



Lent Devotional

# One

Reflections, prayers and  
poems for Lent



tearfund

## Welcome to One

**‘There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.’ (Galatians 3:28)**

This is the sixth of Tearfund’s Lent devotionals that I have been involved in creating. And this is by far the one I am most passionate about.

When we look around at the world today, we can see an awful lot of division and disconnection. Yet there is hope. A deep and thrilling hope.

When we realise that we are one in Christ, everything changes. When we embrace togetherness – unity with creation, with each other and with God – extraordinary things can happen.

At Tearfund, we see this every day in our work. Faced alone, poverty can seem inescapable. But when people come together in unity – in oneness – there is great power. We’ll be sharing some of these stories with you throughout this Lent journey.

May you have a blessed Lent. May you take hold of the thrilling hope we have in Christ. And may you, and all of us, be one.

**Gideon Heugh,**  
*Editor*

*Unless otherwise stated, all Bible quotations are NIV UK.*



## Week one: One with our identity


**‘The great struggle of the Christian life is to take God’s name for us, to believe we are beloved and to believe that is enough.’**

*Rachel Held Evans, Searching for Sunday*

## Day 1:

### Fire

Wednesday 2 March

 'Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.'

Romans 12:2

The first day of Lent is known in many traditions as Ash Wednesday. Ash is the aftermath of fire – the remnant of a burning away.

Part of the spiritual journey is learning to let go; it is to subtract whatever the world has put upon us to make more room for God's abundance. So, to begin Lent, let us reflect upon some of the things it might be time to burn away from our lives:

- **Negative beliefs about ourselves.** For example, 'I'm not enough'. You are more than enough for Christ.
- **Bitterness and unforgiveness.** The only person it's hurting is you.
- **Whatever the 'thing' is that you're waiting for to complete you.** 'If only I had that job/that house/that person etc.' It won't complete you; you are already complete.
- **Material possessions.** These can be anchors that weigh us down. It is liberating when we realise that all things belong to God.
- **Self-centredness.** There is a desperate need for society to move from 'me' to 'we'; from 'I' to 'all of us'.

*Write down a list of some of the things that you want to subtract from your life this Lent. Commit your list to God.*


**Gideon Heugh**

*Gideon writes for Tearfund and is a poet and environmentalist*

## Day 2:

### Meeting my maker

Thursday 3 March

 'For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb'.

Psalms 139:13

In a world where we can add filters to our photos, share curated highlight reels of our lives, and present the best version of ourselves to others, this verse reminds me that I cannot hide from our omnipresent Creator. To be honest, that can sometimes be a frightening and uncomfortable thought.

But this verse also delivers a freeing truth: God knows every corner of our hearts and being – even the dark depths we want to keep hidden in shame. He knows us intimately and yet still fully delights in me, in you!

Since we were so carefully and intentionally created, we each have a valuable role to play, flaws and all, in advancing his kingdom. This encourages me in my day-to-day work here in the Middle East, knowing that every task – whether big or small, seen or unseen, or seemingly insignificant – ultimately contributes to a much bigger purpose, which you are also part of.


*Loving God, thank you for this wonderful truth. Help me to invest my whole being in it, so that everything I do will flow from it. Amen.*

**Jade Beakhouse**

*Jade works in Tearfund's Middle East Team*

### Day 3: In the image

Friday 4 March

 ‘So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them.’

Genesis 1:27

This is a verse many of us know so well that sometimes we forget to stop in awe at its power, beauty and meaning. We are made in the image of the same God who flung stars into space and who brings meaning from chaos.

Pause, and breathe it in. The image of our Lord is woven deeply into the fabric of humanity.

Wrapped up in this short verse is the calling to our identity as image-bearers of the King. And the calling to actively look for the image of our King in others.

This is a world-changing truth. How different things would be if we saw past the headlines into the image of God? The climate crisis, modern-day slavery, fast fashion... I dare to believe that if we truly lived out this verse – poverty would be over. Injustice gone.

So today, let's proactively look and find the image of God in ourselves and others.


*Creator God, we pause in awe. Thank you that we are woven in your image. Help us Lord to see this in ourselves and in others. Might we live differently in light of this truth. Amen.*

**Dot Tyler**

*Dot leads Tearfund's work with young people across the UK*

### Day 4: The real you

Saturday 5 March

 ‘Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.’

John 1:12

Read this prayer out loud and let the truth soak into you: you are created and you are loved. And, as we journey together this Lent, let us ask God how we can seek freedom for others too.

*God of creation, of the parted seas and the miracle birth, the empty tomb and risen King, help me to see myself as part of your story.*

*Wash away any shame or fear that is holding me back, declare over me again that I am a new creation in you, Lord.*

*Show me the areas of my life where I need to prune, so I can walk in greater freedom with you.*

*And when life is difficult: grant me patience, like you did Joseph, grant me boldness, like you did Rahab, grant me courage, like you did Ruth, grant me wisdom, like you did David.*

*God of my past and my future, let me never forget that you are working in the present, help me to see myself in your greater plan. Show me how I can best serve you with all of me, as a beloved child of God, because – yes – that is who I am. Amen.*

**Rachael Adams**

*Rachael is the Editor of Tearfund's weekly prayer email*



## Day 5: A new light arrives

Sunday 6 March

‘Weeping may stay for  
the night, but rejoicing  
comes in the morning.’

Psalm 30:5

Each Sunday we will be sharing a poem with you. Treat this as a Sabbath Day – read them slowly, soaking in the words and asking God to speak to you through them.

### A new light arrives

*Buried in the night,  
anxious thoughts crowded darkly  
around me.*

*The last thing I expect  
is a miracle;  
the last thing I anticipate is God  
riding the dawn.*

*But then,  
like the only answer we ever need,  
a new light arrives,  
splashing grace-paint  
on the worn-out canvas of my heart,*

*and all of a sudden  
hope is running along the tops of the trees  
wild-eyed  
and rampant.*

**Gideon Heugh**

Poem is © Gideon Heugh, from ‘Rumours of Light’



## Week two: One with Christ

‘Look for Christ and you will find  
Him, and with Him everything  
else thrown in.’

C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

## Day 6: The difference

Monday 7 March

‘I have been crucified with Christ  
and I no longer live, but Christ  
lives in me.’

Galatians 2:20

‘There is still hope. Even if we lost everything, God will not leave us alone... As long as God is there, we can recover from this.’

These are the words of Rowena, from the Philippines. I spoke with her after Super Typhoon Goni washed away her home. Rowena was in the process of trying to move on.

Our local partner, PhilRads, has been helping people like her recover from the storms – storms that are becoming even more severe due to the climate crisis. They provided immediate relief in the aftermath and are training communities to become more resilient when disasters hit.

I was there to help Rowena, yet I felt as though she was the one encouraging me. God never forsakes us. God never abandons us. Jesus’ sacrifice at the cross means that that love is alive today in us. It is a hope that we can hold onto through the ups and downs of life. This is the difference that being one with Christ makes.

*Christ our Lord, thank you for the sacrifice you made so that we are never apart from you. We pray that people around the world who are affected by disasters will know this love too. Amen.*

**Patricia Pagulayan**

*Tearfund’s International Communications Coordinator*



📍 Rowena stands with her husband and daughter in front of their wrecked home.

Photo: Patricia Pagulayan/Tearfund

## Day 7: The faces of Christ

Tuesday 8 March

■ 'But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbour?"'

Luke 10:29

There are around 125 billion galaxies in the known universe. All of them unique. Each of these galaxies contain hundreds of billions of stars. All of them unique. Most of these stars have planets orbiting them. All of them unique.

One of those countless planets is of course the Earth. And on this gorgeous world there are around 8.7 million different species of life. All of them unique.

And one of those beautiful species is us. Human beings. Today, there are around 7 billion of us. All of us unique.

God, clearly, loves diversity. Everything created has a unique identity. Yet all of this awesome abundance of uniqueness is held together by one thing: Christ. All of it, all that has ever been made, was made by and through and for Christ (Colossians 1:16).

When we look into a face, we see a beautiful uniqueness, but also a beautiful connectedness. We see Christ. Who is our neighbour? Everyone, and in everyone, Christ.

*Christ over all, thank you for the diversity of your creation. Help us to embrace and celebrate it. And open our eyes so that we can see you in all things. Amen.*

Gideon Heugh

## Day 8: What the light illuminates

Wednesday 9 March

■ "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

I step out of the door and it is like passing into another world. Light and warmth wrap around me with the same intense immersion as entering the sea. Even as I close my eyes, the day's brightness floods my eyelids with a determined, flesh-washed, 'I am here'.

As a photographer and a sleep-deprived parent, I am obsessed with light. And so my everyday ritual of noticing the presence of the day's light is special to me. It nourishes me and echoes that call, to keep moving towards the light of the world.

Photography breaks the movement of our lived experiences into frozen chunks of reflected light and time. Daylight speaks to us of continuity. All things reveal their connectedness as light travels with us from second to second. As we, too, travel through the present moment of each day.

*Today, as soon as possible, step outside and seek out that light. Even if it's cold and dreary (you can look through a window too), take some time to become aware of that gift of 'the light of life'. You are coated in light; notice how it makes you feel. Notice what the light illuminates in front of you. Now, say thank you to Jesus, the light of life itself.*

Tom Price

Tom is a photographer and filmmaker



Join us in praying regularly for those living in poverty, with a particular focus on the climate crisis. Sign up to receive prayer points directly to your phone every one to two weeks by texting **'PRAY'** to **+44 (0)7916 874441** using your phone's SMS messaging app.

📷 In Malawi, a women's self-help group gathers for prayer and singing.

Photo: Alex Baker/Tearfund



## Day 9: Union

Thursday 10 March

**'Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: the old has gone, the new is here!'**

2 Corinthians 5:17

Have you ever visited a new destination and been keen to explore your surroundings? Whether undertaking a day trip, week away, or permanent move, I often look forward to experiencing my new environment, its history, architecture, culture and people. When we are in Christ, we are a new creation and there is plenty to explore and experience.

As we abide in Christ and he in us, we are transformed. Our mind is renewed daily as we feed on God's word. Spending time in his presence and in prayer we develop a new perspective and begin to see the world through Christ's lens. Our hearts are awakened to opportunities to be Christ's hands and feet in the places we reside and beyond.

In the forthcoming days, let us be excited about the new things that Christ is doing in us, in our community and worldwide, and let us explore how we can play our part.


*Lord, thank you for the ways in which you transform us. Help us to perceive and embrace the new things that you are doing in and around us. Please make us aware of that which you want to do through us, so that we can be a blessing to others. Amen.*

**Rev Lotwina Farodaye**

Rev Lotwina is part of Oxted Team Ministry

## Day 10: The everyday divine

Friday 11 March

 'The Word became flesh  
and made his dwelling  
among us.'

John 1:14

As I write this reflection my home church in Cardiff is going through the Gospel of Mark. From the opening chapters alone one thing is obvious: when people come into contact with Jesus, their lives are transformed.

And why should that come as a surprise, since he is the divine dwelling among us? But as I read about Jesus, another thought comes to mind. His divinity is awesome, but also his humanity is beautiful. He cares, loves and shows mercy to those whom society deems do not belong.


As we marvel at Jesus, the Son of God, let us also marvel at his humanity, and be inspired by it to go and stand with our brothers and sisters who are living in poverty and marginalised. Loving humanity is a radical act these days. As people notice the way you love and serve your close and global neighbours, let them be amazed, and ask 'What sort of new teaching is this?' (Mark 1:27 NLT)

*Thank you Jesus for being both God and human. Help me to serve and love my local and global neighbours. May our governments create policies that show kindness and mercy towards the marginalised. Amen.*

**Cynan Llwyd**  
Cynan leads Tearfund Cymru (Wales)

## Day 11: Alive with Christ

Saturday 12 March

 'Now if we died with  
Christ, we believe that we  
will also live with him.'

Romans 6:8

As you pray, invite Christ's presence into your body. Take a few moments to relax. Listen to your body: what can you feel? Notice any pain, tension, sickness. Notice also any feelings of fear or hope, a smile, a sigh or a tear. Offer these to God as you pray.

*Christ Jesus, you are the Lord of my body. You who inhabited this same flesh, know what it is to grow and move and change, to be both healed and wounded, to feel alive.*

*In this space in which I live, in each breath, each cell, each feeling nerve, in this gifted skin where your Spirit dwells with me, I carry the joy and power of your resurrected life along with the sorrow of advancing death, through which I will come to you. Wherever I go, you are with me, whatever the world has for me, there you are active through my life, long past the end.*

*Give me the gift of becoming more aware of you of, feeling your holy presence in the death and life of my body, of knowing hope beyond my experience – because you have looked out of eyes like mine and, gloriously wounded but forever alive, you call me on. Amen.*

**Rosie McNeil**  
Associate National Director, Vineyard Churches UK and Ireland

## Day 12:

### The path

Sunday 13 March

**‘Trust in the Lord with all  
your heart and lean not on  
your own understanding.’**

Proverbs 3:5

#### The Path

*You can step away from the treadmill now.  
We both know how tired you have become;  
we both know how the noise has been driving you mad.*

*I won't blame you for getting on in the first place.  
We were all lied to. We were all told that it led somewhere.  
Look how many increase the speed hoping to get  
there faster; see how inevitably they fall.*

*I am glad to have reached you.  
Come away now. Come out into the sun,  
into the wind and the rain. Here is a path.  
I cannot tell you how long it is, or the wonders, the tragedies  
you will find around its sharp corners.*

*I can tell you that it will end in your death –  
of course! And why would we forget?*

*The ground is solid, but softer than you might think.  
You can sit down anywhere and admire the view.  
You are encouraged to make a habit of rest.*

*At many points it will branch off  
and you won't know which path to take.  
But take note of this:  
in all places it is wider than one set of shoulders.*

#### Gideon Heugh

Poem is © Gideon Heugh, from 'Rumours of Light'



## Week three:

### One with creation

**‘To love a place is not enough. We must  
find ways to heal it.’**

Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*

## Day 13:

### This good world

Monday 14 March

 'God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.'

Genesis 1:31

Once I built a chicken coop.

It wasn't sturdy, polished or worthy to be paraded in the streets. There were raggedy edges and bits of nail sticking out. But when I finished I breathed out a satisfied sigh and surveyed my work.

God did a far better job creating a home for us humans than I did for my hens. With the work of creating done, God surveyed his handiwork and called it 'very good'. Not good because of what we can get out of it – but good for goodness' sake.

This beauty, crafted by God as a home for his image bearers to thrive in, has signposted centuries of Jesus' followers towards a life of worship.

Consider author Richard Foster's words on creation and use them to spur you into prayer today:

*Give your attention to the created order. Look at the trees, really look at them. Take a flower and allow its beauty and symmetry to sink deep into your mind and heart. Listen to the birds – they are messengers of God. Watch the little creatures that creep upon the earth. These are humble acts, to be sure, but sometimes God reaches us profoundly in these simple ways if we will quiet ourselves to listen.*


**Glen Mitchell**

*Glen is the director of Tearfund Northern Ireland*

## Day 14:

### The immeasurable

Tuesday 15 March

 'For in [Christ] all things were created... all things have been created through him and for him.'

Colossians 1:16

So much of what we cling to disintegrates when looking at the stars. I feel a similar thing when walking in the mountains, or watching a sunrise, or spending time in a quiet wood. Awe is a fantastic remedy for worry.

You're never going to reach the edge of wonder. When you make your life about the immeasurable, there will always be abundance.

When we bring our hearts before the immensities – the beauty and the wonder of God's creation – something inside us opens up. We realise that we are part of a greater whole.

Wonder helps reabsorb us back into the wider natural world. Through wonder, we are knocked out of the illusion that the world revolves around us.

But to do this, we have to do it. We have to go outside. We have to stop and stare. We have to put down our busyness and embrace quiet stillness.

*God of wonder, show me new ways that I can get lost in you through your creation. Open my eyes, my ears and my heart to the wonder around me. Help me to stop, to be still, and to stare at the beauty around me. Amen.*

**Gideon Heugh**

## Day 15:

### Love in action

Wednesday 16 March



**‘To act justly and to love mercy.’**

Micah 6:8

Like in Nehemiah’s days, when the builders of the wall had to fight off their enemies, people living in poverty have to deal with the reality of the climate crisis. In their extreme scarcity, they contend with droughts and floods that wash away their roads, bridges, houses and livelihoods.

On the other hand, they need to address the causes of these challenges using climate-smart solutions that they cannot afford. It is unjust, since though the poor have contributed least to the climate crisis, they are the worst affected. This injustice requires unified action by the global church.

Jesus looks to his church in the global south to address society’s problems, but they will need their brothers in the global north to stand alongside them. Through prayer, material generosity and speaking truth to people in power – in other words, through love in action – the global church can overcome the climate crisis and extreme poverty, as one.

*Lord, show us what it means to act justly, love mercy and to walk humbly with you when it comes to tackling the climate crisis. Reveal to me how I can help my church stand with those in need. Amen.*

**Hannington Muyenje**

*Hannington is part of Tearfund’s global campaigns team*

## Day 16:

### Without excuse

Thursday 17 March



**‘God’s invisible qualities...have been clearly seen...so that people are without excuse.’**

Romans 1:20

Trees are holy. An aged tree is a beautiful tree; its branches are home to the birds, its roots hold the tree and the soil around it together. Its leaves purify the air. Its bark and leaves provide medicine. Its fruit and seeds feed others and carry future life within them. Trees exemplify a stability that does not compete with other trees in order for them to be significant.

There are many trees that are pointed out in the Bible: the cedars of Lebanon, the trees of life and good and evil in Genesis, sycamore trees, fig trees etc. Trees are integral to the God story, to revealing who God is, but we somehow forget about them because they do not ‘shout’ at us.

I want to be a tree. I want to bear fruit; fruit that will last. I want to be in community with other trees so that we create forests – places of lushness where people can experience peace, tranquility and God’s goodness. I want to give people a reason to believe, taste and see that God is good.

*God of the trees, may this Lent be one in which we consider all of your creation, and how your creation constantly declares your glory and reminds us that we are created to serve others... without excuse. Amen.*

**Carol Ng’ang’a**


*Carol is part of Tearfund’s Young Theologians network*



## Day 17:

### All things

Friday 18 March

 ‘How many are your works, Lord! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.’

Psalm 104:24

The first time I heard about Fairtrade was in a primary school assembly. My friend’s mum was giving a talk on cocoa farmers – how they struggle to earn a fair wage for their work – keeping them trapped in poverty.

It is now more than 20 years since that assembly and it saddens me what little progress has been made.

Our team in Ivory Coast is working with hundreds of cocoa farmers, but the climate crisis has changed the weather patterns, making it harder to farm. They still struggle to earn a fair price for their labour and crops.

God calls us to care for creation and for our neighbours. We cannot do that if we keep ourselves separate from their daily struggles. If we opt for a life of consumerism over connection.

But how do we reclaim this? By a life of thanksgiving. Of recognising the part each person and creature plays in the world. And matching our lifestyle choices in recognition of this.


*Before your meals today, thank God. Lift up every part of it and the journey of how it made its way to you. Pray for a fair wage and working conditions for the farmers and workers involved.*

**Rachael Adams**

## Day 18:

### Grief and hope

Saturday 19 March

 ‘Do not be afraid, you wild animals, for the pastures in the wilderness are becoming green.’

Joel 2:22

The extent of the climate and wider ecological crisis overwhelms me. I am challenged not to rush too quickly to hope but to stop and face full-on the suffering we are causing – to people, the wider natural world and other creatures.

It is important – vital – that we allow our sorrow and lament to be expressed. Scripture is full of these laments – times when God’s people would cry out in agony and grief, longing for a deliverance that didn’t seem to be coming. Yet through expressing it, that grief would often turn to hope.

I long for the time that Joel speaks of, when the wilderness will be restored and wild animals can flourish. Speak out the following prayer by author John Polhill and ask God to turn your mourning into active resolve.

*Creator God, bless the tears we shed for the resources we have squandered. Bless the sigh we breathe out for the atmosphere. Bless the head we hang for the creatures lost and exploited. Bless the hands we wring for the things we have broken and wasted. Bless us as we lament. Cradle us as we regret. Restore us as we start afresh. Amen.*

**Dr Ruth Valerio**

*Ruth is Tearfund’s Director of Global Advocacy and Influencing*

## Day 19:

### A forest once

Sunday 20 March

‘Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.’

John 12:24

#### A forest once

*I thought I dreamt of a forest once, darkfully green,  
a place where the wind could hide  
and becoming lost we would find ourselves.*

*I thought I dreamt of fallen leaves,  
of decay enriching the soil – life rising  
from the sweet sting of impermanence.*

*Now awake, encased by undying concrete,  
I think of the beginnings that will never come  
because of the endings that cannot.*

**Gideon Heugh**

Poem is © Gideon Heugh, from ‘Rumours of Light’



## Week four:

# One with each other


‘Love is larger than the  
walls which shut it in.’

Corrie ten Boom, *The Hiding Place*

## Day 20:

### The power of community

Monday 21 March

 ‘How good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity!’

Psalms 133:1

The fading night sky was filled with lightning flashes over the rainforest. We were sat out eating delicious doughnuts cooked over an open fire. I was visiting the Democratic Republic of Congo with a small team from Tearfund, collecting stories from a remote village near Bunia. It had been a difficult journey, up a sharp hill. Fortunately, we were welcomed by a team of local church pastors on motorbikes, and we rode pillion up the steep track. The pastors joined us for food and asked if we’d like them to sing.

As they sang their beautiful Congolese worship songs, the sky sparked and heaven opened. I didn’t understand the words, but their passion and faith echoed in harmony all around us. It was the most amazing expression of Christian community I have ever experienced. That is what helps bring heaven to earth – when barriers are broken and we join together as one.

*The dawn is breaking, wake up  
God’s glory, is going around the world  
The world asks me, where is your God?  
I say my God is seated in glory, oh Yahweh, be praised!  
Let me magnify him, for he is my strength!*

From *Glorify the Lord*, a Congolese worship song.


**Peter Shaw**

*Peter is Editor of Tear Times and The Prayer Diary*

## Day 21:

### Each other

Tuesday 22 March

 ‘Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves.’

Philippians 2:3

‘Sometimes you can’t make it on your own’. Bono had it right, apart from that first bit. We can take away the ‘sometimes’.

Our culture worships the individual. The self-made. The self-sufficient. Self-care. Do-it-yourself. Self-obsession. Cue an explosion of loneliness.

No one is self-sufficient. You alone cannot entirely care for yourself. It’s about time we embraced that fact, and surrendered to our interdependence.

We are not simply individuals. We are part of this world; and this world is part of us. We need friendship. We need family. We need community. We need helping hands and shoulders to cry on. Without this – without relationality, unity, togetherness – we fall apart.

We need each other. And each other needs you.

*God who is one, make us one with you, one with creation, and one with each other. Help us to tear down the walls that divide us; to build bridges across the divides that separate us; to reach out in love and inclusion, always. In Jesus’ name, amen.*

**Gideon Heugh**

## Day 22: The lonely place

Wednesday 23 March

‘So in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.’

Romans 12:5

Tearfund works with churches around the world to set up self-help groups. In these groups, people come together to find solutions to lift themselves out of poverty. At the heart of the success of these groups is connection. Poverty is a lonely place. Any response to it needs to restore people's emotional and spiritual wellbeing, as well as their practical needs, otherwise it's just plastering over a hurting wound.

I am reminded of this in these words that Laetitia, who is part of a local self-help group, shared with my team:

‘The utmost importance of this group to me is love... We find ways to support one another and, at the end of the day, you find yourself benefitting the way you didn't before...We used to fear trying out some businesses. But when you meet and open up to each other, you get encouragement and advice different from when you are doing things alone.’

*God of connection, help us to feel more connected to those around us, so that together, we can change things for your glory. Amen.*

**Emmanuel Murangira**  
Emmanuel leads Tearfund's work in Rwanda

## Lent Appeal

Self-help groups, like Laetitia's, have been hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic. Please consider giving to Tearfund this Lent to support those who have been affected.

Please give today at  
[tearfund.org/oneLent](https://tearfund.org/oneLent)

📍 Laetitia, who is part of a self-help group in Rwanda.  
Photo: Tumuheirwe Jesus/Tearfund





## Day 23: Restoring relationships

Thursday 24 March

‘He who was seated  
on the throne said,  
“I am making  
everything new!”’

Revelation 21:5

I lead an organisation that works to change the story for women who have been subjected to sexual and gender-based violence. As part of that work, we host a Survivors’ Network for Christian women.

We meet women who have lost their security, identity and sense of self-value. It can feel as though they’re stuck in a horror story. We don’t have to have been through domestic abuse to share that feeling – it might be losing a loved one or illness, it might be battling with mental health or the struggles of making ends meet. There are times when situations feel insurmountable.

This verse brings the hope of Jesus into the darkness. The hope that life can be different, that as well as heaven and earth, we too can be made new. He who sits on the throne is ready to turn the page on the story of our lives and start a new chapter.

*Almighty God, who sits upon the throne, I worship you. You are the author and perfecter of all things. I bring my life to you and ask you to make me new, in your image and to your glory. Help me to bring that same renewal to those I meet. Amen.*

**Bekah Legg**

*Bekah leads Restored, which works to end violence against women*




📷 A member of a choir in the Democratic Republic of Congo who use music to educate people about sexual and gender-based violence.

Photo: Hazel Thompson/Tearfund

## Day 24: Wounded healers

Friday 25 March

 'The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.'

Luke 4:18

It's easy to sit back and examine the lives of others. Sipping at the cup of comparison and judgement we can find ourselves feeling rather smug.

However, as we examine the shape of our lives, we make room for Christ to tend to our wounds, leading us towards others in love. When the Spirit of the others-centred Christ takes up residence in our lives, we become those who are centred on others.

Suffering can harden or humble us. If our hurts soften our hearts and we allow humility to run its course, it will lead us into washing the feet of those in pain. Like Christ, our wounds may never go away, but they can form us beyond self-absorption and towards co-suffering.

We often believe that the broken parts of our stories rule us out from serving others, when in fact our woundedness can be embraced as a gift and a guide, keeping us on humility's highway in the direction of others.


*Dear God, might we feel compassion like Christ did, feel pain in the deepest places; might we reach down and reach out until our lives become cruciform, shaped into the cross of Christ. Shape us so. Break us, so we might proclaim good news to the broken. Amen.*

**Stuart Bothwell**

Stuart helps lead Lagan Valley Vineyard church

## Day 25: Us, not me

Saturday 26 March

 'For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen.'

1 John 4:20

*God of unity, connection, togetherness, community –  
When divisions arise and conflict takes hold,  
Help us to dethrone ourselves,  
To look for common ground,  
To seek the greater good,  
To let go of me and mine and embrace us and ours.*

*When we are faced with challenges  
Such as extreme poverty and disaster and the climate crisis,  
Help us to work as one,  
To embrace our shared humanity  
To see that the path ahead is in our togetherness,  
To let go of me and mine and embrace us and ours.*

*God, I love you. And I do not want to be shown to be a liar.  
When I find other people difficult,  
When I am tempted to anger, unforgiveness, or even hatred,  
Help me to let go,  
To see your face in everyone,  
To share your love with everyone,  
To let go of me and mine and embrace us and ours.*

*In Jesus' name,  
Amen.*

**Marc Antoine**

Marc leads Tearfund's work in Haiti

## Day 26:

### Friend

Sunday 27 March

#### Loneliness

*I would trade  
in a heartbeat  
all the light  
poured upon me  
for one friend  
to sit with  
in the dark.*

**Gideon Heugh**

Poem is © Gideon Heugh, from 'Rumours of Light'

**'If either of them falls down,  
one can help the other up. But  
pity anyone who falls and has  
no one to help them up.'**

Ecclesiastes 4:10



## Week five:

### One with the church

**'The church isn't simply a collection of  
isolated individuals... we need to learn  
again the lesson that a hand is no less a  
hand for being part of a larger whole.'**

N.T. Wright, *Simply Christian*

## Day 27: Hands and feet

Monday 28 March

‘Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace.’

1 Peter 4:10

Being the Editor of Tearfund’s weekly prayer email can often mean hard conversations with teams around the world, where we sit in the tension of an unanswered prayer. Like persisting in prayer for peace in Yemen then feeling our hearts shatter as the conflict continues.

But we don’t stop. Petitioning. Crying out together for change. Waiting. Encouraging each other in the meantime. It’s not easy – but I’m glad we don’t have to do this alone.

The easier conversations to have are the ones where God is on the move, despite the challenges we face around us.

One that has stuck with me is of a pastor we work with in Chad who rescued hundreds of girls in his community from female genital mutilation and cutting by opening up his church as a refuge, providing them with shelter, safety and hope for the future.

This was one person deciding that they could use what they have at their disposal to share God’s love with those in need. That is the call of the church today.

*Open up your hands before you and ask God how you can use what he has given you to bless someone else today. Repeat often, enjoy seeing God at work and bring the glory back to God by sharing your stories with others.*

Rachael Adams

## Day 28: Faultless

Tuesday 29 March

‘Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress.’

James 1:27

Jesus is the way, the truth and the life.

A way needs to be followed. Truth needs to be put into practice. Life needs to be lived.

Christianity is a journey, not a destination. At the end of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus himself says, ‘Not everyone who says to me, “Lord, Lord,” will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.’ (Matthew 7:21)

In other words, to listen to and worship Jesus is not enough. We need to walk the walk.

All this begs the question: what, in essence, is this way – this beautiful, truthful path?

That’s the question that James is answering in these verses. To ‘look after orphans and widows’ is Biblical shorthand for reaching out to the marginalised and oppressed. To look after those in need. To love; because love changes everything – because love is the only faultless religion.


*Jesus, help us to follow your way. Help us to practice your truth. Help us to live your life. Amen.*

Gideon Heugh



## Day 29: Heart and mind

Wednesday 30 March

 'Then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.'

Philippians 2:2

Being like-minded is never easy. In our families, churches, and workplaces we do not always agree, but more often than not this is due to a lack of communication.

In a previous role, as a professional mediator, I worked with victims and offenders enabling them to talk to each other. As they talked, both parties often realised they had more in common than they first thought and many of their differences were just perceived differences rather than actual ones. By simply talking with each other they became even more like-minded.

For us in the church, we become more like-minded by studying the Bible together and talking through our different interpretations and how we apply it.


*Read Ephesians 4:17-25 and consider the behaviours outlined that bring about like-minded living. Select two or three of these behaviours to work on in your own life and write down specific action points of how you might do this.*

**Graeme McMeekin**

Graeme leads Tearfund's work in Scotland

## Day 30: Salt and light

Thursday 31 March

 'You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden.'

Matthew 5:14

With no job or prospects, François preferred to stay hidden. 'As a husband and father I could not meet my responsibilities,' he says. 'I was ashamed to go to large family events.'

Kinshasa, the capital city of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) where François lives, used to be a beautiful, green place. It's now overflowing with discarded plastic. Both François and his home were in need of some enlightenment...

That's where the local church – the light of the world – in Kinshasa comes in. Answering God's call to care for creation, the church established a plastic waste project. Not only does it uncover the hidden beauty of the city, it also provides meaningful employment.

François's job at the project has brought him back to life: 'I feel like someone coming out of the abyss. I am a new François.'

*Lord Jesus, thank you for reigniting the light in François' life. Help us to see that by caring for creation, we do more than just preserve the environment, we become a beacon of light that shines out your goodness for all to see. May we, as part of your church, be bringers of salt and light in all that we do. Amen.*

**Hebdavi Muhindo**

Hebdavi leads Tearfund's work in the DRC

## Day 31: Mercy and the church

Friday 1 April

The call of the church is to love. But what does love look like?

Mercy is a 16-year-old from Liberia. She and her two brothers lost their parents to Ebola. They were stigmatised by the community – called ‘the Ebola family’.

They didn’t have money for school, or even food. Things became desperate. Too many times these stories end in tragedy. But not with Mercy – because of the love of the church.

Our local church partner invited Mercy to take part in their Journey to Healing programme. Joining a support group, she felt acceptance and encouragement for the first time since she lost her parents. The programme also supports her financially.

Now, Mercy is empowered. During the pandemic, she’s working as a volunteer with our church partner, teaching vulnerable people about coronavirus and also how to spot and report domestic violence. ‘I feel proud that people listen to me,’ she says. Love looks like this.

*Dear God, thank you for your church. May it reach out more and more to vulnerable people – meeting their needs and pouring out your love. Amen.*

**Noorie Dudley Sam**

*Noorie leads Tearfund’s work in Liberia and Sierra Leone*

‘By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.’

John 13:35

## Lent Appeal

Tearfund works through local churches around the world to love and empower people like Mercy. To enable work like this to happen, please consider supporting our *Lent Appeal*.

Please give today at  
[tearfund.org/oneLent](https://tearfund.org/oneLent)

📍 Bollou (16), a teenage girl like Mercy who has benefitted from the work of Tearfund’s partner in Ivory Coast.

Photo: Jonas Yameogo/Tearfund



## Day 32:

### Make us one

Saturday 2 April

**'All the believers were together and had everything in common.'**

Acts 2:44

Read Acts 2:42-47 and reflect on how it would feel to be part of this church. In our churches, what are the barriers to this becoming reality?

*God, you are three and you are one – different persons in perfect unity and harmony, in essence the same. You draw us to worship you, to share your life and to show your love to others. Yet we are fragmented and need your healing and reconciling touch. Though we are many, make us one.*

*I lay before you the fragments of myself:  
my mixed motives and hidden agendas,  
my conflicting priorities for my money,  
my desire to follow you and my habit of putting myself first,  
though I am many, make me one.*

*I lay before you the fragments of my local church,  
a family of flawed and quirky real human beings.  
Our different gifts and our common purpose.  
Our oneness in prayer and our quarrels about budgets.  
Our personality clashes and our love across barriers.  
Though we are many, make us one.*

*Giving God, Gracious Christ, Reconciling Spirit, make your church integrated with you and with each other not to get all we can for ourselves but to give all we can to others. Amen.*

**Rev Dr Lynn McChlery**

Rev Dr Lynn leads Auchterarder Parish Church in Scotland

Photo: Michael Owen/Tearfund



## Day 33:

### Rabble

Sunday 3 April

‘Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives among you?’

1 Corinthians 3:16

### Rabble

*We are where the divine dwells –  
not in stone or marble,  
but in our soft and playful bodies.*

*We are God’s temple –  
not the lavish or gilded  
but the lowly and unexpected.*

*We are the church –  
not an institution or an idea  
but a rabble of flawed,*

*belly-laughing, mess-making,  
tear-shedding, culture-shaking,  
head-scratching dreamers.*

**Gideon Heugh**

Poem is © Gideon Heugh, from ‘Devastating Beauty’



## Week six:

# One with the marginalised

‘God loves and defends those with the least economic and social power, and so should we. That is what it means to “do justice.”’

Timothy Keller, *Generous Justice*



## Day 34:

### The meaning of justice

Monday 4 April

‘Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.’

Isaiah 1:17

What would a Christian society truly look like?

Would it be one in which everyone goes to church?

One in which we all read the Bible every day? One in which worship music tops the charts?

If we follow God’s word, a Christian society would be one that is free from inequality. One in which people looked after each other with compassion. Christianity is more than church numbers – it’s about justice. To build God’s kingdom is to lift up those who have been cast down. Without doing that, we are missing the whole point. Old and New Testaments both are emphatic with this (Deuteronomy 27:19; Amos 5:21-24; Matthew 7:21; James 1:27).

Earlier in today’s passage, God rejects his people’s worship. Why? Because there is injustice in the land. Because the cries of the marginalised are going unheeded. Because his people are not looking after those in need.

Would God want to receive our worship today? It is a challenging question. But one that must be asked.

*God of justice, have mercy on your church. We recommit ourselves to your will – the will that says seek justice and defend the oppressed. Amen.*

Dr Ruth Valerio

## Day 35:

### Radical inclusion

Tuesday 5 April

‘For you are all one in Christ Jesus’

Galatians 3:28

God opposes oppression. This is because to marginalise, oppress or exclude a human being is to violate God’s image.

Every single one of us is made in God’s likeness. Every. Single. One. Of. Us. We are one. There is no ‘them’, there is only ‘us’.

One of my favourite sayings is, ‘Build bridges, not walls.’ But Jesus went further than that. He tore down the walls. He sought out those who had previously been excluded, and he included them. He sought out those who had been rejected, and he embraced them. He sought out those who had been left out, and he let them in.

That is the nature of Christ: radical inclusion. And Christ is everywhere, always. The moment of creation itself was an action of inclusion: to bring physical matter into union with the divine. That is the story of God. And that is our story, our mission. To be the great includers.

*God of inclusion, make us more like you. Help us to focus on the things that unite, not the things that divide us. Help us to include. Amen.*

Gideon Heugh

## Day 36: Self-help groups

Wednesday 6 April

‘Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position.’

Romans 12:16

People living in poverty often don't need assistance, but opportunities. They are able and willing to better their circumstances, but are often excluded from the process. That is why self-help groups centre on help, not hand-outs. Leonille, from Rwanda, found herself excluded from society due to her disability. She was encouraged through our church partner to set up a self-help group, bringing together people with disabilities. The group now has 19 members!

‘The convincing part was not easy. Most of the group members believed that they were no use for anything,’ says Leonille. ‘Once we came together, we were able to discover our abilities. Disabilities don't necessarily mean limitations... This category of people is normally left out and the society does not consider them. I encouraged others to come together to value our talents, escape from loneliness, and improve our living conditions.’

The group has formed new friendships, learned new skills, and are now able to contribute financially to support their families. Praise God.

*Dear God, bless self-help groups like Leonille's with friendship and provision. We pray that even more people in Rwanda and beyond will be connected to groups like these so they can overcome poverty together. Amen.*

**Joanne Uwera**

Joanne is part of our East and Central Africa Team

## Lent Appeal

Help support local churches to set up even more self-help groups so that more people, like Leonille, can lift themselves out of poverty for good.

Please give today at  
[tearfund.org/oneLent](https://tearfund.org/one Lent)



📷 Leonille, who is a member of a self-help group in Rwanda.

Photo: Tumuheirwe Jesus/Tearfund

## Day 37: Tearing down the walls

Thursday 7 April

**‘For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility.’**

Ephesians 2:14

I was born in a refugee camp in Burundi. My Rwandan parents had fled their home due to the violent conflict in the 1960s.

My name means ‘God is with us’. And God has been with me. He has taken away the bitterness of my youth; I no longer harbour ill feelings against those who caused my pain, nor against those who killed my relatives. Christ forgave me and has taught me to forgive.

For many Rwandans, and in my own life, there has been much to forgive. Today marks the 28th commemoration of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda.

Violence like this begins when we stop seeing our fellow human beings as people – as our neighbours – when we stop seeing the one-ness of humanity. Conflict begins in our hearts (Matthew 5:21-22), but it can also end there, when we choose to forgive and to bring down the dividing walls of hostility.

*Reconciling God, thank you for the power of forgiveness. Show me how I can practise this in my own life. Reveal to me the walls I need to tear down – especially the ones that are stopping me from loving my neighbours. Amen.*

**Emmanuel Murangira**

Emmanuel leads Tearfund’s work in Rwanda

## Day 38: The destitute God

Friday 8 April

**‘Jesus replied, “Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.”’**

Matthew 8:20

Jesus lifestyle didn’t include much in the way of material goods, and he warned those who were considering following him that it would mean the same for them.

Jesus’ trade was carpentry, but the majority of his time was not spent fashioning furniture; he invested in the lives of those he encountered. He acknowledged and cared for the outcasts, prayed for those who needed deliverance and brought healing to those who suffered. He was a craftsman of redemption.

A person with many possessions can still be in spiritual poverty. When Paul writes that Jesus became poor so we might be rich (2 Corinthians 8:9), it means that Jesus spent himself building the spiritual wealth of others – pouring out love upon the marginalised. For love and justice are the currencies of God’s kingdom.


As followers of Jesus, we too must spend our lives to this aim.

*Lord, thank you for showing us what heavenly wealth looks like. Guide our hearts and minds, so that we may focus on what truly matters in this life. Amen.*

**Amanda Miah**

Amanda is Chief of Staff at Tearfund USA



 A boy at prayer in Malawi.  
Photo: Aaron Koch/Tearfund

## Day 39: True hospitality

Saturday 9 April

**‘But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed.’**

**Luke 14:13-14**

Jesus calls us to look outside of our usual circles and reach out to those who are overlooked. Living this out takes intentionality. Find a quiet space to reflect on how you can apply this verse in your own life.

*Dear God, Thank you for loving me unconditionally, just as I am. Thank you for accepting me, not because of what I can do for you but because of who I am to you – your precious child.*

Pause to reflect.

*God, I'm sorry for when I have overlooked others. Forgive me for my own prejudices. Help me to see others the way that you see them, so I can love people better. Show me specific people or groups I can reach out to.*

Pause to reflect.

*God, thank you for all the things you have blessed me with in my life. Show me how I can share with others the gifts you entrusted to me. Help me to follow your example of welcoming, accepting and loving all people.*

Pause to reflect.

*Jesus, in your name I pray, amen.*

**Agnes McGrane**  
Agnes is Tearfund's Email Editor



## Day 40:

### Amos 5, 2022

Sunday 10 April

‘But let justice roll on like a river,  
righteousness like a never-failing stream!’

Amos 5:23-24

#### Amos 5, 2022

*Fallen is the church. Swallowed  
By the sea that was allowed to rise  
While she stood by  
And did nothing.*

*But seek God; seek justice; and live.*

*Fallen is the church. Consumed  
By inequalities that were allowed to rage  
While she turned away  
And did nothing.*

*But seek God; seek righteousness; and live.*

*Fallen is the church. Tripped up  
By the impoverished who were left on the ground  
While she walked around  
And did nothing.*

*Our services are meaningless  
Our worship is worthless  
Our prayers appal the ears of the Lord  
As long as we stand by and do nothing*

*So let justice roll on like a river,  
Righteousness like a never-failing stream.*

**Gideon Heugh**

Poem is © Gideon Heugh



## Week seven:

# One with redemption


‘All shall be well, and all shall be  
well, and all manner of things  
shall be well.’

Julian of Norwich

## Day 41:

### All shall be well

Monday 11 April

 'Weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.'

Psalms 30:5

My country knows what it is to weep. We have suffered the unthinkable; we have borne the unbearable.

And yet... we also know what it is to wake up to a new day. We know what it is to rejoice. We have seen reconciliation and redemption where such things may have seemed impossible.

I have seen such things here – things made well despite the weight of unimaginable suffering. I know, therefore, that things can be made well wherever you may be; whatever you may have been through.

This is because God is our Great Redeemer. The Almighty Restorer. The Unrivalled Healer. He can heal our wounds, take away our sorrows, and wipe away our tears.

It may take time. It may even take a long time. Yet all shall be well. Our help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

*God of redemption, I lift my weeping to you, and the weeping of the nations. Hear our cries oh Lord. Hear our pleas for deliverance, and come quickly to make all things well. Amen.*

**Jean Paul Ndagijimana**

Jean Paul is the pastor for Hope Evangelical Church in Rwanda

## Day 42:

### Reconciliation

Tuesday 12 April

 'And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.'

2 Corinthians 5:19

God calls us to be peacemakers. Stepping into this role requires us to put the needs of others before ourselves.

In the last presidential election in Burundi, we saw how the church stepped into this gap. Elections in Burundi have often been marred by violence. But the church was able to show another way.

In the lead-up to the election, Tearfund ran workshops with church leaders on how to promote peace. 'I believe that church leaders should be present in everyday life, engage and invest in the peaceful processes in their country,' shares Rev Onesphore Ndayizigamiye, who attended the training. 'They should not be afraid, but step up, because their role is very important.'

'When different religious denominations work together for the same cause, their message is really powerful,' adds Bishop Pontien Ribakare.

The election in Burundi was largely peaceful, praise God – a huge transformation from the last one.

*In a society full of division, Lord, show me how I can begin to bridge the gap. I lay down my own prejudices and fears. Give me opportunities to heal and reconcile for your glory. Amen.*

**Diane Igrimbabazi**

Diane leads Tearfund's communications for East and Central Africa



## Lent Appeal

Find out more about our life-changing work in Rwanda and how people are coming together to lift themselves out of poverty – and the difference you can make.

Please give today at [tearfund.org/oneLent](https://tearfund.org/oneLent)

🏠 Self-help groups empower people to start their own businesses, such as selling hand-made crafts.

Photo: Tumuheirwe Jesus/Tearfund

## Day 43: Redeemed

Wednesday 13 April

‘I have swept away your offences like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist. Return to me, for I have redeemed you.’

Isaiah 44:22

The root of the word ‘redeem’ is to ‘buy back’. In our Isaiah passage, the image is of a relative who comes to take upon themselves the debt of another – to ‘buy back’ their freedom from sin. In the same way, Isaiah tells us, God redeems his people. In our Christian lives, we celebrate that Jesus has redeemed us through his death on the cross.

This Lent, as we think of Rwanda, I’m reminded of visiting a Tearfund project in its capital – Kigali – in 2018. A group of women were making shopping bags out of old rice and maize bags.

There was so much of ‘redemption’ in the story of those women and their bags. They had – quite literally – brought the materials back to life – reused them, and made something practical and beautiful and useful. With these bags they could now make a living and provide for their families. And in doing so, many of them had encountered the love of the Redeemer for themselves.

*Heavenly Father, thank you that you are a redeeming God. Thank you that Jesus came to Earth to ‘buy back’ your people. May we rejoice in the knowledge of our redemption today. Amen.*

**Rev Kate Wharton**

Rev Kate is Vicar of St. Bartholomew’s Church in Liverpool

## Day 44: Move forward

Thursday 14 April

**‘Then the Lord said to Moses,  
“Why are you crying out to me?  
Tell the Israelites to move on.”’**

Exodus 14:15

I am writing this in autumn, when leaves are giving themselves to the ground. There is about to be a wild silence in the trees. An aching expanse of waiting. When you read this, it will be spring. The great re-awakening where creation blossoms into life.

The seasons, created by God, can help us to understand the cycles of our own lives. When we need to grieve, process or petition God. And when we need to push forward.

The transition isn't easy. Holy Week is a reminder that Jesus didn't find it trouble-free to move forward. He spent hours kneeling in agony in the garden of Gethsemane. Blood and sweat and tears. And the immediate future wasn't so bright either.

It comes back to surrender. Reminding ourselves that God is good and God is love – that's why we can take a leap of faith. There was pain on the cross, but the stone was rolled away.

*Name what you are holding onto that is keeping you still. Ask the Holy Spirit to help if you are unsure. Write this down and, as the events of Holy Week unfold, bring it to the cross. Surrender it to God and commit to moving forwards into the promise he has for you.*

Rachael Adams

## Day 45: The descent

Friday 15 April  
Good Friday

**‘Darkness was over the  
surface of the deep, and the  
Spirit of God was hovering  
over the waters.’**

Genesis 1:2

There was no light. It hadn't been created yet. The waters were deep and utterly dark. Yet God was lingering there, ready, waiting in anticipation.

What do dark waters symbolise? Chaos. Sadness. Fear. Emptiness. Loss. Doubt. Loneliness. Despair. The Good Fridays of life.

There is a concept in ancient literature called katabasis. It means to make a descent in order to gain understanding. Because the ancients understood something that perhaps we have forgotten: the most profound truths aren't necessarily found at the top of a mountain – they're more often than not at the bottom of a pit.

You'll know this from your own life. Think about the events that have shaped you. They won't be stories of plain sailing; they'll be stories of challenge, stories that have a little darkness in them. Good Friday stories.

Live long enough and you will know a time when there was no light. Maybe you are experiencing such a time now. What if God was lingering in that darkness; hovering above the waters; ready to make something new?

*Christ who was crucified, Christ who is there in the darkness, make your presence known to me. Give me peace while I wait for the moment you say, 'Let there be light.' Amen.*

Gideon Heugh



Photo: Ruth Towell/Tearfund

## Day 46: Holding on together

Saturday 16 April

**‘Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.’**

**1 Thessalonians 5:11**

The gap between Friday and Sunday – between falling down and rising up; between the darkness and the dawn; between the cross and the empty tomb – can feel like forever. How can we endure it? The same way that the disciples would have done: together. Let us pray that we can do this as a community of believers today.

*God of Holy Saturday,  
God who is there in the waiting,*

*Help us to hold on through the night.  
Help us to see that we are not alone:  
That we are part of a global community,  
And that in this unity there is strength.*

*We pray that times of uncertainty  
Will be times in which we can build bridges  
And cross divides,  
Knowing that only by doing this can we move forward.*

*Thank you God that you are with us always.  
Help us to be with each other, always.*

*In Jesus' name, amen.*

**Nigel Harris**  
Tearfund CEO



## Day 47:

### A tremor in the void

Sunday 17 April  
Easter Sunday

‘And surely I am with you  
always, to the very end of  
the age.’

Matthew 28:20

#### A tremor in the void

*It began with darkness, a tremor in the void,  
the shadow of God moving silently  
over the cowering deep.*

*It began with darkness, a serpent's lie believed,  
a temptation devoured,  
a garden left behind.*

*It began with darkness, a people enslaved,  
a murderer in exile,  
the angel of death snatching a nation's young.*

*It began with darkness, the terror of war,  
the breaking of kings, invasion and oppression  
and a God abandoned, then forgotten.*

*It began with darkness, a frightened mother  
travelling a dusty road, a stable for a delivery room,  
a desperate escape into a foreign land.*

*It began with darkness, the plotting of the pious,  
the betrayal of a friend, an arrest in the night,  
an unjust trial.*

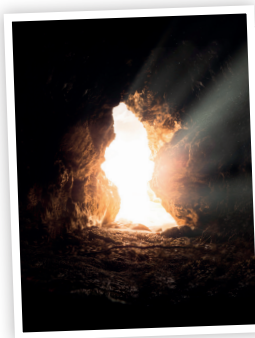
*It began with darkness, an innocent man's arm  
forced against a wooden beam, iron nails driven through his  
skin tendons ligaments bones  
broken body hoisted high*

*the crowd jeering joking sneering spitting,  
his mother, weeping.*

*It began with darkness,  
an anguished cry, a spear thrust into flesh,  
life pouring out, sky turning black.*

*It began with darkness, a tremor in the void,  
the eyes of the anointed opening  
in the cold heart of a tomb,*

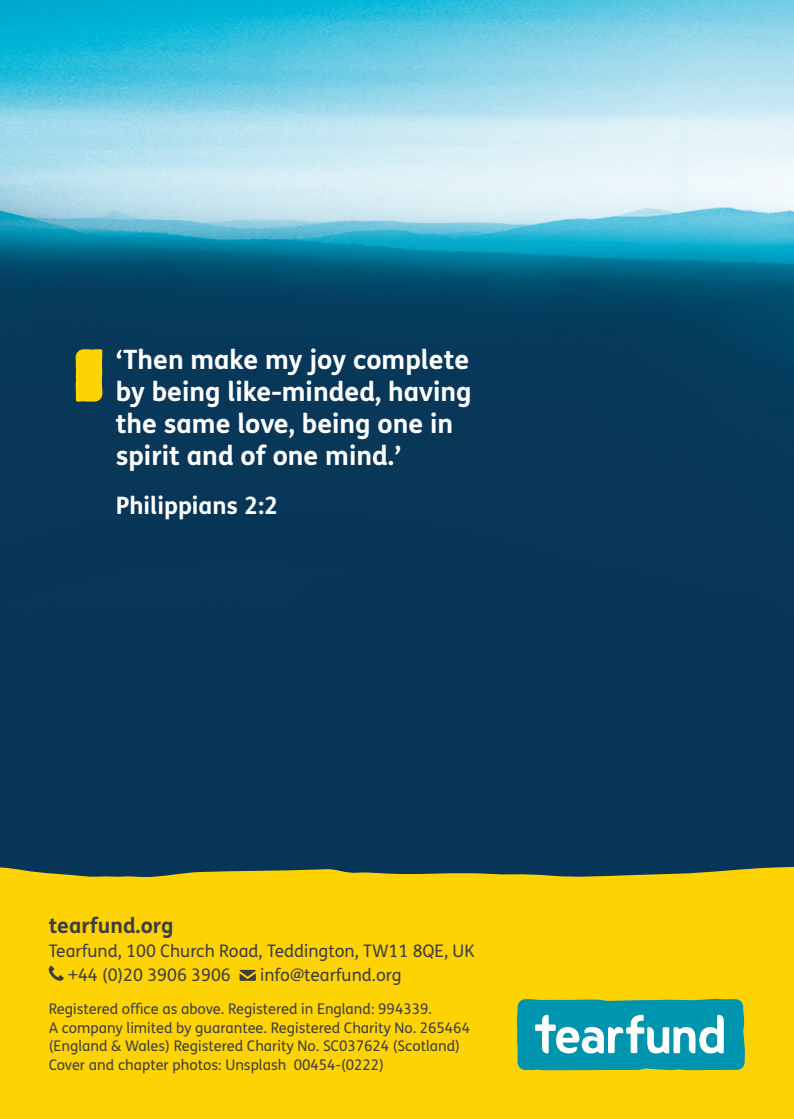
*and then a voice:  
‘Let there be light.’*



**Happy Easter from  
everyone at Tearfund**

May you know the reality of  
the risen Christ in your heart.  
May Christ's love, peace and  
hope rest upon you and your  
loved ones, now and always.

**Gideon Heugh**  
Poem is © Gideon Heugh



**‘Then make my joy complete  
by being like-minded, having  
the same love, being one in  
spirit and of one mind.’**

**Philippians 2:2**

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