



Jesus said to Martha, “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” She said to him, “Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world. John 11:25,26 (NRSV)

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## PARTNER CHURCHES AND ORGANISATIONS

### How is Easter celebrated around the world?

Some of our Mission Partners describe the traditions in the countries where they live and serve

#### Similarities and differences

We learn from Rachel Ullmer that in Pakistan there are some traditions that are similar to ours in the UK and a few variations



Easter is a very special time in Pakistan. To prepare for Easter, the padres make visits to all their parishioners and special services are held during Lent. In my Urdu speaking church, there is a lot of emphasis on the preparation for Good Friday.

It is very moving as the padre and his wife wash the feet of the congregation. He washes the men’s feet and she washes the women’s feet. The Sunday School children carry palm branches from the nearby trees and sing in the church.

#### To a deeper knowledge

On Maundy Thursday, there is a service to remember the last days of Jesus, which leads into the Good Friday

service. In most churches, this is a three-hour service from 12 noon to 3 pm (we all hope the weather is not too hot). It’s where people from the church read prayers and devotions based on the events of the crucifixion. It is a thought-provoking time and moves one to a deeper knowledge of our Lord. Some churches have hot cross buns, which are made locally.

#### Celebration

Easter Sunday is a time of celebration. In our church, we have an Easter cake for everyone, and a sunrise service. Before dawn, everyone gathers in the church, where there is a model of the empty tomb and an empty cross.

Everyone has a candle to hold and we walk around the streets singing the Easter songs. Many who don’t attend the church like to look and some even know the Easter hymns! Afterwards, there are puras and hulva to eat which is fried bread and sweet stuff.

All through this time, the police are guarding our churches. I always feel glad that the whole essence of our faith is celebrated in such a moving and glorious way.

### Vibrant worship in Germiston

The Revd Stephen Day explains the priority given to Easter in South Africa

Easter is, without doubt, the Christian festival in Germiston. While much of the worship which accompanies Holy Week would not seem out of place in the UK, there are two defining times of worship which are radically different.

#### Vibrant services

We may associate Good Friday with solemn, meditative services. In Germiston, we experienced vibrant Seven Words services, focusing on seven words of Jesus from the cross. These services last between three to six hours and involve nine preachers.

The first preacher invites worshippers to walk the Via Dolorosa with Jesus, which leads to Golgotha. Seven preachers then preach on one of the



'Uvukile!'. He is risen!

seven words, concluding with another preacher who invites a response. I have found these services to be inspirational, offering a different model for Good Friday worship.

The Saturday night leading into Easter Day is spent in an "all-night revival". This includes a memorial service for members who have died since the previous Easter and also a healing

service. Much time is spent in song and with people preaching on a set theme.

#### Sharing the good news

When the revival draws to a close, around 6 am, the church lights are turned off. Women bearing candles enter crying out "Uvukile!" which means "He is risen!". Some of these women then share the good news that Jesus Christ is risen. In the mood of celebration, we then go outside and have a short service of Holy Communion.

We have been blessed by these new experiences of Holy Week and Easter worship, which will hopefully enrich our ministry when we return to the UK later this year.

### Easter Journey in Zambia

Mission Partner, Keith Waddell describes the road from Lent to Easter in Zambia

On Ash Wednesday, the United Church of Zambia burns the previous year's palm leaves from home and church. It does this together with all the year's challenges and any written prayer requests.

An ash mark on the forehead is then washed away. Remaining ashes are scattered, signifying a new beginning in repentance for the past.

The next major milestone on the Lenten journey is Palm Sunday. This marks the beginning of Holy Week. It's an Ecumenical occasion with most churches parading together through the streets before going to their individual churches.



Mural of Jesus and Thomas painted on the Chapel Wall at UCZ Njase Girls Secondary School in Choma

On Maundy Thursday the clergy wash the feet of congregants and adherents. In the evening there is Holy Communion and a Tenebrae Service with the blowing out of candles and the departure in silence. Purple and black are the predominant colours worn on Good Friday.

On Easter Sunday there is a candlelight service with Holy Communion just after dawn, to celebrate the resurrection. This is followed in the afternoon by a moving memorial service for all those who died that year. Their names are read out and artificial flowers are laid. These flowers decorate the church in the coming year.

# Life for Christians in Algeria

Former Superintendent of the Algerian Methodist Church, the Revd Daniel Nussbaumer, describes some of the challenges and miracles for believers there



Constantine, Algeria

For more than a century there has been a Methodist church in Algeria. It has never sought to establish itself as a denominational church, but simply to be a Christian witness in Muslim lands.

There are five or six Methodist communities, some with more than a hundred people worshipping on Saturdays. One of its missions is also the reception of students from Black Africa studying in the cities of northern Algeria.

### Threatened and beaten

It is possible to be a Christian in Algeria but it is often in families that the opposition is the largest. Some women cannot tell their husbands that they go to church. Others have been threatened and beaten by their own brothers.

A friend wrote to me a few weeks ago about how he was beaten by

other young people accusing him of being a Christian. Everyone has access to radio and television, which plays an important role in the conversion of hundreds of Algerians.

Even though many Algerians are not particularly engaged in Muslim faith and practice, Islam

puts a weight on these people. It demands the observance of rules - laws that alone will achieve salvation. For this reason the Muslim who turns to the Christian faith sees it as a liberation. From there always comes the great joy they discover when Jesus becomes their friend and saviour.

Another highlight is the number of people who have found the way to faith in Christ through a dream. Like an engineer dreamed he had to go to the church if he did not want to die. But he did not know a church and there are no steeples in Algeria to tell you the Christian places. He paid one of his workers to take him to a church where he participated in the worship and gave his life to Jesus.



The Souk in Constantine

# “What worries me is not the cry of the bad guys – it is the silence of the good”

We learn about the response of the church in Brazil to the Brumadinho Dam disaster from the Revd José Pontes Sobrinho



Pastors and other volunteers pray for the firefighters

Almost a hundred people were confirmed dead with another 276 missing and 135 families made homeless, after the breach of Brumadinho Dam on 29 January. The Revd José Pontes led a team of pastors, psychoanalysts and psychologists to visit the scene of the disaster. They had come to offer help and solidarity with the families who have lost homes and loved ones.

The team were seeking to find out how they could help those affected by the catastrophe at the mine operated by the Vale Mining Company.

Pastor José found that the population were in a state of disbelief and disillusioned with the Vale company and local government. Despite this they retained their faith in God and the church. One local said, “The one who has credibility at this time is the Christian church.”

### Alleviating the pain and loss

He discovered that many farmers in the area have lost houses, land and livelihoods. He learned that churches,



Methodists, Juliana and Thais, along with other volunteers from YWAM visited Ronac – a teenage survivor of the tragedy



Daniel Bridi (on the left) cut short his overseas holidays when he learned of the tragedy to go and help



The rescue team pay homage and offer prayer for the victims of the tragedy

working together with members of the government, are seeking to alleviate the pain and loss. They are doing this by bringing emergency relief and support in rebuilding the lives of the survivors.

They are seeking to help with restructuring the city, alleviating

environmental damage and by offering practical, psychological and spiritual support to the stricken people. The church is also offering to assist in the making of public policy. The aim is to help establish ethical values which support the victims of the disaster, while seeking to prevent a tragedy like this occurring again.



Children from Lebanon being entertained while their parents' applications are being processed in Italy

### The Immigrants' Creed

This inspiring reflection was shared at the Churches Together in Rome service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

I believe in Almighty God,  
who guided the people in exile and in exodus,  
the God of Joseph in Egypt and Daniel in Babylon,  
the God of foreigners and immigrants.

I believe in Jesus Christ, a displaced Galilean,  
who was born away from his people and his home,  
who fled his country with his parents when his life  
was in danger.

When he returned to his own country  
he suffered under the oppression of Pontius Pilate,  
the servant of a foreign power.  
Jesus was persecuted, beaten, tortured,  
and unjustly condemned to death.

But on the third day Jesus rose from the dead,  
not as a scorned foreigner  
but to offer us citizenship in God's kingdom.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the eternal immigrant  
from  
God's kingdom among us,  
who speaks all languages, lives in all countries,  
and reunites all races.

I believe that the Church is the secure home  
for foreigners and for all believers.  
I believe that the communion of saints begins  
when we embrace all God's people in all their  
diversity.

I believe in forgiveness, which makes us all equal  
before God,  
and in reconciliation, which heals our brokenness.  
I believe that, in the Resurrection, God will unite us  
as one people in which all are distinct  
and all are alike at the same time.

I believe in life eternal, in which no one will be  
foreigner  
but all will be citizens of the kingdom  
where God reigns forever and ever.  
Amen.

(José Luis Casal)

## Introducing Louis as he prepares to volunteer in Sri Lanka this summer

Well, hello everyone!

This all began when I had just started the 3rd year of my degree in Applied Theology and Performing Arts. In all honesty, I didn't really have a clue what my next steps were going to be after I graduated.

I prayed to God and asked him to lead me and show me in what direction I should go once I'd finished my studies. God answered in the most tangible way and clearly demonstrated that I should explore overseas mission work. Now this was quite a calling for someone who had never been on an aeroplane before and absolutely despised learning languages at school. But I started the journey.

### Diving in head first

I decided to sign up for a two-week mission trip to serve in a church in Bangalore, India. I thought this would



be a safe way to "dip my toe in" so to speak. However, to be honest, once we arrived it felt like I'd dived in head first.

In June 2019, I will be going on my first ever solo mission trip to a theological college in Sri Lanka. I will spend three months in that beautiful country hoping to learn more of what God is doing globally within Christian mission work and what that's actually got to do with me.

My blog is a way for me to keep people up-to-date with all things

mission, from my training, mentoring and support (provided by the lovely Encounter Worldwide team). It will also be a way for me to share any anxieties I have or any travel hacks. If you're a praying person, please keep me in your prayers as I continue this awesome journey with God.

We look forward to hearing more about Louis's adventure over the coming months.

Check out Louis's blog at <https://travelswithtreggers.weebly.com/>

His fundraising page is at <https://www.gofundme.com/zetnmr-mission-trip-to-sri-lanka>

If you're interested in finding out more about the Encounter Worldwide programme, go to <https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/our-work-worldwide/world-church/overseas-opportunities/encounter-worldwide/>

## Asia Bibi released

Good news and a call to action from M. Joseph Francis, the National Director of the Centre for Legal Aid, Assistance and Settlement (CLAAS) in Pakistan

I am writing this letter with great joy and happiness. I want to thank each and every one of you for your efforts, contributions and most importantly your prayers for the safety and release of Asia Bibi.

After nine long years seeking to prove her innocence, Asia is free. The Supreme Court's landmark judgment has affirmed our trust in our judiciary.

### Our battle is not over

At CLAAS we know that our battle is not over until everyone charged under the Blasphemy Law is released. We're hopeful that this judgment will lay a precedent and the Judges in Lower and High courts will also deliver judgments on merit.

Furthermore, we must not stop talking about the misuse of this law and the threat it poses to people in

general. More than ever we need all the progressive voices to influence the present government to make procedural amendments to stop its abuse.

Once again thank you for your continuous support and encouragement to continue our mission for the protection and promotion of human rights in Pakistan.

## Winter in Jerusalem

### Deacon Angleena Keizer gives an update on her work at the Methodist Liaison Office

February brought more rain and cold weather in the area. Farmers and agricultural people are always pleased with rain as it refills their cisterns. Sadly, more settlement homes were built, more trees uprooted and more Palestinian homes demolished. The political atmosphere continues to heighten the sensitivities of all people. The upcoming elections in Israel tend to add pressures and stresses all round.



The visit of the Methodist Vice President, Bala Gnanapragasam and his wife, Sylvia

In the midst of all this we have been busy preaching, leading worship and welcoming visitors. This included the visit of the

Methodist Vice President, Bala Gnanapragasam and his wife, Sylvia who came for an official eight day stay. They were taken

around the area to meet our partners and others so they could gain a better understanding of some of the issues here.

## Mission Partner news in brief

**Peter Ensor** gives thanks to God that the political scene in Kenya is now calm after the turbulence which surrounded the general election last year.

Peter says, “We may also praise the Lord for the fresh attempts made by the government of President Uhuru Kenyatta to combat the evil of corruption. This is endemic in so many African countries today.”

He adds, “I would be grateful for your prayers as I go through the process of relocation. They’d be particularly appreciated as I make arrangements for the shipping of

my goods back to UK and start to look for a new home.

“I would also be grateful if you would pray for the theological department I will leave behind. May they find suitable staff members who will be able to deliver the courses I have been teaching during these past five years.”

**Tim and Angela MacQuiban** will be returning home from Rome at the end of July.

Angela says, “People are already asking us what we’ll miss about Rome. We say the food, the

weather, the architecture and of course the history. But above all we’ll miss the many friends we’ve made here, at the church and ecumenically. It’s been a great privilege to spend the last years of our active ministry in such a wonderful city.”

**Val Ogden** has recently returned from her placement at the Pacific Theological College and is now living and working in Lincolnshire. Val says she is humbled and will be forever grateful for the deep and lasting life lessons and overwhelming generosity of many Pacific people.

### New team member

#### Introducing Catherine Hickey who has joined the team as Programme Support Officer

Catherine has a background in international mission and development. She and her husband Martin served as Mission Partners in Nepal for 10 years, then India and Cyprus before returning to London in 2015. She has also worked for CAFOD and Tearfund in roles which have taken her to Asia, Africa and Latin America.

#### Global Missions Fellows

Her new role includes supporting and developing programmes which bring mission personnel from partner churches to work with the Methodist Church in Britain. She will also be helping



to develop the Global Missions Fellows (GMF) programme in Britain and Europe.

This gives young adults from anywhere in the world the opportunity to serve for two years on social justice programmes linked to Methodist congregations. It aims to connect the Church in mission and develop leaders committed to building just communities and a peaceful world.

Is your church, circuit or district interested in receiving a Global Missions Fellow, or other mission personnel, to join you in your local mission in Britain? If so, please contact Catherine at: [hickeyc@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:hickeyc@methodistchurch.org.uk)

## RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES

### Church twinning

A growing number of churches and circuits are building twinning links with Methodist Partner Churches around the world. Their aim is to share and learn in mission, understanding, culture and worship across Methodist communities – together.

#### Mutually beneficial links

Are you interested in developing a twinning link with a church or circuit in another country? If so, take a look at our new guidelines document on our website. It's been specially designed to

support you in thinking through, developing and establishing a link that is mutually beneficial.

If you already have a twinning link, it would be great to hear how things are going. Tell us what has been shared and learnt in your efforts to understand and strengthen God's mission around the world.

Our new guidelines could help you on your journey, both in developing a new link but also perhaps in invigorating an established one.

Learn more now by downloading our twinning guidelines [www.methodist.org.uk/media/8088/church-twinning-guidelinesdocx.pdf](http://www.methodist.org.uk/media/8088/church-twinning-guidelinesdocx.pdf)

You can also get in touch with the World Church Relationship team by emailing us at: [gr.admin@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:gr.admin@methodistchurch.org.uk)

## Asia Sunday 2019

Asia Sunday is observed on the Sunday before Pentecost. This year it falls on 2 June.

Member churches and councils of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), as well as churches and ecumenical partners around the world, observe Asia Sunday annually. It's an occasion to offer special prayers and organise worship services with a focus on the Asia Sunday theme.

CCA General Secretary, Dr. Mathews George Chunakara stated, "The consequences and impacts of statelessness and human trafficking are enormous. The Christian response must be to address these

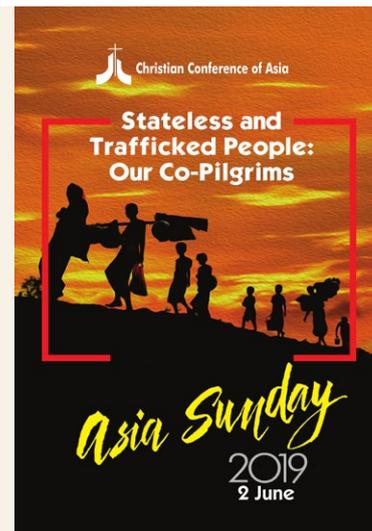
contemporary problems of dehumanisation with urgent priority.

### Rampant rise of inequality

"There are numerous issues linked to statelessness and human trafficking as well as to the movement of people within and beyond borders. These include the rampant rise of inequality, ethnocentrism, racism, violence and extreme nationalism.

"All these dehumanising factors are increasingly evident in Asia. They are degrading the image of God and the basic dignity deserved by every human being.

"It is important for the churches in Asia to be concerned about



migrants, trafficked and stateless. They are our co-pilgrims and sojourners, intimately connected or interdependent in our human family."

For Asia Sunday worship resources, please download:

- [Asia-Sunday-2019 \(Word format\)](#)
- [Asia-Sunday-2019 \(PDF format\)](#)

## Would you like a speaker for a World Church event or service?

If you would like to invite a speaker to your event, please get in touch with Carolyn Lawrence at Global Relationships.



You can email her at: [lawrencec@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:lawrencec@methodistchurch.org.uk)



Methodists for World Mission

## MWM World Mission Conference

31 May – 2 June 2019

The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire

## CHINA'S MISSION TO THE WORLD

For more information and booking details:

Email: [bookings@mwm.org.uk](mailto:bookings@mwm.org.uk)

Website: [www.mwm.org.uk](http://www.mwm.org.uk)

# PRAYER POINTS



Pray for the church in Algeria. Pray for charities such as SAT-7 broadcasting Christian programmes. Pray for people who live in strong opposition to their family. Pray for the Algerian government to respond to churches that have done everything required by law to legalise their places of worship.

Pray for the church across the world celebrating Easter. Pray that they may be a witness to all around them of the new life to be found in Jesus.

Pray for all of our Mission Partners who are either moving to new appointments this year or returning to the UK at the end of their placements.

Pray that fresh attempts to quell corruption in Kenya will have some long-term effects in reducing its incidence. Also pray that this will raise the level of awareness of its moral unacceptability and damaging economic impact among the Kenyan population as a whole.

Remember Tiana our Encounter Worldwide volunteer in Argentina and Louis as he prepares to go to Sri Lanka.

Pray for Asia Bibi as she adapts to life outside prison and for all those still incarcerated for their beliefs.

Remember the families and victims of the Brumadinho Dam disaster as they seek to rebuild their lives.