

*Resources for*

**THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY**

**MEMBER CHURCHES**

1. Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church
2. Arcot Lutheran Church
3. Baptist Church of Mizoram
4. Bengal-Orissa-Bihar Baptist Convention
5. Chaldean Syrian Church of the East
6. Church of North India
7. Church of South India
8. Convention of Baptist Churches of the Northern Circars
9. Council of Baptist Churches in North East India
10. Council of Baptist Churches of Northern India
11. Evangelical Lutheran Church in Madhya Pradesh
12. Good Samaritan Evangelical Lutheran Church
13. Gossner Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chotanagpur
14. Hindustani Covenant Church
15. India Evangelical Lutheran Church
16. Jeypore Evangelical Lutheran Church
17. Malabar Independent Syrian Church
18. Malankara Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church
19. Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church
20. Mar Thoma Syrian Church
21. Mennonite Brethren Church
22. Mennonite Church in India
23. Methodist Church in India
24. Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church
25. Presbyterian Church of India
26. Salvation Army
27. Samavesam of Telugu Baptist Churches
28. South Andhra Lutheran Church
29. Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church
30. The National Organisation of the New Apostolic Church

**REGIONAL CHRISTIAN COUNCILS**

1. Andhra Pradesh Council of Churches
2. Bengal Christian Council
3. Bihar Council of Churches
4. Chhattisgarh Christian Council
5. Gujarat Council of Churches
6. Jharkhand Council of Churches
7. Karnataka Christian Council
8. Kerala Council of Churches
9. Madhya Pradesh Christian Council

10. Maharashtra Council of Churches
11. North East India Christian Council
12. North West Frontier Christian Council
13. North West India Council of Churches
14. Santalia Council of Churches
15. Tamilnad Christian Council
16. Utkal Christian Council
17. Uttar Pradesh Council of Churches

**ALL INDIA CHRISTIAN ORGANISATIONS**

1. All India Association for Christian Higher Education
2. Association of Theologically Trained Women of India
3. Bible Society of India
4. Board of Theological Education of Senate of Serampore College
5. Christian Association for Radio and Audio Visual Services
6. Christian Endeavour in India
7. Christian Union of India
8. Ecumenical Council for Drought Action and Water Management
9. Indian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge
10. Inter-Church Service Association
11. The Leprosy Mission
12. Lott Carey Baptist Mission in India
13. National Council of YMCA's of India
14. National Missionary Society of India
15. Student Christian Movement of India
16. United Evangelical Lutheran Church in India
17. Young Women's Christian Association of India

**RELATED AGENCIES**

1. All India Sunday School Association
2. Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society
3. Christian Literature Society
4. Christian Medical Association of India
5. Church's Auxiliary for Social Action
6. Ecumenical Church Loan Fund - India
7. Henry Martyn Institute, International Centre for Research Interfaith Relations and Reconciliation

**AUTONOMOUS BODIES**

1. All India Council of Christian Women
2. Urban Rural Mission
3. India Peace Centre

*You are witnesses  
of these things (Lk.24:48)*

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## FOREWORD

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The practical details of the Week of Prayer 2010 are the “incarnation” of a desire and convincing realization that Mission has the essential duty to bear witness to the Unity in the Holy Trinity. The conviction has been growing steadily since the epoch making World Christian Fellowship at Edinburgh in 1910 and its “felt” resolutions, that missionary endeavors world wide cannot afford to be divorced from the urge for Christian Unity. The programs of the Week of Prayer are devised to enkindle this desire further and carry it forward, at the same time respecting different traditions and unique cultural expressions in different churches and climes. Of course, this befits the Centenary Theme which is definitely a challenge to brood over the reality of the pain of “division”, and its ill effects on genuine witnessing.

Our Lord has declared that he came to bear witness to Truth; this is clear evidence that ‘witnessing’ initiates in the Godhead itself! This is similar to saying that “Mission” has a Trinitarian origin. Any witness worth the name is to declare with total conviction and without fear that “he has seen”, and cannot but make it known to others. The Sanskrit origin of the word “witness” elaborates it to mean “to see exactly”. Even though, different church missions claim to bear witness to the Risen Christ, the fact remains that the painful reality of a divided church is eating into the ‘essence’ of witnessing itself. The Edinburgh conclave of 1910 was perhaps the first formal assay to assay this all embracing issue at the universal level, at Scotland.

The gist of the problem is introduced in the Resources for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2010 is given as follows:

“We sense that Mary Magdalene, Peter or the two Emmaus disciples will not witness the same way. Yet it will be the victory of Jesus over death that all will place at the heart of their witness.....Their story will accentuate different things, sometimes dissent may arise between them about what faithfulness to Christ requires, and yet all will work to announce the Good News” (page 7)

However, it will be too much to assume that the “divisions” have been natural, and beyond help. It is also useful to listen to the voice of the Orthodox Churches in the Ecumenical circles, that to understand the divisions, we need to look back to the “beginnings” and Apostolic times, and discern what actually happened. Besides, it would be far from healthy for

any one to start a 'church" of his own reckoning and bewail subsequently about disunity among Christians! But we know, when everything is said and done that divisions have come to stay and cannot be ignored.

It is in this context that Christians around the globe come together to feel as one and pray for Unity of "Christians in Mission" And that exactly makes it all the more relevant and expedient. The declaration comes from the Risen One, "You are witnesses of these things". There it is our twin obligation to seek for unity and present a united face of mission before the world.

Usually a witness presents his case before a judge in a court of law. The true witness is accepted as a trusted aid in the dispensation of justice. Here as we attempt to present a "United Front" in mission in the modern world, let us also remember that the "judge" will certainly examine the witness! Here the Judge is God, and at a lesser level, the world itself. A convincing and truthful witness shall be listened to and honoured. It is this kind of witnessing to the Resurrection of the Lord that the Week of Prayer 2010 is calling us for. Neither God nor the world shall suffer a divided witness to the same Truth. So what is the way out? Experience of a century has taught us that pious declarations will never take us any where. We trust that prayer can do a great deal, especially, prayer together.

It is a time to feel humble in the presence of God, to examine critically our tall claims of uniqueness and dynamism and being relevant more than all in the modern world. With all our activities are we extending the Kingdom of God or throwing costly pearls before swines, as the world scoffs at our unjustified divisions? The reflections and meditations which flow through the seven day scheme of prayer, would certainly help us to ask certain fundamental questions regarding our role in the world as Christians, who are attempting to witness the Risen Lord. The earnestness of those who prepared this scheme of prayer and praise could be "touched" and felt at every word and section in this booklet. Let us as churches and individuals, reciprocate their good will and learn new lessons in unity and unity in mission, knowing full well that a divided witness has least relevance in days to come.

When everything is said and done, it shall never be forgotten that unity alone shall not mean everything, what the world is waiting for is the witness from real Christian, who not only mean what they declare, but they are what they bear witness to! The Church the world over has suffered due to the systematic neglect of this aspect. In our enthusiasm to preach and "witness" to Christ in our own ways, have we forgot to be real Christians,

who would choose to live the way He did.....to live simple lives, deeply entrenched in morals, always ready to serve and sacrifice , and not to water down basic Christian precepts under the guise of modernity and intellectualism. When abominations run the roost, no form of witness, however deeply united. shall carry the day.

The Spirit of God is still working in us – this Prayer scheme is the witness for this. The Spirit is moving us to repentance, mutuality in love, deep soul searching ,opening up our closed minds and hearts. May that benign and sometimes strong breeze leave no heart unchanged!

**Metropolitan Dr. Yakob Mar Irenaios  
Chairperson - Commission on Mission  
National Council of Churches in India**

### **To those organizing the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity**

#### **The search for unity: throughout the year**

The traditional period in the northern hemisphere for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is 18-25 January. Those dates were proposed in 1908 by Paul Wattson to cover the days between the feasts of St Peter and St Paul, and therefore have a symbolic significance. In the southern hemisphere where January is a vacation time churches often find other days to celebrate the week of prayer, for example around Pentecost (which was suggested by the Faith and Order movement in 1926), which is also a symbolic date for the unity of the church.

Mindful of this flexibility concerning the date, we encourage you to understand the material presented here as an invitation to find opportunities throughout the whole year to express the degree of communion which the churches have already received, and to pray together for that full unity which is Christ's will.

#### **Adapting the text**

This material is offered with the understanding that, whenever possible, it will be adapted for use at the local level. In doing this, account must be taken of local liturgical and devotional practice, and of the whole social and cultural context. Such adaptation should normally take place ecumenically. In some places ecumenical structures are already set up for adapting the material. In other places, we hope that the need to adapt it will be a stimulus to creating such structures.

#### **Using the Week of Prayer material**

° For churches and Christian communities which observe the week of prayer together through a single common service, an order for an ecumenical worship service is provided.

° Churches and Christian communities may also incorporate material from the week of prayer into their own services. Prayers from the ecumenical worship service, the 'eight days', and the selection of additional prayers can be used as appropriate in their own setting.

° Communities which observe the week of prayer in their worship for each day during the week may draw material for these services from the eight days.

° Those wishing to do bible studies on the week of prayer theme can use as a basis the biblical texts and reflections given in the eight days. Each day the discussions can lead to a closing period of intercessory prayer.

° Those who wish to pray privately may find the material helpful for focusing their prayer intentions. They can be mindful that they are in communion with others praying all around the world for the greater visible unity of Christ's church.

**Biblical text****Luke 24**

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. 2They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, 3but when they went in, they did not find the body. 4While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. 5The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, 'Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. 6Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, 7that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again.' 8Then they remembered his words, 9and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. 10Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. 11But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. 12But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened. 13 Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, 14and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. 15While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, 16but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. 17And he said to them, 'What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?' They stood still, looking sad. 18Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, 'Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?' 19He asked them, 'What things?' They replied, 'The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, 20and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. 21But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. 22Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, 23and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. 24Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.' 25Then he said to them, 'Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! 26Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?' 27Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he

interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. 28 As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. 29But they urged him strongly, saying, 'Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.' So he went in to stay with them. 30When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. 31Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. 32They said to each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?' 33That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. 34They were saying, 'The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!' 35Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread. 36 While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' 37They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. 38He said to them, 'Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.' 40And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. 41While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, 'Have you anything here to eat?' 42They gave him a piece of broiled fish, 43and he took it and ate in their presence. 44 Then he said to them, 'These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you — that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.' 45Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, 46and he said to them, 'Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, 47and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48You are witnesses of these things. 49And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.' 50 Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. 51While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. 52And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; 53and they were continually in the temple blessing God. (NRSV)

### Introduction to the theme for the year 2010

During the past century reconciliation between Christians has taken on very different forms. Spiritual ecumenism has shown how important prayer is for Christian unity. Great energy has been put into theological research which has led to a large number of doctrinal accords. Practical cooperation between churches in the social field has given birth to fruitful initiatives. Alongside these major accomplishments, the question of mission has had a particular place. It is even generally held that the 1910 World Mission Conference in Edinburgh marked the beginnings of the modern ecumenical movement.

#### Mission and Unity

Not everyone naturally makes the link between missionary endeavour and the desire for Christian Unity. Yet surely the missionary commitment of the church must go hand in hand with its ecumenical commitment? Because of our baptism we are already one body and we are called to live in communion. God has made us brothers and sisters in Christ. Is not this the fundamental witness that we are called to?

Historically the fact that the question of Christian unity was often first raised by missionaries was for practical reasons. This was often simply so as to avoid unnecessary competition in the face of enormous human and material need. The territory to be evangelized was shared out and occasionally attempts were made to go further than having activities running in parallel to one another and to favour some common projects. Missionaries from different churches might for example combine their resources to undertake a new translation of the Bible and this cooperation in the service of the Word of God led to reflections on the divisions between Christians. Without denying the rivalries that existed between missionaries sent by different churches, it should also be recognized that those who were first in the mission field were also the first to recognize the tragedy of Christian division. Europe had got used to divisions between churches but the scandal of disunity seemed dreadful to missionaries who were announcing the gospel to people who had known nothing of Christ until then. Of course the different church divisions which have marked Christian history did have theological reasons, but they were also marked by the context (historical, political, intellectual ...) which gave birth to them. Could it be justified to export these divisions to peoples who were discovering Christ? In the midst their fresh beginnings the new local churches could hardly fail to notice the gap between the message of love which they wanted to live out and the actual separation between Christ's disciples. How can you make others understand the reconciliation offered in Jesus Christ if the baptised themselves ignore or fight one another? How could Christian groups who lived in mutual hostility preach one Lord, one faith and one baptism in a

credible way? There was, then no lack of ecumenical questions for the participants at the Edinburgh Conference of 1910.

#### The Edinburgh Mission Conference of 1910

The official delegates of Protestant mission societies from the different branches of Protestantism and Anglicanism, joined by an Orthodox guest, met during the summer of 1910 in the Scottish capital. The Conference which was not a decision-making gathering had no other aim than to help missionaries to forge a common spirit and coordinate their work. Only those missionary societies working to announce the gospel in new places where Christ had not yet been made known were present. Thus those societies working in Latin America or the Middle East where the Roman Catholic Church and Orthodox Churches had already been for a long time, were not invited. In 1910 the Scottish ecclesial landscape was beginning to diversify and the Roman Catholic and Episcopal Churches once more enjoyed a more important role. Edinburgh was chosen as the place for the meeting because of its intellectual and cultural vitality. The fame of its theologians and church leaders also encouraged this choice. Scottish Protestant churches were also particularly active in mission and had a reputation for paying attention to local cultures.

#### The Christian Churches in Scotland Today

To honour this important stage in the history of the ecumenical movement it was natural for the promoters of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity – The Faith and Order Commission and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity - to invite the Scottish churches to prepare the 2010 Week of Prayer at the same time as they were actively involved in preparing to celebrate the anniversary of the 1910 Conference on the theme “Witnessing to Christ today”. In response these churches suggested as the theme “You are witnesses of these things”. (Luke 24.48)

#### The Biblical Theme: You are Witnesses of These Things

In the ecumenical movement we have often meditated on Jesus' final discourse before his death. In this final testament the importance of the unity of Christ's disciples is emphasized: “That all may be one ... so that the world may believe.” (John 17.21) This year the churches of Scotland have made the original choice of inviting us to listen to Christ's final discourse before his ascension, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.” (Luke 24.46-48). It is on these final words of Christ that we shall reflect each day. During the 2010 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity we are invited to follow the whole of chapter 24 of Luke's gospel. Whether it be the terrified women at the tomb, the two discouraged disciples on the road to Emmaus or the eleven disciples overtaken by doubt

and fear, all who together encounter the Risen Christ are sent on mission: "You are witness of these things". This mission of the Church is given by Christ and cannot be appropriated by anyone. It is the community of those who have been reconciled with God and in God, and who can witness to the truth of the power of salvation in Jesus Christ.

We sense that Mary Magdalene, Peter or the two Emmaus disciples will not witness in the same way. Yet it will be the victory of Jesus over death that all will place at the heart of their witness. The personal encounter with the risen One has radically changed their lives and in its uniqueness for each one of them one thing becomes imperative: "You are witnesses of these things." Their story will accentuate different things, sometimes dissent may arise between them about what faithfulness to Christ requires, and yet all will work to announce the Good News.

### **The Eight Days**

During the 2010 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity we will reflect each day on chapter 24 of Luke's gospel stopping at the questions which it asks: Jesus' questions to his disciples; the questions the apostles ask of Christ.

Each of these questions allows us to highlight a particular way of witnessing to the Risen One.

Each of them invites us to think about our situation of church division and about how, concretely, we can remedy that. We are already witnesses and we need to become better witnesses. How?

by praising the One who gives us the gift of life and resurrection (Day 1);

by knowing how to share the story of our faith with others (Day 2);

by recognizing that God is at work in our lives (Day 3);

by giving thanks for the faith we have received (Day 4);

by confessing Christ's victory over all suffering (Day 5);

by seeking to always be more faithful to the Word of God (Day 6);

by growing in faith, hope and love (Day 7);

by offering hospitality and knowing how to receive it when it is offered to us (Day 8).

Would our witness not be more faithful to the gospel of Christ in each of these eight aspects if we witnessed together?

### **Edinburgh 2010**

The one hundredth anniversary of the Mission Conference which took place in the City a century earlier will be marked in June 2010 ([www.edinburgh2010.org](http://www.edinburgh2010.org)). The organisers want this meeting to be a time of thanksgiving for the progress in mission God has made possible. They have also given an important place to prayer, to offering to Christ the witness which churches will have to bear together during the 21st century.

This meeting should also allow those working in the mission field for a long time and representatives from more recent currents to share their perspectives. Members of different church traditions will also be able to discuss their mission practice. The world has changed a lot since 1910 and once more mission must be thought about anew. Secularisation and de-Christianization, new means of communication, interconfessional relations, interreligious dialogue there are many issues to discuss. While everyone may agree on the need for Christ's disciples to witness to him, it is still difficult to arrive at a common understanding of what mission needs to be today. Within individual churches there is no lack of discussion. Would this discussion not benefit from being held by all of the churches together? 1910 ... 2010: Christians have at heart a similar sense of urgency: for our humanity wounded by division the gospel is not a luxury; the gospel cannot be proclaimed by discordant voices. In Christ, those filled with hatred can find the path of reconciliation. In Christ those whom everything divides can find the joy of living as brothers and sisters... You are witnesses of these things.

### **The preparation of the material for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2010**

The initial work leading to the publication of this booklet was done by a Scottish ecumenical group brought together by Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS) at the invitation of the Catholic Bishops' conference. We particularly want to thank all of those who contributed:

Mr. Andrew Barr (Episcopal Church of Scotland)

Major Alan Dixon (Salvation Army)

Rev. Carol Ford (Church of Scotland)

Rev. Willie McFadden (Roman Catholic Church)

Rev. Lindsay Sanderson (ACTS, United Reformed Church)

The texts proposed here were finalized during the meeting of the international preparatory group nominated by the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches and the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity. The group met at Scotus College in Glasgow, Scotland's national Roman Catholic seminary. We are particularly grateful to the seminary's Rector the very Rev. William McFadden, to the seminararians and the whole staff for their warm welcome, their availability and the prayerful way in which they accompanied our work. Finally a special word of thanks to the Rev. Lindsay Sanderson (ACTS Assistant General Secretary) for having revised the texts together with the Rev. McFadden, for the times of common prayer and the exchanges organized with representatives of the various Christian churches of Scotland, as well as the overall preparation of the meeting.

## Introduction to the Ecumenical Worship Service

“You are witnesses of these things.” (Luke 24: 48)

The theme for the 2010 week of prayer for Christian Unity is “You are witnesses of these things.”. It comes from chapter 24 of Luke’s gospel which is the central focus of this service. This is also the theme which Scottish Christians have chosen to celebrate the centenary of the Edinburgh Mission Conference. In 1910 members of the meeting in Edinburgh heard prophetic witness as to how divisions between Christians not only weaken missionary effectiveness, but also the Church and body of Christ and its mission.

In 2010 the Christians of Scotland invite ecumenical gatherings to read aloud the whole of this chapter of Luke. Thus preaching, thanksgiving, intercession and the celebration of being sent out in the name of the gospel can all be fully developed. This will lead to an appreciation of the resurrection of Christ as the source of ecclesial communion, of being sent out in mission, of the intrinsic link between mission and unity and, therefore, of the continual need to renew our commitment to Christian unity. It was precisely this reciprocal demand for evangelism and for ecumenism that the pioneers of the ecumenical movement of the 20th century emphasized with such faith, strength and clarity.

### Order of service

The order of service is deliberately very simple. This choice was made in order to help with adapting it to local situations and to allow Christians from all traditions to come together without difficulty to pray while respecting their diversity. It is quite possible to expand a part of the service. The simplicity of the structure – (I) gathering, (II) celebration of the Word of God, (III) intercessions, (IV) sending – means that congregations which prefer freer forms of worship and spontaneous prayer should also be able to use the material.

### I) Gathering

*Opening hymn.* During the singing of this hymn, the Bible or the book of the gospels is brought forwards and placed either on the lectern, table or altar depending on local custom.

In the *words of welcome* the person presiding welcomes all communities and leaders who are attending. The assembly is then invited to give thanks to God for the resurrection of his son Jesus Christ and to ask for the gift of the Holy Spirit to renew Christian mission and unity in the spirit of the Edinburgh call of 1910 (see also the general introduction and the passage

above). The *opening prayer* can also be chosen from the anthology in the appendix.

### II) Proclamation of Luke 24

The *Gospel hymn of praise*. There are a variety to choose from: hymns to the risen Christ, a gloria, an alleluia in a more developed form, a chant or responsive paschal Psalm or one which evokes the sending out of the witnesses of the resurrection. Reading Luke 24 in full is recommended for the proclamation of the gospel. This can be done by one reader or by several: the narrator, the voice of Christ, the angels, the Emmaus disciples and the Jerusalem disciples. At verse 34 a dialogue with the congregation is possible:

Reader: It’s true the Lord is risen and he appeared to Simon.

Congregation: It’s true ! Christ is risen, Christ is risen indeed, Alleluia!

- Another possibility is to sing a verse of praise between the reading of the three sections of the chapter :

The Easter message at the tomb (v.1-12); appearing to the disciples on the way to Emmaus (v.13-35);

appearing to the eleven (v.36-53). Other expressions of praise are also possible, such as applauding after each appearance by the risen one as done in the Chaldeen church.

- In particular with children or young people mime or other forms of theatre could be used.

- It might also be possible to use icons, pictures or video ...

Before and following the sermon the time given to singing, music and silence needs to be defined.

### III) Prayers of thanksgiving and intercession

These are inspired by the material prepared for the each day of the week of prayer. They invoke the name of the Lord and celebrate God in his generosity and hospitality towards us manifested in Jesus Christ. They are at once prayers of supplication and a request for God’s consecration of witnesses to the Gospel, united by one faith and one baptism, and by the common witness of the church which is undivided in its hope.

### IV) Sending

A prayer by a Scottish Christian is proposed as a prayer of commitment. It expresses our desire to ask for God’s blessing for the present and future, both of the ecumenical movement and of evangelism. In the year 2010 as we approach a new “Edinburgh commitment”, may our gatherings for prayer hear the more than ever contemporary call to evangelize in unity: “

May we be one, that the world may believe", and may our response to Christ's call to bear united witness to his resurrection be strengthened.

**Using the material for prayer in other circumstances**

This service outline could also be used for a joint service to mark Easter in 2010 or in those coming years when Christians celebrate Easter on the same date. (4 April 2010, 24 April 2011, 20 April 2014, 16 April 2017). The material can also be used for worship in local congregations.

**Order of the Ecumenical Worship Service**

- L: Leader**
- A: Assembly**
  
- I) Gathering**

**Opening hymn**

**Opening responses**

- L. "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling..."
- A. "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all."
  
- L. "It is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem..."
- A. "We are the witnesses of these things."

**Words of welcome**

**Opening prayer**

O risen Christ,  
On the road to Emmaus you were the disciples' companion.  
Be at our side on the journey of faith  
on life's pathways and at every encounter,  
engender our compassion so that we may welcome others  
and listen to their stories.  
Kindle anew the desire to proclaim your Word.  
May it illumine us and may our hearts burn to bear witness to it.  
May your Holy Spirit teach us the art of explaining scripture  
and open our eyes to recognize you.  
Grant us the courage to become vulnerable  
so that our sisters and brothers may know you through us  
and that we may know you through them.  
Amen

**II) Celebration of the Word of God**

**Sung acclamation of the gospel**

**Reading of the whole of chapter 24 of the Gospel of Luke**

**Sermon**

**Hymn**

**The peace**

L. Jesus said to his disciples, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you." Do not look upon our sin but on the faith of your church. To fulfil your will, grant this peace to your church and lead it to perfect unity, you who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever.

A. Amen

L. The peace of the Lord be always with you.

A. And also with you.

*Or*

L. The peace of the Lord be always with you

A. The risen Christ is indeed among us

*Or*

L. Christ is risen.

A. Christ is risen indeed ! Alleluia.

**The Nicene-Constantinople creed (without the filioque)**

**Offering and hymn**

**III) Intercessions**

Creator and saviour God, we praise you for all our different communities who together want to confess, through word and deed, their faith in the risen Christ, who brings us life.

May we so progress in our ecumenical commitment that we become more united both in our thanksgiving for creation and in our concerted action to uphold life.

*Kyrie eleison (or an alternative sung response)*

God, you have made yourself known to us in our story, we give you thanks for being with us and for having given us your Son to reveal your love and share your glory.

Guide the steps of all who bear witness to the gospel towards perfect unity, in careful and patient listening to cultures and people's history.

*Kyrie eleison*

God, you who never abandon us, we give you thanks for the experience of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus with the risen Christ.

Grant that we may feel Christ's presence with us on our journey. Warm our hearts and open our understanding, that we may bear witness to your active presence in the power of his resurrection.

*Kyrie eleison*

God, from whom every perfect gift comes, we give you thanks that from the dawn of time from generation to generation you have never ceased to awaken that cloud of witnesses which transmitted the faith of the apostles. (Saint Ninian, Saint Columbus ... - *at this point each congregation can mention local evangelists and martyrs*).

We pray that we may be faithful to this faith we have been entrusted with, and creative, so as to together to open up new paths of the gospel.

*Kyrie eleison*

God of compassion, we give you thanks because you have reconciled the world through the cross of your Son.

Increase our faith, that it may give our churches and each of us, with Christ and following his example, the strength to always to stand more effectively alongside people in their lives, suffering and death.

*Kyrie eleison*

God, we put our hope in you and praise you for Jesus' promise, "See, I am with you always even unto the end of time."

You see the doubts which beset our hearts on the path to Christian unity. Following the example of the ecumenical pioneers of the Edinburgh conference of 1910, give us courage to denounce together our current fears and clarity to regain trust in 2010 on the path to the fulfilment of your will.

### The Lord's prayer

### IV) Sending

#### Prayer of commitment

- L. Let us pray.  
A. 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.  
(ACTS commitment. Taken from the Inaugural Service of  
Action of Churches Together in Scotland)

#### Blessing

- L. The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the love of God  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit  
be with you always.  
A. And also with you.

*Or*

- L. The Lord who conquered darkness with light,  
give peace to you.  
The Lord who conquered death with life,  
give peace to you.  
The Lord who conquered loneliness with love,  
give peace to you.

*Or another blessing.*

### Sending forth

- L. Today the risen Christ says to us, "As the Father sent me, so I send you".  
A. Amen.  
  
L. We have been told the Good News of the resurrection of Jesus, "We are the witnesses of these things". Go then in the peace of Christ. Alleluia!  
A. Thanks be to God. Amen, Alleluia!

### Final hymn

**NCCI Sunday (January 24, 2010)****Sermon guideline<sup>1</sup>****Theme: Witnessing for Christ today**

(Suggested readings: Exodus 1: 15-22; Acts 1:1- 11; Luke 9:18-22)

**Exodus 1: 15-22 (Perspectival change)**

The midwives in the story had little or no consciousness of being a 'missioner' (that of bringing into the world a liberator who will be God's servant in liberating God's people from the clutches of Pharaoh). They were just being true to their profession with due diligence. Witnessing to Christ today is 'being true and sincere to what one is doing'<sup>2</sup>, and in this context pro-Life.

To witness for Christ today is to be Life-oriented in ones day to day activity<sup>3</sup> – it is more than prayer and reading the scriptures, it is more than just bible study, revival meetings; it is far greater than personal evangelism and evangelistic campaigns (which normally are understood as mission activities); these if understood in perspective would, at best, strengthen the christian to be sincere and pro-Life in ones day to day work.

Directives like the one that Pharaoh gave to the midwives will therefore not distract one from being diligent in ones work. Fear of being punished, or of being 'disobedient' to authority, will seem insignificant in the context of affirming Life. Witnessing for Christ today is about People, and a faith-perception of "God's desire" about People, and not about whether God is relevant or redundant in any given situation.

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<sup>1</sup>This is a guideline from a global and from a pan-national context. This is not a sermon *per se*. The Preacher would do well to translate the guideline into specific contexts in which the sermon is preached.

<sup>2</sup>This should not be interpreted so as to justify caste-based occupations. Clarification can be given at this point that caste-based occupations should be denounced since they perpetuate caste.

<sup>3</sup>Such an understanding would seem to be irrelevant in a country where unemployment is rampant among rural communities, and where a vast percentage of the members of the Church is unemployed. It is not so. The relevance of Mission in the context of unemployment is addressed in Christian witness consisting in challenging powers and principalities that threaten and negate life – suggested in the Conclusion of this guideline.

In the context of a nefarious exploitative geo-political climate - propounded, pushed and perpetuated by unholy cartels of political market – 'witnessing for Christ today' calls for affirming life through diligence in ones work, within and against a backdrop of a complex context – genocide for ethnic cleansing, extermination of the poor through pursuance of anti-poor policies (hoodwinked by announcing anti-poverty programs), blunting of intellectual capabilities of the subaltern through promotion of genetically modified food for mass-production, and use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides in producing foods for the masses (while pricing food produced in healthy traditional and organic methods out of reach of the poor – for the rich). Issues such as hunger malnutrition, infanticide, and female-feticide represent the complex context at the local level.

All Mission, Theology, Ecumenism, Church, Exposition, Exegesis, etc., would do well to be geared toward affirming living in the world, 'a living' for all in the present and beyond ones time, and living in all its fullness where day to day living and work will be addressed.

**Acts 1: 7 & 8 (Paradigmatic shift)**

The Acts story of the 'people of the way' suggests that 'Witnessing for Christ today' warrants a paradigmatic shift. The 1910 call of Bishop V. Azariah, ". . . give us friends" has to be captured in the multi-cultural pluri-faith context of the day. That it has taken 100 years for us to be sensitive, in our context, to what we asked the International Missionary movement of that time, is surprising. Better late than never, we need to come into our own.

The book of Acts of the Apostles supposedly suggests a spatial expansion of Christianity (cf. Acts 1:8). It is also taken to suggest bringing many 'into the fold' – 'planting new churches' and setting up elders. While the former can only be attributed to the plan of the book 'Acts of the Apostles' – a movement from Jerusalem to Rome<sup>4</sup>, the latter can be seen as coming together of those who thought differently - after the pattern of Jesus – from that which organized religion was compelling one to think. The latter idea had no allusion to 'bringing into the fold' as circumcision held dearly by the jewish-converts to 'the way' was done away with by the Jerusalem Council of Acts 14.

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<sup>4</sup>This movement can at best be interpreted as 'centre to fringes methodology' of that time, than reading into it a movement from Jerusalem-centred resurrection-faith to Rome-centred religious tradition.

The Essence of the story of the 'Acts of the Apostles' nevertheless yields to the understanding that 'witnessing is about affirming and aligning with the Christ in everyone and every ethno-cultural and faith-tradition, just as Jesus is the Christ of the Jewish-Christian faith tradition. (cp. Paul's exposition of faith in Ephesus, and the call to Macedonia through a vision)

The warranted shift is from that of being construed as 'fishing for Christ' to be 'friend of the other'. Jesus himself said 'no longer will I call you servants, but friends'. Witnessing for Christ today therefore is to offer and accept friendship for 'common good', from whence it deepens into a fellowship where one and each is willing to give life not just for 'friends' but for all<sup>5</sup>.

### **Luke 9: 18 – 22 (Post-person sustenance)**

Luke's rendering of the mind of Jesus in Luke 9: 22 can be understood as inviting to focus on '...on the third day he has to rise again', which to Jesus was far more important than the section on suffering and dying on the cross which anyway is incidental to the search for alternate.

Such a focus read along with the rendering of 'destroy this temple and in three days I will rebuild it' connoting the death of his body - the Church, invites the faithful to move beyond the mission-person (read personnel) to sustaining messianic values and principles in the community (beginning with that of the faithful which at best can be the microcosm of the Community) in which the 'sovereignty of the least'<sup>6</sup> as the desire of the suffering yet victorious saviour is established.

This will challenge us to go further, to where Jesus wants us to go; to the community in context and not to him, nor draw all to him, in order that we (and the Church) also may - like him - dissolve as the salt yet live in the flavour which enriches the nature of the other.

<sup>5</sup>The theme of the National Ecumenical Youth Assembly of the NCCI Commission on Youth (Jan 5- 10, 2009) is "Come, let's be friends"

<sup>6</sup>The 'sovereignty of the least' is proposed as a close to appropriate contemporaneous alternate phrase to what is captured in the Biblical literature as the 'kingdom of God'

### **Conclusion**

On NCCI Sunday, placed within the context of the annual 'week of prayer for christian unity' one is called to unite in thought and prayer for the vision of the ecumenical movement in India.

The 'spirit of ecumenism' challenges exclusivity and calls for an inclusive mindset which will flavour all spheres of ones life. This year NCCI proposes the theme of the World Missionary Conference 2010 as the theme of NCCI Sunday, so that the reflections and prayers of the faithful on this day will be an offering of the Indian Ecumenical Movement to the Global Mission Event later in the year.

To this end, this year we can call for a perspectival change from 'evangelistic campaigns to everyday activity' as Mission, call to a shift to another paradigm of 'offering and accepting friendship' from that of 'fishing for Christ', and call to a post-person and pro-community sustenance of the Witness to Christ today. This will be in keeping with the mind of Jesus as propounded by the synoptists to preserve the messianic secret to facilitate a movement from continuing to expect a messianic-'man' (sic!) to inculturating a messianic mind-set by culling it out from all cultures and from amidst all peoples.

The final outcome of the sermon could help the worshipper work toward specific areas of witnessing for Christ today in his or her situation (short-term) whereby the following can be ultimately (long-term) achieved.

1. Church and local congregations will be challenged to redefine Mission praxis from an over-emphasis on sending missionaries, and going as missionaries, to being one (as Jesus) in ones existentialist context particularly in that of perversion of depravation and dispossession
2. Christian witnessing will be projected as one of making friends and being friends to the other rather than fishing for Christ, which fishes ultimately are marketed for personal and group interests
3. Christian Witnessing will be guided to invest in challenging – together as friends coming together for a purpose - powers and principalities, which threaten life and living, as mission-priorities instead of harvesting 'gullible' souls for a more vulnerable future, and an unseen, unsure

and insipid beyond; the beyond in this context will then be the hope of 'exciting possibilities' through mission sustained in the 'community of the sovereignty of the least'.

4. Witnessing for Christ today, since it is the handiwork of the 'finger of God' amidst us, will issue forth in the existentialist realisation of the taste of the 'banquet' of "conviviality" as people of all faith-experiences, religious-traditions, and ideological persuasions enrich life and living as the salt for the other, and all together helping to fulfill the 'Life-affirming' mission of the other.

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## Biblical reflections and prayers for the 'eight days'

### Day 1 Theme - Witness through Celebrating Life

**Text** - Why do you look for the living among the dead?

(Luke 24:5)

#### Readings

Genesis 1:1. 26-31	God saw all that he had made, and indeed, it was very good
Psalms 104:1-24	O Lord, how manifold are your works.
1 Corinthians 15:12-20	If the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised
Luke 24:1-5	Why do you look for the living among the dead?

#### Commentary

Our journey of Christian unity is firmly rooted in our common belief that in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, - we celebrate not only the life God has given us but the offer of new life through Jesus' conquering death once and for all. As we meet together during this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, we witness to our shared faith by our concern for the life of all. Life is God's gift to us, and the more we support and celebrate life, the more we give witness to the one whose generous love brought us to life initially.

The reading from the book of Genesis reminds us of the creative power and energy of God. It is this power and energy that St Paul encounters in experiencing Jesus' resurrection.

He challenges the people of Corinth to put their total trust in the Risen Lord and his offer of new life.

The psalm continues this theme as it proclaims the glory of God's creation.

Our gospel passage challenges us to look for new life in the face of a culture of death that our world frequently presents to us. It encourages us to trust in Jesus' power, and so to experience life and healing.

Today, we thank God for all that shows God's love for us: for all of creation; for brothers and sisters in all parts of the world; for communion in love, for forgiveness and healing and for life eternal.

#### Prayer

God our creator, we praise you for all who give witness to their faith by their words and actions. In living life to the full we encounter your loving presence in the many experiences you offer us. May our common witness of celebrating life unite us in blessing you, the author of all life.

### Reflection questions

1. To what extent do your own witness and the witness of your church celebrate life?
2. Will others know from your witness that Christ has been raised from the dead?
3. What do you see as the areas of growth in your life?
4. Are there things of the past that the churches cling to which ought to be laid to rest because of a new ecumenical consciousness?

### Day 2 Theme: Witness through Sharing Stories

**Text** - What are you discussing with each other while you walk along? (Luke 24:17)

#### Readings

Jeremiah 1:4-8

Go to all to whom I send you

Psalms 98

Sing to the Lord a new song

Acts 14:21-23

They strengthened the souls of the disciples

Luke 24:13-17a

What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?

#### Commentary

Sharing our stories is a powerful way in which we give witness to our faith in God. Listening to one another with respect and consideration allows us to encounter God in the very person with whom we are sharing.

The reading from Jeremiah offers us a powerful witness of God's call to the prophet. He is to share what he has received, and so allow God's Word to be heard and lived out.

This call to proclaim God's Word is also experienced by the disciples in the early Church, as witnessed to in the reading from Acts.

Our psalm allows us to sing to God with a spirit of praise and thanksgiving. Today's gospel passage presents a Jesus who enlightens our blindness and dispels our disillusionment. He helps us to understand our stories within the one unfolding plan of God.

During this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, we listen to the faith stories of other Christians in order to encounter God in the variety of ways God's very self is revealed to us. We are aware also that we can share with others through the virtual reality of technology. Modern means of communication can help us share more widely, and so create a community that is broader and more extensive than the purely physical.

In listening with attentiveness we grow in faith and love. In spite of the diversity of our personal and collective witness, we find ourselves intertwined in the one story of God's love for us revealed in Jesus Christ.

#### Prayer

God of history, we thank you for all who have shared their story of faith with us and so have given witness to your presence in their lives. We praise you for the variety of our stories both as individuals and churches. In these stories we see the unfolding of the one story of Jesus Christ. We pray for the courage and the conviction to share our faith with those with whom we come into contact, and so allow the message of your Word to spread to all.

### Reflection Questions

1. Are you “gossiping the Gospel” or just gossiping?
2. How open are you or your church to be drawn into the stories of others?
3. How open are you to share with others your stories of faith, and so give witness to God’s presence in your personal experiences of life and of death?
4. Are you aware of the enormous potential for good that modern means of communication offer the Church today?

### Day 3 Theme: Witness through Awareness

Text - Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days? (Luke 24:18)

#### Readings

1 Samuel 3:1-10	Speak, Lord, your servant is listening
Psalms 23	The Lord is my Shepherd
Acts 8:26-40	Philip proclaimed to him the Good News about Jesus.
Luke 24:13-19a	...their eyes were kept from recognizing him

#### Commentary

Growing in faith is a complex journey. Many people in our world today lead busy lives and have lots of pressures and responsibilities. It is easy to miss God’s revealing love to us in our everyday life and experiences. The more pressure and activity we surround ourselves with, then the greater the possibility of overlooking what is in fact before our very eyes. Like the two disciples in the gospel, we sometimes think we know what is real, and try to explain our view to others, yet we are not aware of the full truth. In our world today we are invited to be aware of God in the surprising and unlikely events of life.

In our Old Testament reading, we hear how God calls and invites Samuel to bear witness. Samuel first of all has to hear this word. Hearing requires an open disposition and a willingness to listen to God.

This desire to hear God’s Word is also experienced by both Philip and the Ethiopian in the reading from Acts. They witness to their faith by responding to what is asked of them at that precise moment in time. They listen attentively and respond accordingly. The psalm of the Good Shepherd reflects the quiet trust of the one who is aware of the tender care of God, Who gathers the flock and leads them to green pastures.

During this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, we seek to be aware of God in our everyday events and experiences. We meet people who are familiar and others who are strangers. In these encounters we learn from each other’s spiritual experiences and so get a new view of God’s reality. This awareness of God’s presence challenges us to work for Christian unity.

#### Prayer

Lord Jesus, Good Shepherd, You encounter us and remain with us in everyday life. We pray for the grace to be aware of all you do for us. We ask that you prepare us to be open to all you offer us and bring us together in one flock.

### Reflection questions

1. When have you been aware of God's presence in your life?
2. Are you aware of global celebrations and tragedies, and how might our churches together respond to these?
3. Is being aware enough, or is there something more that you might do in order to give witness to your faith?
4. How do you make yourself aware of God when the reality of God's presence does not correspond to your expectations?

### Day 4 Theme - Bearing witness through celebrating the faith we have received

Text: "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth." (Luke 24:19)

#### Readings

Deuteronomy 6:3-9	The Lord is our God, the Lord alone.
Psalms 34	I will bless the Lord at all times.
Acts 4:32-35	Of one heart and soul.
Luke 24:17-21	But we had hoped...

#### Commentary

We have an enormous debt of gratitude to those whose faith has provided the foundation for our Christian lives today. Numerous men and women through their prayer, witness and worship have ensured that the faith is handed down to the next generations. In Scotland we have an impressive Christian history. Saint Ninian in the 4th century, Saint Columba in the 6th century and the many Celtic saints whose faith was rooted in the love of God and wonder at his creation. The faith of Scottish people can also be seen in the very important role played in the diffusion of the Reformation of the 16th century and the way in which this spirit has been firmly maintained since then.

Today's readings affirm the importance of supporting the community of faith in order to ensure the dissemination of the Word of God. The passage from Deuteronomy gives us the beautiful prayer of our Jewish sisters and brothers who every day use these words to praise God. The Psalm invites us to bear witness through praise for what we have received as believers, so that our faith may be shown through glorifying and thanksgiving. The extract from Acts reveals a community united in faith and charity. The gospel passage shows us Jesus as the centre of what we have received in faith.

As we unite with our Christian brothers and sisters in praying for unity during this week, we welcome the rich variety of our Christian heritage. We pray that awareness of our common heritage may unite us more closely as we progress in faith.

#### Prayer

Lord God, we give you thanks for all the people and communities who have communicated the message of the Good News to us, and thus given us a solid foundation for our faith today. We pray that we too may together bear witness to our faith, so that others may know you and place their trust

in the truth of salvation offered in Jesus Christ for the life of the world.

**Reflection questions**

1. Who inspired you in your faith?
2. What are the aspects of faith which inspire you in your everyday life ?
3. What do you feel were the most important teachings which were passed on to you ?
4. How can you recognize God at work with you in the transmission of faith the future generations ?

**Day 5 Theme : Witness through suffering**

Text - Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory? (Luke 24:26)

**Readings**

Isaiah 50:5-9	The one who vindicates me is near.
Psalms 124	Our help is in the name of the Lord.
Romans 8:35-39	God's love shown forth in Jesus Christ.
Luke 24:25-27	He interpreted to them the things about himself.

**Commentary**

In recent years two events which took place in Scotland led to this small country suddenly becoming the centre of attention of the world's media. The bomb attack on the plane above Lockerbie and the massacre of children in Dunblane school brought attention to the nation which will always remember these terrible losses of human life. The two events caused suffering and unimaginable anguish to a large number of people and the consequences were felt well beyond the physical borders of the two places. Innocent people met their death in horrifying circumstances.

The reality of suffering is something that the Prophet Isaiah speaks about forcefully in today's text, in which he reminds us that God is never resigned to seeing humanity suffer. In response the Psalm proclaims the trust that believers must maintain in their Saviour.

The letter to the Romans proclaims the certainty that love is always strongest and that suffering and sorrow will never prevail. For before offering the resurrection to the world, Christ entered into a terrible death and into the dark depths of the tomb so as to be completely with us at our very lowest ebb.

In the Lord's footsteps, Christians who seek full unity show their solidarity to those amongst them who are confronted in their lives with tragic situations of suffering, by confessing that love is stronger than death. And that it was from the extreme humiliation of the tomb that resurrection came like a new sun for humanity; a clamouring annunciation of life, forgiveness and immortality.

**Prayer**

God our Father, look with compassion on our situations of poverty, suffering, sin and death, we ask you for forgiveness, healing, comfort and support in our ordeals.

We give you thanks for all who manage to see light in their affliction. May your divine Spirit teach us the greatness of your compassion and help us stand alongside our sisters and brothers in difficulty. Filled with its

blessings, may we in unity proclaim and share with the world the victory of your Son who lives for ever.

### Reflection questions

1. How can you show empathy to those who suffer and are in difficulties?
2. What wisdom and deeper understanding have you gained through suffering you have known in your own life?
3. How do you live out solidarity with the suffering and oppression that so many people living in poverty in our world experience, and what is your own experience of it?
4. How would you bear witness to the mercy of God and to the hope you find in the light of the cross of Christ?

### Day 6 Theme: Witness through Faithfulness to the Scriptures

Text - Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?  
(Luke 24:32)

### Readings

Isaiah 55:10-11	The word that goes forth from my mouth does not return to me empty
Psalms 119:17-40	Open my eyes that I may see the wonders of your Law
2 Timothy 3:14-17	All scripture is inspired by God
Luke 24:28-35	Jesus opens the Scriptures to His disciples

### Commentary

Christians encounter God's Word in a privileged way through reading the Sacred Scriptures and celebrating the sacraments. In faithfully listening to the proclamation of Holy Scripture, and by prayerfully reading the various books of the Bible, they open their hearts and minds to receive the very Word of God. Jesus promised His disciples that He would send the Holy Spirit to make them understand the Word of God, and to guide them in all truth.

Historically, Christians have been divided in reading and understanding the Word of God. They often used the Bible to emphasize their disagreement rather than to find ways for reconciliation.

Fortunately, in recent times, in their search for unity, Sacred Scripture has brought Christians closer to one another. Shared Bible study has become a major means of growing together among them. The Christian journey that we celebrate during this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is one that is firmly rooted in our shared listening to God's Word, trying together to understand and to live it.

The prophet Isaiah reminds us that God's Word powerfully proclaimed is indeed effective and operative. It does not return to God empty but succeeds in the purpose for which He sent it. This message is repeated in the words addressed to Timothy, as he is directed to believe in the efficacy of the Scriptures by which the faithful are equipped for every good work.

Our psalm gives praise for God's words and statutes and implores God to give understanding, that we may keep the Holy Law with our whole heart. During this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity we pray that all Christians may enter more deeply into the mystery of God's wonderful revelation as it comes to us in Holy Scripture. We beseech the Holy Spirit to help us better comprehend the Word of God and to direct us on our common

journey of faith until we will all be gathered again around the one table of the Lord.

### Prayer

God, we praise and thank you for your saving Word as it reaches out to us through the Sacred Scriptures. We thank you too for the brothers and sisters with whom we share your Word and discover together the abundance of Your love. We pray for the light of the Holy Spirit, so that Your Word may lead and direct us in our quest for greater unity.

### Reflection Questions

1. What are the passages of Scripture that mean most to you?
2. Who or what in your life makes your heart burn with a passion for the gospel and a desire to give witness to Christ?
3. Which passages from the Scriptures have helped you to better understand the witness of other Christians?
4. How may our churches use the Scripture more effectively in their daily life and prayer?

### Day 7 Theme: Witness through Hope and Trust

Text - Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? (Luke 24:38)

### Readings

Job 19:23-27 God whom I shall see on my side  
Psalm 63 My soul thirsts for You  
Acts 3:1-10 What I have, I give you  
Luke 24: 36-40 The disciples were startled and terrified

### Commentary

During their journey in life and faith, all Christians experience moments of doubt. When Christians cannot recognise the presence of the risen Christ, being together sometimes makes their doubts even heavier, rather than lighter.

The challenge faced by Christians is to continue to believe that even when they do not see or feel God, God remains with them. The virtues of faith, hope and trust allow them to give witness that their faith goes beyond their own possibilities.

The character Job gives us an example of someone who faced difficult trials and tribulations and even argued with God. In faith and hope however, he believed that God would remain on his side. This reliance and conviction is also shown by the actions of Peter and John in the account with the lame man as told in Acts. Their belief in the Name of Jesus allows them to witness powerfully to all who were present.

Today's psalm is a prayer reflecting our deep desire for God's steadfast love.

Our meeting during this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity allows our communities to grow in shared faith, hope and love. We bear witness to God's steadfast love to all people, and God's faithfulness to the one church we are called to be.

The more we witness together, the stronger our message will be.

### Prayer

God of hope, share Your vision of the one church with us, and overcome our doubts. Increase our faith in your presence, that all who profess belief in you may worship together in spirit and in truth. We especially pray for all who are in doubt right now, or whose lives are spent in the shadow of

danger and fear. Be with them and give them your consoling presence.

### Reflection questions

1. How do you deal with your own fears and doubts?
2. How might you be a cause of fear and anxiety for others by your behaviour?
3. When have you faced up to your own fears and doubts and so given witness to your faith in Christ by overcoming these difficulties?
4. How may Christian communities encourage one another in faith and hope?

### Day 8

#### Theme: Witness through Hospitality

Text – Have you anything here to eat? (Luke 24:41)

#### Readings

Gen 18:1-8

Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves

Psalm 146

He who gives justice to the oppressed and gives food to the hungry

Romans 14:17-19

Pursue what makes for peace and mutual edification

Luke 24:41-48

Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures

#### Commentary

Today, electronic communication has made us neighbours in one small and overloaded planet. As in the time of Luke, many peoples and communities have had to leave their homes, wandering and journeying to strange lands. People of the world's great faiths have arrived bringing new beliefs and cultures to our communities.

In the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity we recognise in our shared journey towards unity the hospitality and companionship of Christians of all churches. Christ also calls us to both offer and to receive the hospitality of the stranger who has become our neighbour. Surely, if we cannot see Christ in the other, then we cannot see Christ at all.

The story in Genesis describes how Abraham receives God in opening his house and offering hospitality to strangers.

The God of all creation also stands with the prisoner, the blind, the stranger. Our psalm is an offering of praise for God's everlasting faithfulness and all that God has done for us.

The text from Romans reminds us that the kingdom of God comes about through justice and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

The resurrected Christ brings his disciples together, eats with them and they recognise him again. He reminds them of what the scriptures said about him and explains what they did not understand before. Thus, he frees them from their doubts and fears and sends them out to become witnesses of these things. In creating this space for encounter with him he enables them to receive his peace, that implies justice for the oppressed, care for the hungry and the mutual upbuilding as the gifts of the new world of the resurrection. Christians throughout history have found the risen Lord as they have served others and been served by others in faith, so we too can encounter Christ when we share our lives and our gifts.

**Prayer:**

God of love, You have shown us your hospitality in Christ. We acknowledge that through sharing our gifts with all we meet you. Give us the grace that we may become one on our journey together and recognise you in one another. In welcoming the stranger in your name may we become witnesses to your hospitality and your justice.

**Reflection questions**

1. To what extent is the country in which you live hospitable to the stranger?
2. How in your own neighbourhood can the stranger find hospitality and a space to live?
3. How might you show gratitude for those who have shown you hospitality by being available?
4. How does the cross show us that God's hospitality is a hospitality lived out in total selfgiving?

**Additional worship resources from Scotland**

**Holy Spirit of Freedom**

as the poor long  
for abundance shared  
and injustice ended,  
and the Church longs for unity;  
Challenge us to see these two visions  
as vital threads in a single tapestry;  
Sharpen our wit and imagination  
to weave the two together  
in the footsteps of Jesus  
for the life of the world  
to the glory of God!

(Carolyn Smyth)

**Risen Christ,**

As you journeyed with the two who travelled the Emmaus Road  
travel with us on our journey of faith.  
In our encounters on the way  
give us compassion to listen to the other's story,  
patience to explain what may seem obvious to ourselves,  
and courage to make ourselves vulnerable,  
so that others may encounter you through us  
and we may rediscover you through them.  
Amen.

(Lindsey Sanderson )

**Prayer/Meditation of Witness**

This reflective piece uses symbols and movement to support universal understanding in worship gatherings where there is more than one native language/tongue spoken and/or where there is desire to include those with learning difficulties. It may be experienced as a whole or broken up into sections throughout a service of worship.

The symbols: **Large stone, story book with pictures/photographs, globe, creed or other statement of faith, cross/crucifix, Bible, large question mark on card, loaf of bread.** The symbols are brought forward at the appropriate section of prayer and placed in a prominent position where all can see – this may be on table/altar placed at front or centre of gathering.

Symbols could also be projected on to screen/wall using PowerPoint presentation.

**Action 1**      **A large stone is carried to the place of display. Music may be played during this.**

**Voice 1**      'Why do you look for the living among the dead?'

**Voice 2**      I know what it is to lose someone.

I have been in the place of weeping and despair.

I have felt the weight of the stone that crushes all hope

and blocks me from God.

**Voice 1**      But it is we, and not God, who place stones.

Little by little the light will come again.

Christ will reveal Himself in the love of a friend,

in the hospitality of a neighbour,

in the kindness of a stranger.

**Voice 2**      There must be death before there can be resurrection.

I have seen the dead come to life:

(list or personal testimonies are heard)

**Both**      We are witnesses of these things.

**ALL**      We pray for all who need the stone rolled away.

We give thanks for all who have experienced resurrection in this life.

We praise God, for the glory of the risen Christ who gives us the sure and certain hope of eternal life.

**Action 2**      **A large storybook with pictures or appropriate photographs is/are carried to the place of display. Music may be played during this.**

**Voice 1**      'What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?'

**Voice 2**      I enjoy real conversation. I have outgrown small talk.

I am a true storyteller.

I am a listener even when it is painful.

I play a part in my neighbour's story.

**Voice 1**      Thank God for the gifts of communication - for face to face talking, for the telephone, for radio, television and the world wide web. Thank God for all that connects us and enables us to keep in touch. Thank God for the Holy Spirit.

**Voice 2**      We are our stories. I have heard stories that have changed lives. (list or personal testimonies are heard)

**Both**      We are witnesses of these things.

**ALL**      We pray for all who talk of things that don't matter. We give thanks for all who have shared experiences of healing, forgiveness and reconciliation. We praise God, for the transforming power of His love and pray that one day Christ's story and ours are one.

**Action 3**      **A large globe (perhaps one that lights up) is carried to the place of display. Music may be played during this.**

**Voice 1**      'Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?'

**Voice 2**      These days I am aware of natural disasters that occur on the other side of the world. Yet I fail to notice when my neighbour suffers loss and I do not know what they celebrate next door. I feel like a stranger in my own land.

**Voice 1**      Sometimes we are called to be still. If we look and listen, we will find the Christ in the other. If we look inwards, we will find the Christ in ourselves. And if we are open to challenge and vulnerability then the Holy Spirit will show us where God wants us.

**Voice 2**      God is in every situation. No one is a stranger to God. I have seen God at work in the large and the small. (list or testimonies)

**Both** We are witnesses of these things.

**ALL** We pray for all who are in tragic circumstances.  
We give thanks for international relief agencies,  
for emergency services and for individuals who  
make personal sacrifices to help their neighbours.  
Praise God, for the gift and power of prayer –  
for there is always something we can do –  
we can pray.

**Action 4 A creed or other statement of faith (could be a banner or other visual representation) is carried to the place of display. Music may be played during this.**

**Voice 1** 'What things?'

**Voice 2** My faith is precious.  
I have clung to it in my times of greatest trial.  
I cannot imagine life without it.  
I want this faith for my children.

**Voice 1** We cannot leave the responsibility to others.  
We are called to witness to our faith.  
Throughout the ages, men and women  
have spread the Word of God  
and dark places have become light.

**Voice 2** In this place we remember those who  
who have inspired our faith today:  
(list or testimonies)

**Both** We are witnesses of these things.

**ALL** We pray for those who defend the faith of Christ  
even when they face ridicule, persecution or death.  
We give thanks for those who have influenced us.  
And in the silence, we give thanks for the things of faith  
that matter most to each of us. (silence)  
We praise God for His faithfulness  
that endures forever. (Amen)

**Action 5 A large cross or crucifix is carried to the place of display. Music may be played during this.**

**Voice 1** 'Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer  
these things and then enter into his glory?'

**Voice 2** I have seen the inhumanity of man to man –  
in men, in women and in those little more than children.  
I have watched the suffering of someone I love  
and been unable to lift them from their cross.  
Sometimes I cry, why O God, why?

**Voice 1** There are many kinds of suffering.  
War, terrorism and human cruelty remind us  
that we have the power to make any word incarnate:  
for Christ's sake, we must make sure it is love.  
We cannot stop the sufferings of illness or loss  
but we can enter the pain and share it, in love.

**Voice 2** From the blood stained Cross of Christ,  
flowed the harvest of faithfulness, forgiveness and love.  
I have known this harvest.  
(list or testimonies)

**Both** We are witnesses of these things.

**ALL** We pray for all who suffer at the hands of others.  
And we pray for those who inflict suffering.  
We give thanks for those who embody love in action  
and go where even angels fear to tread.  
We pray for those who are ill, those who care for them,  
and those who are approaching death.  
We praise God for his promise  
that there is nothing in life or in death  
that can ever separate us from the love of God. (Amen)

**Action 6 A Bible is carried to the place of display. Music may be played during this.**

**Voice 1** 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was  
talking to us on the road?'

**Voice 2** I do not read my Bible as often as I should.  
But there are treasured verses and sayings  
that live deep within me:  
And in unexpected moments, alone or in company,  
something real happens - now  
and I understand the words as never before -  
Is this what is meant by revelation?

**Voice 1** God reveals His Word in many ways.  
We do not need to strive for revelation –  
the Holy Spirit will open our eyes and minds  
when the time is right.  
And those God raises to be prophets make sense of  
today in the light of yesterday and point us towards  
the future.

**Voice 2** Love is at the centre of revelation.  
I have felt my heart burn with passion.  
(list or testimonies)

**Both** We are witnesses of these things.

**ALL** We pray for all whose hearts are cold.  
We pray for those who think they have seen it all.  
We give thanks for past and present prophets  
who have shared what God has revealed to them.  
We give thanks for those whose passion for Christ  
has brought justice and freedom to the oppressed.  
We praise God for all the ordinary people  
who are living revelations of His Word. (Amen)

**Action 7** **A large question mark on card is carried to the place of display. Music may be played during this.**

**Voice 1** 'Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?'

**Voice 2** I envy those who have never doubted.  
I would like to have such certainty.  
But things happen to me and to other people

that make me question Your power O God.  
And every funeral I attend  
invites me to travel the Emmaus road once more.

**Voice 1** It takes courage and trust to befriend doubt.  
You need to be prepared to journey.  
Apathy, inaction, complacency and self-centredness  
are the opposites of faith - not doubt.  
Follow the way of Christ.  
Pray, praise God and love Your neighbour as yourself.  
For it is in the acting out that we find the answers.

**Voice 2** Only by faith can we live the questions.  
I have experienced incredible breakthroughs in faith.  
(list or testimonies)

**Both** We are witnesses of these things.

**ALL** We pray for those who live in perpetual fear.  
We pray for those who are crippled by their insecurities.  
We give thanks for those whose strength of faith  
upholds and encourages others in the face of adversity.  
We praise God for the reassurance of Jesus,  
that when we reach out and touch our ghosts<sup>1</sup>  
we too will discover that Christ is alive. Amen

**Action 8** **A large loaf of bread is carried to the place of display. Music may be played during this.**

**Voice 1** 'Have you anything here to eat?'

**Voice 2** I have been hungry.  
I have been fed.  
I cannot live by bread alone.  
But I cannot live without it.

**Voice 1** We are stewards of God's world.  
We share a common loaf.  
There is plenty for everyone.  
It is just hospitality that is needed.  
For everyone born there is a place at the table.

**Voice 2** Hospitality creates a space  
where the needs of the other are fed.  
I have known life-changing acts of hospitality.  
(list or testimonies)

**Both** We are witnesses of these things.

**ALL** We pray for those living in inhospitable places.  
We give thanks for those who give of their time,  
their talents, their resources, their very selves  
to affirm the Christ in the other.  
We praise God for the glory of Christ's cross  
inviting all who come to Jesus  
to be united in His feast of life. (Amen)  
Blessing  
Be the great God between your shoulders  
To protect you in your going and your coming  
Be the Son of Mary near your heart  
And be the perfect Spirit upon you pouring.  
Amen.

(Carol Ford)

#### Endnotes:

1 Luke 24: 37

## Scotland's Ecumenical Context

### From 1910 to 2010

Edinburgh 1910 saw the birth of the modern ecumenical movement, but why did it happen in Edinburgh? Scotland, intellectually and culturally, had a strong tradition of internationalism stretching right back to the Celtic missions. This international perspective was promoted by leading Scots theologians and church leaders. This was coupled with the strong missionary ethos of 19th century Scottish Protestantism, which in addition to evangelism was concerned with modifying the economic imperial expansion of the British empire. This engagement in mission led to the churches being willing to support a World Mission Conference, rather than leave it to mission agencies. Finally Scotland was experiencing rapid change in both church and society which stimulated a sense of wider vision in the churches.

In 2000, John Pobee (Ghana) visited Scotland and challenged the Christian leaders to mark the centenary of 1910. Over the next few years an ever-widening circle of mission thinkers and activists recognised that 2010 was an occasion for great potential and that collaborative action was required. In 2005 an international gathering was held in Edinburgh from which key themes for mission in the 21st century emerged. These include foundations for mission; mission in an interfaith context; mission and its relationships to post-modernity and power; forms of missionary engagement; theological education; contemporary Christian communities; mission and unity and mission spirituality.

It was also recognised a focal point to the centenary was required and this will be held in Edinburgh from 2-6 June 2010. The work of Edinburgh 2010 is co-ordinated through its website [www.edinburgh2010.org](http://www.edinburgh2010.org)

### The intervening years

From the 1940's to the present day three particular threads have developed in the ecumenical landscape of Scotland.

#### *Theological Exploration*

From the so-called *Bishops Report*, (an Anglican/Presbyterian report in 1956), through nearly 30 years of *Multilateral Conversations* (1967-1994) involving six Churches in Scotland, to the *Scottish Churches Initiative for Christian Unity* (SCIFU - 1996-2003) many doctrinal issues were addressed. This has resulted in greater understanding of our different traditions and an

increasing discovery that there is much theological agreement between the churches. The fact that this has failed to produce a scheme of union, upon which all could agree, is based not on any antagonism between churches as realising that unity is more than creating some grand plan. It lies in recognising unity as possible within difference.

#### *Practical Co-operation*

At national level two bodies emerged in the 1950's producing great energy and vision.. By the beginning of 1960 this became enfolded in the opening of *Scottish Churches House* in Dunblane - a Conference and Retreat Centre which "the Churches held in common and where they could begin to learn to grow together to serve Scotland". By 1962 *Scottish Churches Council* was established with most non-Roman Catholic Churches as members and a number of associated ecumenical groups and organisations. This led to many nationally sponsored activities – e.g. Lent courses, youth work, outreach work in communities, which soon mushroomed with local councils of Churches throughout Scotland co-operating in joint worship and action. In 1986 a UK-wide Lent course was the catalyst to new 'instruments of unity' which for the first time included the Roman Catholic Church. So *Action for Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS)* came into being in 1990.

#### *The Prophetic Voice*

This third thread is the one that is the more difficult one for Churches to live with. Yet without it ecumenism would lose its cutting edge. As Churches grew closer together, ecumenism provided its own prophetic action. *Christian Aid* reflected in its work both the practical expression of compassion for the world's hungry, but also, the prophetic words of protest for justice in the world. The *Iona Community* that has always had a strong ecumenical commitment has openly challenged the Churches and the World on their disunity and injustice. There have been prophetic moments as when in 1982 on his visit to Scotland Pope John Paul II said "Let us walk together as pilgrims hand in hand".

Ecumenism in recent years has widened to an inter-faith context, and to Christian witness in a more secular and multi-cultural society. What its history in Scotland has illustrated is that to meet that challenge we need to hold these three threads in tension. It is not a choice between them. For it is only when they interact with each other that there is created the theology, the co-operation, and the prophetic voice, which lies at the heart of an ecumenical vision.

Tartans are one of Scotland's treasures. Traditionally each pattern was identified with a particular 'clan' or family, but tartans are a living tradition and continue to be designed for many different purposes and organisations. Tartans have a base colour onto which horizontal and vertical stripes are laid. The background text is above, and below we offer a number of horizontal and vertical stripes which share just some of the ways the churches engage between themselves and with wider society.

#### **Horizontal Stripes – churches seeking unity together**

##### **The Joint Commission on Doctrine of the Church of Scotland and Roman Catholic Church**

This bilateral dialogue has proved to be a rich source of blessing. Its most recent document is entitled "Baptism: Catholic and Reformed" which summarises progress in understanding common baptism, but which also invites further reflection on what this means for the mission of the Church today. The Joint Commission is an example of positive ecumenical theological dialogue, and shows both individuals and institutions are willing to listen seriously to one another. The Joint Commission is currently studying the healing of historical memories and the doctrine of sanctification.

##### **The EMU strand**

Following the end of the Scottish Churches Initiative For Union, three denominations made the commitment to explore ways of working, serving and witnessing together. Thus the EMU conversations were born. Representatives of the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church meet twice a year to discover ways in which nationally and locally we can do those things together that need not be done separately, and are delighted as people with particular responsibilities explore and identify how cooperation can grow, for example in education and training. EMU is a young, living relationship of great potential.

##### **Developing relations with ethnic minority Christians**

In 2007 churches in Scotland marked the Bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act. This became a catalyst in developing closer relationships between the traditional churches and growing number of ethnic minority Christians in Scotland. The Scottish Churches Racial Justice Group now has representatives from African Churches and Asian Christian Fellowships. Minority Ethnic Christians are organising themselves into a body to further relationships amongst themselves and with the traditional churches and ACTS.

## **Vertical Stripes – the churches engaging in Scottish society**

### **The Churches and Parliament**

The Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office was born out of the churches' engagement in the process that brought the Scottish Parliament into being. Having found we could work together on this, churches set up SCPO to enable them to engage as effectively as possible with the Parliament and Government in Scotland – not to set a party line, but to ensure that a conversation takes place and that the voices of the churches are heard. Clearly, we are most effective when we can speak with one voice for our vision for the common good of Scotland, but where there are differing voices we are honest and open about that.

### **The Churches and the National Conversation**

Leaders / representatives of twelve of Scotland's Churches accepted the invitation of the Scottish Government to contribute to a 'national conversation' on choosing the future of Scotland. The group produced the following statement:

"We recognise that the Church is on a journey as well as our nation; all of us are going to struggle to get to where we need to be. But for the Church, as well as for our nation and our communities, we aspire towards these Christian values characterising our common life in Scotland:

- ⊙ A nation that is shaped by the principles of love for God and for all human beings
- ⊙ A nation that promotes dignity and justice for all
- ⊙ A nation that promotes faithfulness in personal and community relationships
- ⊙ A nation that demonstrates compassion and care for the weak and the marginalised
- ⊙ A society in which the voices of all can be heard
- ⊙ A people who are less concerned with their own welfare and more concerned for the wellbeing of others
- ⊙ A nation that strives for excellence and in which all can experience life in all its fullness
- ⊙ A nation that welcomes the unique contribution of those who are making the new Scotland
- ⊙ A state that promotes the well-being of all its citizens without exceeding its authority.

For us, these values are rooted in Jesus and have distinctively shaped Scotland's story as it has developed over the years; where they are lived and practised, we find they resonate with people of other faiths and of none."

### **Street Pastors**

Street Pastors is a mission initiative spreading throughout Scotland. Teams of trained volunteer Street Pastors from local churches are available late at night in town centres to offer words of advice and practical support, to people out and about. 'We will meet, talk and engage with the people through listening, supporting and helping in practical ways. This could be walking a girl on her own to a late night taxi; reassuring someone who feels intimidated; or listening to the people who need to know that somebody cares,' said James Duce from the City Church in Aberdeen, the first Scottish city to launch Street Pastors.

## Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

### Themes 1968-2010

In 1968, materials jointly prepared by the WCC Faith and Order Commission and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity were first used.

- 1968 To the praise of his glory (Ephesians 1: 14)  
Pour la louange de sa gloire
- 1969 Called to freedom (Galatians 5: 13)  
Appelés à la liberté  
(Preparatory meeting held in Rome, Italy)
- 1970 We are fellow workers for God (1 Corinthians 3: 9)  
Nous sommes les coopérateurs de Dieu  
(Preparatory meeting held at the Monastery of Niederaltaich, Federal Republic of Germany)
- 1971 ...and the communion of the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 13: 13)  
...et la communion du Saint-Esprit
- 1972 I give you a new commandment (John 13: 34)  
Je vous donne un commandement nouveau  
(Preparatory meeting held in Geneva, Switzerland)
- 1973 Lord, teach us to pray (Luke 11: 1)  
Seigneur, apprends-nous à prier  
(Preparatory meeting held at the Abbey of Montserrat, Spain)
- 1974 That every tongue confess: Jesus Christ is Lord  
(Philippians 2: 1 - 13)  
Que tous confessent : Jésus-Christ est Seigneur  
(Preparatory meeting held in Geneva, Switzerland)
- 1975 God's purpose: all things in Christ (Ephesians 1: 3-10)  
La volonté du Père: Tout réunir sous un seul chef, le Christ  
(Material from an Australian group. Preparatory meeting held in Geneva, Switzerland)
- 1976 We shall be like him (1 John 3: 2) or, Called to become what we are  
Appelés à devenir ce que nous sommes (Material from Caribbean Conference of Churches. Preparatory meeting held in Rome, Italy)

- 1977 Enduring together in hope (Romans 5: 1-5)  
L'espérance ne déçoit pas  
(Material from Lebanon, in the midst of a civil war.  
Preparatory meeting held in Geneva)
- 1978 No longer strangers (Ephesians 2: 13-22)  
Vous n'êtes plus des étrangers  
(Material from an ecumenical team in Manchester, England)
- 1979 Serve one another to the glory of God (1 Peter 4: 7-11)  
Soyez au service les uns des autres pour la gloire de Dieu  
(Material from Argentina - preparatory meeting held in Geneva, Switzerland)
- 1980 Your kingdom come (Matthew 6: 10)  
Que ton règne vienne!  
(Material from an ecumenical group in Berlin, German Democratic Republic -preparatory meeting held in Milan)
- 1981 One Spirit - many gifts - one body (1 Corinthians 12: 3b-13)  
Un seul esprit - des dons divers - un seul corps  
(Material from Graymoor Fathers, USA - preparatory meeting held in Geneva, Switzerland)
- 1982 May all find their home in you, O Lord (Psalm 84)  
Que tous trouvent leur demeure en Toi, Seigneur  
(Material from Kenya - preparatory meeting held in Milan, Italy)
- 1983 Jesus Christ - the Life of the World (1 John 1: 1-4)  
Jesus Christ - La Vie du Monde  
(Material from an ecumenical group in Ireland - preparatory meeting held in Céligny (Bossey), Switzerland)
- 1984 Called to be one through the cross of our Lord  
(1 Cor 2: 2 and Col 1: 20)  
Appelés à l'unité par la croix de notre Seigneur  
(Preparatory meeting held in Venice, Italy)
- 1985 From death to life with Christ (Ephesians 2: 4-7)  
De la mort à la vie avec le Christ  
(Material from Jamaica - preparatory meeting held in Grandchamp, Switzerland)

- 1986 You shall be my witnesses (Acts 1: 6-8)  
Vous serez mes témoins  
(Material from Yugoslavia (Slovenia), preparatory meeting held in Yugoslavia)
- 1987 United in Christ - a New Creation (2 Corinthians 5: 17-6: 4a)  
Unis dans le Christ - une nouvelle création  
(Material from England, preparatory meeting held in Taizé, France)
- 1988 The love of God casts out fear (1 John 4: 18)  
L'Amour de Dieu bannit la Crainte  
(Material from Italy - preparatory meeting held in Pinerolo, Italy)
- 1989 Building community: one body in Christ (Romans 12: 5-6a)  
Bâtir la communauté: Un seul corps en Christ  
(Material from Canada - preparatory meeting held in Whaley Bridge, England)
- 1990 That they all may be one...That the world may believe (John 17)  
Que tous soient un...Afin que le monde croie  
(Material from Spain - preparatory meeting held in Madrid, Spain)
- 1991 Praise the Lord, all you nations! (Psalm 117 and Romans 15: 5-13)  
Nations, louez toutes le Seigneur  
(Material from Germany - preparatory meeting held in Rotenburg an der Fulda, Federal Republic of Germany)
- 1992 I am with you always ... Go, therefore (Matthew 28: 16-20)  
Je suis avec vous...allez donc  
(Material from Belgium - preparatory meeting held in Bruges, Belgium)
- 1993 Bearing the fruit of the Spirit for Christian unity  
(Galatians 5: 22-23)  
Pour l'unité: laisser mûrir en nous les fruits de l'Esprit  
(Material from Zaire - preparatory meeting held near Zurich, Switzerland)
- 1994 The household of God: called to be one in heart and mind  
(Acts 4: 23-37)  
La maison de Dieu: Appelés à être un dans le coeur et dans l'esprit  
(Material from Ireland - preparatory meeting held in Dublin, Republic of Ireland)
- 1995 Koinonia: communion in God and with one another  
(John 15: 1-17)  
La koinonia: communion en Dieu et les uns avec les autres  
(Material from Faith and Order, preparatory meeting held in Bristol, England)
- 1996 Behold, I stand at the door and knock (Revelation 3: 14-22)  
Je me tiens à la porte et je frappe  
(Preparatory material from Portugal, meeting held in Lisbon, Portugal)
- 1997 We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God  
(2 Corinthians 5: 20)  
Au nom du Christ, laissez-vous réconcilier avec Dieu  
(Material from Nordic Ecumenical Council, preparatory meeting held in Stockholm, Sweden)
- 1998 The Spirit helps us in our weakness (Romans 8: 14-27)  
L'Esprit aussi vient en aide à notre faiblesse  
(Preparatory material from France, meeting held in Paris, France)
- 1999 He will dwell with them as their God, they will be his peoples  
(Revelation 21: 1-7)  
Dieu demeurera avec eux. Ils seront ses peuples  
et lui sera le Dieu qui est avec eux  
(Preparatory material from Malaysia, meeting held in Monastery of Bose, Italy)
- 2000 Blessed be God who has blessed us in Christ (Ephesians 1: 3-14)  
Béni soit Dieu, qui nous a bénis en Christ  
(Preparatory material from the Middle East Council of Churches, meeting held La Verna, Italy)
- 2001 I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life (John 14: 1-6)  
Je suis le chemin, et la vérité et la vie  
(Preparatory material from Romania and meeting held at Vulcan, Romania)
- 2002 For with you is the fountain of life (Psalm 36: 5-9)  
Car chez toi est la fontaine de la vie (Psalm 35, 6-10)  
(Preparatory material CEEC and CEC, meeting near Augsburg, Germany)

- 2003 We have this treasure in clay jars (2 Corinthians 4: 4-18)  
Car nous avons ce trésor dans des vases d'argile  
(Preparatory material churches in Argentina, meeting at Los Rubios, Spain)
- 2004 My peace I give to you (John 14: 23-31; John 14: 27)  
Je vous donne ma paix  
(Preparatory material from Aleppo, Syria - meeting in Palermo, Sicily)
- 2005 Christ, the one foundation of the church (1 Corinthians 3 1-23)  
Le Christ, unique fondement de l'Eglise  
(Preparatory material from Slovakia - meeting in Piestany, Slovakia)
- 2006 Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am among them (Matthew 18: 18-20)  
Là où deux ou trois se trouvent réunis en mon nom, je suis au milieu d'eux.  
(Preparatory material from Ireland - meeting held in Prosperous, Co. Kildare, Ireland)
- 2007 He even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak (Mark 7: 31-37) Il fait entendre les sourds et parler les muets  
(Preparatory material from South Africa – meeting held in Faverges, France)
- 2008 Pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5: (12a) 13b-18)  
Priez sans cesse  
(Preparatory material from USA – meeting held in Graymoor, Garrison, USA)
- 2009 That they may become one in your hand (Ezekiel 37: 15-28)  
Ils seront unis dans ta main  
(Preparatory material from Korea – meeting held in Marseilles, France)
- 2010 You are witnesses of these things (Luke 24: 48)  
...de tout cela, c'est vous qui êtes les témoins  
(Preparatory material from Scotland – meeting held in Glasgow, Scotland)

### Key dates in the history of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

- c. 1740 In Scotland a Pentecostal movement arose, with North American links, whose revivalist message included prayers for and with all churches.
- 1820 The Rev. James Haldane Stewart publishes "Hints for the General Union of Christians for the Outpouring of the Spirit".
- 1840 The Rev. Ignatius Spencer, a convert to Roman Catholicism, suggests a 'Union of Prayer for Unity'.
- 1867 The First Lambeth Conference of Anglican Bishops emphasizes prayer for unity in the Preamble to its Resolutions.
- 1894 Pope Leo XIII encourages the practice of a Prayer Octave for Unity in the context of Pentecost.
- 1908 First observance of the 'Church Unity Octave' initiated by the Rev. Paul Wattson.
- 1926 The Faith and Order movement begins publishing "Suggestions for an Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity".
- 1935 Abbé Paul Couturier of France advocates the 'Universal Week of Prayer for Christian Unity' on the inclusive basis of prayer for "the unity Christ wills by the means he wills".
- 1958 Unité Chrétienne (Lyons, France) and the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches begin co-operative preparation of materials for the Week of Prayer.
- 1964 In Jerusalem, Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras I prayed together Jesus' prayer "that they all may be one" (John 17).
- 1964 The Decree on Ecumenism of Vatican II emphasizes that prayer is the soul of the ecumenical movement and encourages observance of the Week of Prayer.
- 1966 The Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches and the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity [now known as the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity] begin official joint preparation of the Week of Prayer material.

- 1968 First official use of Week of Prayer material prepared jointly by Faith and Order and the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity [now known as the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity]
- 1975 First use of Week of Prayer material based on a draft text prepared by a local ecumenical group. An Australian group was the first to take up this plan in preparing the 1975 initial draft.
- 1988 Week of Prayer materials were used in the inaugural worship for The Christian Federation of Malaysia, which links the major Christian groupings in that country.
- 1994 International group preparing text for 1996 included representatives from YMCA and YWCA.
- 2004 Agreement reached that resources for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity be jointly published and produced in the same format by Faith and Order (WCC) and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (Catholic Church).
- 2008 Commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. (Its predecessor, the Church Unity Octave, was first observed in 1908.)

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