Sometimes we have not even loved ourselves.

*Silence*

Compassionate God, forgive us.

**All**      **God, in your mercy, forgive us**

*Silence*

**All**      **God, in your mercy, help us to act on your call for repentance.**

*Silence*

**Leader 1** Jesus, thank you that through your sacrifice we are forgiven. Holy Spirit transform our hearts and minds, so that we may live and love as Jesus showed us.

**All**      **Amen**

*Pause for reflection*

## **SONG 2**

### **VOICES OF WOMEN**

**Leader 2** The people of Jeremiah's time found themselves in a place where they did not want to be: away from their homeland and excluded from their culture, worship, and homes.

There are many people who have settled in the British Isles after fleeing their homeland and culture. In the land of prosperity many are poor. In the midst of crowded cities many are lonely. How can we tell ALL their stories? We cannot.

What does it mean to feel excluded in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland? Let us listen..

*Immediately three women, seated in different places on the edges of the worship area, jump up and speak.*

**Reader 1 (Lina):** Living in poverty, regularly missing a meal so that my children might not go hungry.

**Reader 2 (Natalie):** Living in fear because my partner abuses me, physically, emotionally, and sexually.

**Reader 3 (Emily):** Living in loneliness and isolation because of my age, disability, ethnic origin, or sexuality.

**Candle #3**      **Leader 2 lights the third candle.**

**All**      **God of love, we light a candle of hope to celebrate with all your people as we watch and wait for your plans and promises to be fulfilled.**

## STORIES OF HOPE

**Leader 1** There are times in our lives when we find ourselves in situations where we do not want to be. Sometimes, like the exiles in Babylon, we cannot see a way forward and long for God to intervene. When God does, it is often in ways that we could never have imagined and not at all as we expected.

Listen to the true stories of three women who found themselves living in difficult situations, and of how God's plans for them have blessed them in very unexpected ways.

### **Reader 1: LINA'S STORY**

I will be sharing Lina's (*Lee-nah*) story in her words:

"I have helped my son to bring up my four grandsons after their mother left them. My son struggles with mental health issues and cannot work, so there is very little money for even their basic needs. I used to go without food myself in order to buy food for him and the boys.

Five years ago, my grandsons attended an event at my local church, where they were welcomed warmly. Since then, this church has become our wider family. They help us with regular donations of food from the foodbank and have helped us with clothing and holidays for the family. One member of the congregation is a retired teacher and helped the grandchildren with their homework on a Wednesday night. Through the love of this church, we have found a safe space, people who love us and will not let us down. I thank God for working out the plans to bless us, and for giving us hope and a future, through my local church."

**Candle #4**      *Reader 1 lights the fourth candle.*

**All**            **God of care,  
we light a candle of hope  
to celebrate with all your people  
as we watch and wait for your plans and promises  
to be fulfilled.**

### **Reader 2: NATALIE'S STORY**

I will be sharing Natalie's story:

"It didn't always feel like fear when I was with my abusive partner. Mostly I felt uneasy, like I was treading on eggshells, unsure of what he was going to do next or what he was going to make me do next. His indifference towards me stung. His unkindness shriveled me up inside. His threats made me paranoid. God was a weapon he used to control me. I was a shell of who I used to be.

When I was pregnant, he hurt me so badly that the baby was born early. In the days I spent in the hospital, not knowing if my child would live, God spoke to me; “Stop praying for your child to live. Instead, pray for my will to be done.” I said, “Yes” to God, who offered only to be present, with no promises that everything would be okay. And yet....

.... my baby is now 13 years old, happy, and healthy. My life has been filled with more joy and beauty than I ever thought possible, and I am free from the man who abused me so terribly. No longer do I fear; God has good plans for me.”

***Candle #5      Reader 2 lights the fifth candle.***

**All            God of tenderness,  
                 we light a candle of hope  
                 to celebrate with all your people  
                 as we watch and wait for your plans and promises  
                 to be fulfilled.**

**Reader 3: EMILY’S STORY**

I will be sharing Emily’s story in her own words:

“I had plans for my life. I would go to university and become a teacher. But when I was 16, I was diagnosed with brain tumours and needed lots of surgery. One operation saved my life but caused me to lose my hearing. I was terrified in my world of silence. All thoughts of a career in education vanished. I struggled to understand what people said to me as I watched their lips move. I struggled to understand sign language, too. I felt caught between the hearing world and the deaf world, fitting into neither. I became very isolated and withdrawn. I wanted to end my life, but God had other plans. As I gradually accepted that my plans could not happen, I asked God to use my life for his glory, and God began to show me his plans. God wanted me to use my story for him. God knows the plans he has for me, and I have learned that I do not need to know them. I need to trust God. I am better at lip reading and sign language now, although I still struggle to understand what people say sometimes. But I know that whatever I go through, God whispers peace and love into my heart. And I do not need to be able to hear to know his whisper.”

***Candle #6      Reader 3 lights the sixth candle.***

**All            God of compassion,  
                 we light a candle of hope  
                 to celebrate with all your people  
                 as we watch and wait for your plans and promises  
                 to be fulfilled.**

**Leader 1** The people walking in darkness have seen a great light ...

Jesus said: "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life."  
(John 8:12)

God's promises of freedom, forgiveness, justice, and peace are fulfilled in Jesus, the life-giving light which even the deepest darkness cannot extinguish. Through Jesus we are able to come close to God and discern God's plans for us.

## **PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

**Leader 2** God of the past, the present and the future,  
we thank you that you love us faithfully and uniquely.  
You loved us before we knew anything about you:  
you care for us in every moment of our lives;  
you know our deepest thoughts, our highest hopes, and our  
greatest fears;  
you know the best and the worst in us, and still, you love us.  
Thank you that you never let us go.  
Thank you for the plans and promises you have made for us,  
which give us hope for today and tomorrow.  
God of our past, our present and our future,  
receive our thanks and praise,  
which we offer in Jesus' name.

**All**           **Amen.**

**Leader 2** The prophet Jeremiah lived some 600 years before the birth of Christ, at a time of great political crisis. The southern kingdom of Judah had been invaded by the Babylonians and many of its people taken from Jerusalem into exile. The people had lost the land they believed God had given them and they longed to return, but the future looked bleak. Our chosen passage is part of a letter from Jeremiah, setting out God's plan for the exiles: they are to stay where they are and make new lives for themselves in this foreign land.

## **BIBLE READING – Jeremiah 29: 1 - 14**

**Reader 4** These are the words of the letter that the prophet Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem to the remaining elders among the exiles and to the priests, the prophets, and all the people Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. This was after King Jeconiah, and the queen mother, the court officials, the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, the

artisans, and the smiths had departed from Jerusalem.’  
(*Jeremiah 29:1-2*)

**Reader 5** Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, that they may have sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let the prophets and the diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams that they dream, for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in my name; I have not sent them, says the Lord.’(*Jeremiah 29:4-9*)

**Reader 4** For thus says the Lord: Only when Babylon’s seventy years are completed will I visit you and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me, says the Lord, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, says the Lord, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.’(*Jeremiah 29:10-14*)

**SONG 3** “For surely I know the plans” (sung twice) Words and music by Lucy Hole, composed especially for the 2022 WDP EWNI program, ©WDPIC. Used with permission.

For surely I know the plans I have for you.

The Lord said:

Surely I know the plans I have for you.

Plans for your welfare, plans to not harm you,

And to give you hope again.

For surely I know the plans I have for you.

## **DEVOTIONAL MESSAGE**

## REFLECTION /RESPONSIVE ACTION

**Leader 1** As we reflect upon God's promise to the people of Judah, at each pause, feel free to write or draw your thoughts – or simply think silently.

“For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you.” (Jeremiah 29:11)

Imagine that you've been given a packet of seeds (or a seed).  
A seed is full of potential and hope.  
Hold your seed(s) and ponder.

What might God be saying to you?  
What hope does God have for you and your future?  
*You can pause to think and write down or draw your thoughts.*

We pray for what is in our hearts...

*Silence for personal prayer*

**Leader 1** Seeds need the right conditions to grow.

Where do seeds of hope need planting in your life?

*Pause*

Where do seeds of hope need planting in your community?

*Pause*

How can these seeds of hope be nourished  
in your life; in your community?

*Pause*

We pray for these places and situations...

*Silence*

**Leader 1** Take these seeds and plant them as a reminder of God's constant love and your hopes.

**Candle #7**      *Leader 1 lights the seventh candle.*

**All**      **God, giver of life,  
we light a candle of hope  
and participate with all your people  
in responsive prayerful action  
to bring to life the plans and promises you have for  
us**

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

**Leader 2** Let us pray:

For all who are hungry, who do not have enough to live with dignity;  
that they may find generosity in their communities.

*Silence*

**All** God, in your mercy  
**Hear our prayer**

**Leader 2** For all who are abused in any way, whose homes or places of study or work are places not of safety but of fear;  
that they may be strengthened and freed from abusers and fear.

*Silence*

**All** God, in your mercy  
**Hear our prayer.**

**Leader 2** For all who live in loneliness or isolation;  
that they may know friendship and community.

*Silence*

**All** God, in your mercy  
**Hear our prayer**

**Leader 2** For all who are shunned, from whom people turn away;  
that they may be included and know themselves loved as children of God.

*Silence*

**All** God, in your mercy  
**Hear our prayer.**

**Leader 2** For all who have been displaced, who live in exile and in fear of losing everything they have ever known;  
that they may know God's peace and strength in their lives.

*Silence*

**All** God, in your mercy  
**Hear our prayer.**

**Leader 2** Let us commend ourselves and all for whom we pray, to the mercy and protection of God. In the name of our Saviour Jesus Christ,

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Leader 1** Let us pray as our Saviour taught us.

**The Lord's Prayer (in your own language)**

**Amen**

## OFFERING

**Leader 1** The World Day of Prayer is a worldwide, ecumenical, women led movement. Each year, we admire the strength of the communities who participate; we empathize with their cares; we are encouraged by their faith; and we stand in solidarity with each other through our prayers and actions.

In Canada, under the leadership of the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada (WICC), your offering funds World Day of Prayer (WDP) as well as grants for projects to restore hope to women touched by injustice. For a list of approved WDP 2020-2021 grant projects go to [wicc.org](http://wicc.org).

### Prayer of Thanksgiving

**Leader 2** Gracious God, we thank you and worship you for all the blessings you have bestowed upon us, for family and friends, home, food, and water. We praise you for leading us to be creative and being able to support our families. We offer to you a small portion of these blessings of money and service. We dedicate them to the World Day of Prayer that will share these gifts with the communities in need here and around the world. Amen

### OFFERTORY Song

*(During this hymn, an offering will be taken)*

### PRAYER OF DEDICATION FOR OFFERING

**Leader 2** Faithful God, knowing that your plans for our lives are good and your promises to be trusted, we offer these gifts in praise and thanksgiving. May they be used according to your will for the benefit of all your people.

### SONG 5 Closing Hymn

### BLESSING and DISMISSAL

**Leader 2** We thank you, loving God, that we have been gathered in your presence and shared in worship.  
Now may we go forth into the world, confident that we are your children, knowing that you have called us by name.  
In our daily lives may we align ourselves to your will, seeking direction to follow your plan and patience in the waiting.  
In the challenges and joys we face, may we be assured we do not face them alone.  
In the name of God, the giver of life,  
let us go in peace, hope, and love.

**All** Amen

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“I Know the Plans I Have for You” was prepared by the World Day of Prayer Committee of England, Wales and Northern Ireland for the worship service and educational activities for the 2022 World Day of Prayer (WDP) annual celebration. WDP materials are developed for the exclusive use of WDP programs organized by national or local committees and their partner organizations.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**Which country is writing the 2023 World Day of Prayer service?**

Taiwan

**Are you seeking funding for a social justice project in your community? WICC distributes WDP grants up to \$5,000.**

Application deadline: March 31, 2022. Go to [wicc.org](http://wicc.org) for details.

**What is WICC?** WICC is a national ecumenical organization with a mission to empower Christians to pursue justice, peace, and reconciliation by standing together in prayer and action.

**For further information, please contact:**

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**WDP 2020- 2021 Grants: International, Canada and Awakening Grants Funded by WDP**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Kenya	CAP (Canadian African Partnership) Network ON / Kijiji Cha Upendo Children's Project	Emergency COVID-19 Support for Orphan Caregivers in Kibera, Nairobi	\$5000.
Malawi	Change Her World, Stratford ON	Pig Cooperative to generate income	\$3000.
Zimbabwe	Shamiso foundation, Lancaster ON	Agricultural support for children and their widow caregivers	\$5000.
Alberta	Jessica Martel Memorial Foundation (Jessie's House)	Family Violence Survivors Support Program	\$5000.
Alberta	HOPE RESOURCE CENTRE ASSOCIATION	Rebuilding lives - support for victims of gender-based violence	\$5000.
Alberta	RESET Society of Calgary	EXPloitation Intervention & Transition (EXIT) Program	\$5000
Alberta	Diocese of Edmonton, Indigenous Ministries Initiative	Indigenous Women Birth Support	\$5000
British Columbia	Ascension Lutheran Church (ELCIC)	Rosemont Community Kitchen, Weekly Community Dinner	\$4500
British Columbia	Mennonite Central Committee	End Abuse Program, When Love Hurts, Phase 4	\$5000
New Brunswick	Gentle Path Counselling Services Ltd.	Subsidized and/or Free Counseling for Women Facing Challenges	\$2500
Newfoundland	Single Parent Association of Newfoundland	Empowering Single Parent Women	\$5000
Ontario	St. James Anglican Church	Women's Community Lunch - Addressing Mental Health Concerns and Food Insecurity in Centre Wellington	\$5000
Ontario	Citizens for Public Justice	Justice Policy Advocacy	\$4000
Ontario	CAP Canada (Christians Against Poverty)	The Jael Initiative - ON and SK	\$5000
Ontario	FCJ Refugee Centre	Uprooted Women's Community Cooperative	\$5000
Ontario	BridgeNorth Women's Mentorship & Advocacy Services	Development/Distribution of National Anti-Trafficking Hotline # Pamphlet	\$5000
Ontario	KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives	Supporting Temporary Foreign Workers During the Coronavirus Pandemic	\$5000
Ontario	Fight4Freedom	Survivor Care Program	\$5000
Ontario	The Gathering Food Centre (c/o Church Out Serving) - Simcoe ON	COVID19 Emergency Food Services	\$5000
Ontario	St. Thomas Wesley United Church	Restorative Justice Circles for Women	\$5000
Awakening Ontario	NorthWind Family Ministries	LifeBuild - Women Restored - setting boundaries; emotional health	\$2000
Awakening Grant Saskatchewan	Battlefords Family Health Centre	Community garden for cultural learning and food production	\$2000
Emergency Grant Bahamas	Bahamas, Turks & Caicos Islands Conference (BTCIC) of Methodist Church in Caribbean and the Americas (MCCA)	Disaster Relief following Hurricane Dorian	\$2000.

