

**“FOR CHRIST
IS OUR PEACE”
EXPLORING
JUST PEACE
WITH JESUS**

**A SIX-SESSION STUDY
ON PEACEMAKING IN
TIMES OF CONFLICT**

**WITH REFLECTIONS FROM ACROSS
THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION**

CONTENTS

Introduction.....1

Making the most of
this Study Guide2

Session one

Jesus and the
Samaritan Woman3

Session two

Jesus Honours a
Syrophoenician
Woman's Faith9

Session three

The Parable of the
Persistent Widow15

Session four

Jesus and Zacchaeus
the Tax Collector21

Session five

What does the Empty
Tomb mean for us?27

Session six

On the Road to
Emmaus33

INTRODUCTION

“For Christ is our peace” writes the author to the Ephesians (Ephesians 2:14). What does it mean to follow this Christ in a world marked by ‘un-peace’ where we have seen the escalation of war, violence and greed - all of which threaten the sanctity of human life and the integrity of God’s creation?

Seeking peace today entails striving for justice. History has proved time and again that devoid of justice, peace remains both shallow and hollow, lacking in depth as well as substance. Therefore, this Study Guide explores the idea of *Just Peace* as providing a shape for Christian discipleship. The concept of *Just Peace* emerges from the biblical vision of justice and peace embracing each other (cf. Psalm 85:10). It reiterates that without justice peace remains cosmetic and incomplete. Justice is understood as the seedbed on which peace should be cultivated to bear fruits of hospitality, healing, and hope.

Only if justice is at its core can peace be understood in terms of flourishing, marked both by the restoration of right relationships as well as deep reconciliation. The idea of *Just Peace* helps us to understand justice in terms of ‘undoing’ systems and structures which contribute to division, destruction, deprivation and damage on a scale that is death-dealing. It is about partnering with the risen Christ, who bears the scars of crucifixion, in proclaiming (through word and deed) that the crucifying-powers of our time will not have the last say and that life will arise amidst death. This task however is not an easy one.

The reflections shared by our various contributors bear witness to the various ways in which *Just Peace* finds its expression in the lived mission of our partner churches. The challenges are varied – racial prejudice, economic and ecological injustice, political instability and gender inequality. Yet, amidst these challenges the courageous witness of the churches in trying to ‘bring down the crucified from their crosses’ (to use a phrase from Latin American Liberation Theology) and heal a groaning creation comes through.

The Revd Canon Dr Peniel Rajkumar, Global Theologian and Director of Global Mission, USPG

MAKING THE MOST OF THIS STUDY GUIDE

1. Commit to attending all six sessions, which can be held weekly during Lent, or at any other significant time in your church calendar. Alternatively, use the sessions to create a reflective day focused on exploring just peace with Jesus. This guide is adaptable for various needs, including individual reflection, on a weekly or monthly schedule.

2. If you are using this as a group – try and commit to the whole course. The more you can attend, the more you will benefit and the more it will maintain the continuity of the group.

3. Begin each study with a time of silence to help centre and recall God's presence. This might look like five to ten minutes of silence followed by a simple prayer.

4. Commit to sharing honestly and to listening without judgement or trying to 'fix' someone else's reflection. Seek to create a safe atmosphere in which people feel able to share openly. Remember, none of us has all the answers. Our aim is to be authentic and whole - not perfect!

5. In your first session you may want to spend 10-15 minutes discussing your groups guidelines and boundaries as to how you want your time together to work. You could write these down so that the group can refer to them when necessary.

6. Before every session consider the following - what is going on in your community, what are the things you are talking about that you'd like to bring to this study and dialogue?

7. Recognise that everyone's life and faith journey is unique and valuable. Strive to accept one another and the experiences shared.

8. Give space for everyone to speak. If you are someone who tends to share a lot, remember to leave space for others who find it harder to share.

9. Remember that religious and theological words can mean different things to different people. Share your perspective and allow others to hold different perspectives.

10. Commit to act. Each week you will discuss, reflect, pray and act. By changing your habits and raising funds for the world church you will become part of something that is beyond your community and make a real difference.

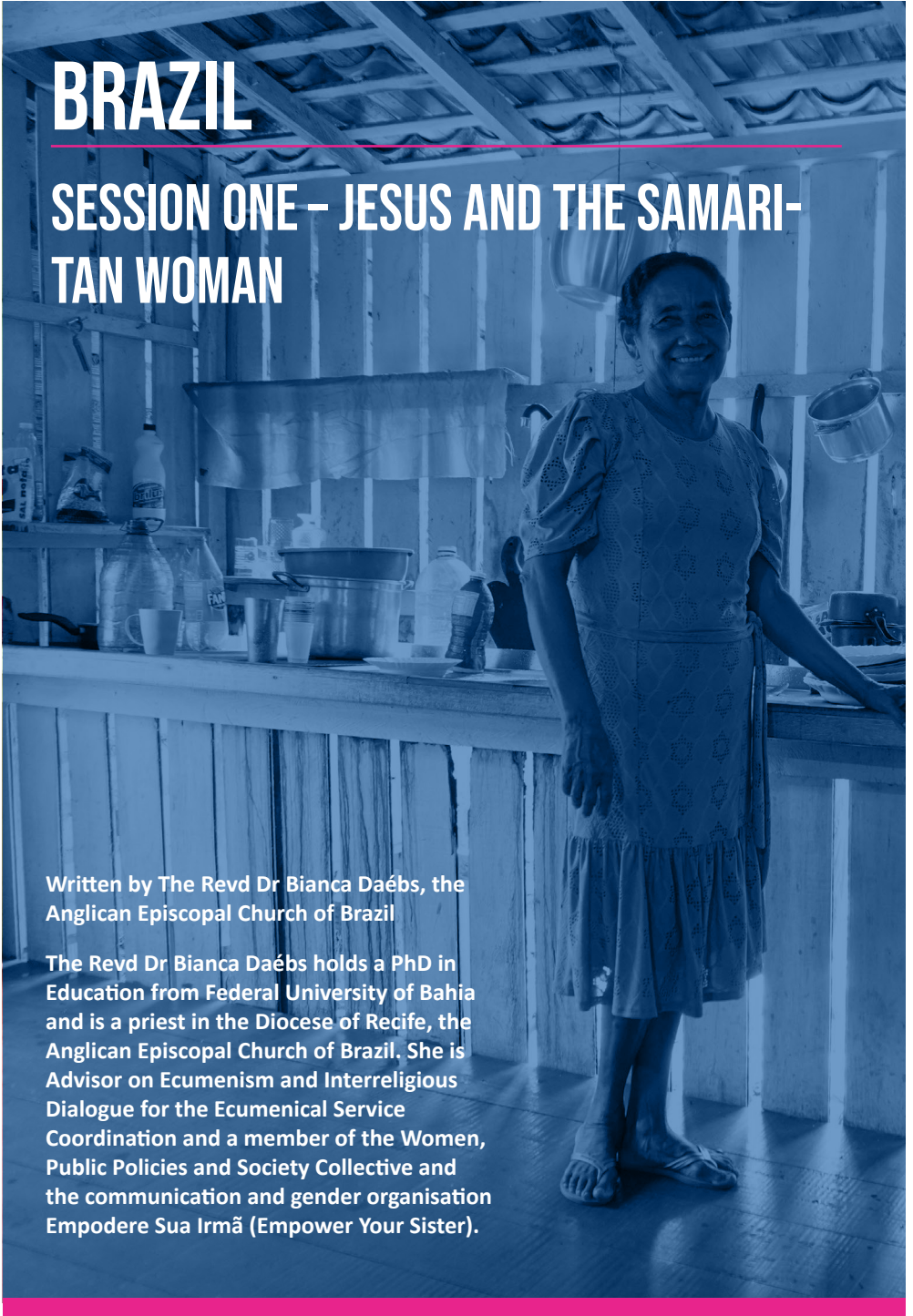
11. Close each session in prayer.

BRAZIL

SESSION ONE – JESUS AND THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

Written by The Revd Dr Bianca Daébs, the Anglican Episcopal Church of Brazil

The Revd Dr Bianca Daébs holds a PhD in Education from Federal University of Bahia and is a priest in the Diocese of Recife, the Anglican Episcopal Church of Brazil. She is Advisor on Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue for the Ecumenical Service Coordination and a member of the Women, Public Policies and Society Collective and the communication and gender organisation Empodere Sua Irmã (Empower Your Sister).



THE ANGLICAN EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF BRAZIL

Brazil is a country of exuberant beauty and profound cultural diversity - but it also bears historical scars that still mould its social reality. Colonisation left deep marks, especially in the structures of power and inequality that persist to this day. Afro-diasporic and indigenous communities face systemic barriers that limit their access to education, health, housing and economic opportunities.

In the religious context, the churches in Brazil have played an ambiguous role: on the one hand, they have been complicit in colonial and exclusionary structures; on the other, it has also been a space of resistance, transformation, education, freedom and welcome.

Today, Brazil is experiencing growing religious diversity,

with the strengthening of evangelical churches, Afro-Brazilian religions and interfaith movements seeking social justice and inclusion. Many faith communities have taken a stand against racism, gender violence and social exclusion, although there are still internal tensions and theological and pastoral challenges.



**Where do you
get that living
water?**

John 4:11

BIBLE READING

JOHN 4:1-26

¹Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard, ‘Jesus is making and baptizing more disciples than John’— ²although it was not Jesus himself but his disciples who baptized— ³he left Judea and started back to Galilee. ⁴But he had to go through Samaria. ⁵So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

⁷A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, ‘Give me a drink’. ⁸(His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) ⁹The Samaritan woman said to him, ‘How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?’ (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) ¹⁰Jesus answered her, ‘If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, “Give me a drink”, you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.’

¹¹The woman said to him, ‘Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?’ ¹²Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?’ ¹³Jesus said to her, ‘Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.’ ¹⁵The woman said to him, ‘Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.’

¹⁶Jesus said to her, ‘Go, call your husband, and come back.’ ¹⁷The woman answered him, ‘I have no husband.’ Jesus said to her, ‘You are right in saying, “I have no husband”; ¹⁸for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!’ ¹⁹The woman said to him, ‘Sir, I see that you are a prophet. ²⁰Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.’

²¹Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²²You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him.

²⁴God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.’ ²⁵The woman said to him, ‘I know that Messiah is coming’ (who is called Christ). ‘When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.’ ²⁶Jesus said to her, ‘I am he, the one who is speaking to you.’

REFLECTION

Travelling from Judea to Galilee, Jesus chose an unusual route for Jews of his time: he decided to pass through Samaria, a region avoided because of the deep prejudice against Samaritans. This gesture already revealed a different attitude, as it challenged the social and religious conventions of his time.

On arriving at Jacob's well, in bright sunshine, tired and thirsty, Jesus met a Samaritan woman and humbly asked her for water. The simple act of addressing her in a gentle dialogue was revolutionary: a male Jew not only broke the silence with a Samaritan woman, but also with a woman in a context full of racial, social and religious prejudices.

The woman's reaction shows the weight of these barriers: she was surprised that a Jew would ask her for water. However, Jesus didn't just transgress norms; he turned that encounter into an opportunity to reveal profound truths about grace and the inclusiveness of the Kingdom of God. His gesture, considered scandalous by the standards of the time, reached the woman's heart and became an eternal symbol of love that transcends prejudice.

Just as the Jews of Jesus' time shunned the Samaritans, Brazilian society still bears the marks of a colonial past marked by the enslavement and marginalisation of Afro-diasporic

and indigenous peoples.

Racial prejudice, intertwined with social and gender inequalities, persists as an open wound, demanding concrete responses of justice and reconciliation. Inspired by the example of Jesus, who confronted oppressive structures with love and courage, the Episcopal Anglican Church of Brazil (IEAB) has taken an active role in this transformation.

Guided by the Five Marks of Mission - especially the call to transform unjust structures, challenge violence and promote peace and reconciliation - the IEAB supports initiatives that combat racism and discrimination. Projects such as the Human Rights Radar (supported by USPG), which monitors violations, Curupira (Indigenous and territorial rights Canada-Brazil), aimed at defending indigenous communities, and Empower Your Sister, which empowers women using social networks to confront racial and gender prejudice, are examples of this



The simple act of addressing her in a gentle dialogue was revolutionary

commitment. Through these actions, the Church not only denounces injustices, but also builds alternatives based on solidarity and human dignity.

By following Jesus' example, the IEAB reaffirms its faith in a God who leans towards the marginalised and challenges its children to do the same. Its witness is an invitation to hope: a message that, in Christ,

all barriers can be overcome, and all people are called to a full and just life. Just as the dialogue at the well of Sychar transformed the story of that woman, the Church continues to write stories of transformation, proving that love, when lived radically, is the most powerful force against prejudice and exclusion.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What are the strongest prejudices in my society?
- What prejudices do I still carry inside me?
- How does Jesus inspire me to break down prejudices in order to fulfil the commandment to love your neighbour as yourself?

Why not jot down your thoughts and ideas and share them online by tagging @USPGglobal with the hashtag #JustPeace2026. Let's share and inspire others!



Rev. Cláudio Miranda (right) with Margarida Souza, an Afro-Brazilian artisan and community leader within the Diocese of Amazonia.

PRAYER PROMPTS

- Pray for the people and communities who suffer racism in your society/community
- Pray for migrants and refugees fleeing conflict in hope of a better life
- Pray that God may move you to support the struggles against race and gender prejudice in your society and faith community.

SOUTH AFRICA

SESSION TWO – JESUS HONOURS A SYROPHOENICIAN WOMAN'S FAITH

Written by Dr Thandi Gamedze, Senior
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University of the Western Cape.

THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa is one of the most economically unequal countries in the world. This is extremely visible in Cape Town - the city in which I live. This inequality largely stems from the country's colonial and apartheid history, in which, over the course of around three centuries, land and resources were systematically stolen from the locals by colonial powers, while their labour was extracted to build the colony's wealth.

The church has played a contested role in the country. Parts of it provided the theologies that legitimated and even sanctified colonialism and apartheid, while other parts

of it nurtured movements for liberation. These contestations remain present within the church today – albeit in slightly more nuanced ways.



Photo: Diriye Amey



BIBLE READING

MARK 7:24-29

²⁴From there he set out and went away to the region of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet he could not escape notice, ²⁵but a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet.

²⁶Now the woman was a Gentile, of Syrophoenician origin. She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter.

²⁷He said to her, 'Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs.' ²⁸But she answered him, 'Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.'

²⁹Then he said to her, 'For saying that, you may go—the demon has left your daughter.' ³⁰So she went home, found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

REFLECTION

I must start by being honest – this is a passage of scripture that I have always found difficult. In the present-day context, where political leaders justify genocide by claiming that the targets are ‘human animals’, I find it hard to accept Jesus’ insinuation that those belonging to the Jewish faith were the children of the house, while the Gentiles were dogs.

I won’t attempt to explain or provide an easy answer to this uncomfortable insinuation. Firstly, because I don’t really know how, but secondly, because learning to sit with that which is not comfortable feels like an important aspect of our Christian journey. So we sit with Jesus’ words, and with all the collective memory of how oppressed groups have been likened to animals in our history and present, with the memory of how such labelling has justified the unthinkable, and with the weight of the reality that there is much work remaining to undo all the centuries of dehumanisation of certain groups of people.

Selah.

Jesus’ words, if nothing else, offer an important lens into the dynamics of power operating on the scene. The Syrophoenician woman embodies various intersecting identities which render her less than human according to the context in which she lives.

Within this, the woman’s response to Jesus is particularly powerful. In playing with and into Jesus’ dog metaphor,

she questions the conclusion that Jesus draws (that the dog receiving food means that the children of the house will go hungry) and subverts it, making the point that no one has to go hungry, but that there is enough even for those that have been classified as dogs.

In this regard, she reclaims her power and place in the story of faith, and indeed expands the scope of this very faith, stretching it so that everyone is included. Poignant also is the way that the woman stands in her power, recognising the various limitations that society has placed on her, but refusing to accept them and instead, rewriting a different reality for herself and others that follow in her footsteps.

In speaking about this passage of scripture, some say that it is the only documented argument where Jesus seems to lose. The Japanese biblical scholar Hisako Kinukawa says that Jesus emerges from the encounter as a ‘finally teachable man’, who defies patriarchal norms. For some this is too uncomfortable – Jesus losing an argument and shifting his views in response



Jesus’ words offer an important lens into the dynamics of power operating on the scene.

- but I can live with it. For me, this is what the Way of Jesus is about. The struggle of making material the year of the Lord's favour, the openness to seeing God in places and people that we hadn't realised God inhabits, the intentional listening to those who bear the brunt of the oppressive structures of society and letting ourselves and our faith be shaped and changed by what we hear. The radical nature

of the incarnation is its utter humanness too.

In present day society, where women continue to bear the brunt of patriarchal power structures which refuse to let go easily, may our faith continue to be vulnerable to being shaped and changed by the interventions of the Syrophoenician women of our times.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Who are the "Syrophoenician women" of our time, and what might it look like for us to truly listen and allow their voices to change us?
2. How might aspects of your faith need to change in the light of Jesus' expansive and revolutionary gospel?
3. Do you find the 'outsider' 'insider' dynamic at play in our churches? What can just-peace mean in that context?

Why not jot down your thoughts and ideas and share them online by tagging @USPGglobal with the hashtag #JustPeace2026. Let's share and inspire others!

PRAYER PROMPTS

1. Pray for the people and communities who are being marginalised in their cultures and ask God to change hearts so that all are seen as children who are worthy to receive bread.
2. Pray for open hearts and open minds in our churches and communities so that we can create an environment where all voices are heard and listened to.
3. Pray that our own understanding of God's Word, and the application of our faith, continues to grow as we uncover more about Jesus' teachings.



POLYNESIA

SESSION THREE – THE PARABLE OF THE PERSISTENT WIDOW

Written by the Revd Liliani Havili, Anglican Diocese of Polynesia.

The Revd Liliani Havili was born and raised in the Kingdom of Tonga. She is currently employed by the Anglican Diocese of Polynesia, working at the Diocese's Theological College, St John the Baptist Theological College, in Suva, Fiji.

THE ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF POLYNESIA

The Anglican Diocese of Polynesia, also referred to as Tikanga Pasifika, is one of the three Tikangas within the Province of Aotearoa, New Zealand, and Polynesia. This region is currently facing the pressing challenges brought about by climate change, necessitating a transformation towards a safer and more resilient church.

We are shifting our focus from community vulnerability to actively building resilience within our communities. Working alongside our ecumenical partners, we

advocate for climate justice, resilience, and hope, and commit ourselves to supporting and educating our communities during these challenging times.



BIBLE READING

LUKE 18:1-8

¹Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. ²He said, 'In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. ³In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, "Grant me justice against my opponent."

⁴For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, "Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, ⁵yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming."

⁶And the Lord said, 'Listen to what the unjust judge says. ⁷And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them? ⁸I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?'

REFLECTION

Jesus tells the parable in Luke 18:1-8 of a widow who persistently seeks justice from a judge who "neither feared God nor had respect for people" (v.2). Despite the judge's lack of interest or concern for the widow, her persistence moves him to act. Jesus' emphasis is not only on the "need to pray always and not to lose heart" (v.1) but also the sincere and desperate cries of those who suffer. Unlike the unjust judge, God in Jesus is listening, interceding, and responding with justice.

This message resonates deeply with communities facing the severe impacts of climate change, especially the Pacific Island nations. For these countries, this is an immediate and lived reality. Environmental extremes like tsunamis, earthquakes, cyclones, landslides, floods,

shifting weather patterns, and rising sea levels are transforming daily lives.

Nations like Tuvalu, Kiribati, and the Solomon Islands are losing their lands due to rising seas, erasing history, ancestral memories, and the entire community. Category 4

and 5 cyclones have battered Fiji, Samoa, Vanuatu, and Tonga, destroying homes and sacred burial sites, breaking the connection to identity and heritage. This leads to dislocation, climate displacement, and land loss. Such events create deep personal wounds, highlighting the urgent need for justice, compassion, and hope-driven responses.

Pacific communities embody the widow's perseverance in the parable through their refusal to give up. These island nations continue to cry for justice, not only for themselves but for all of creation. Their resilience is rooted in a spiritual and cultural understanding of the interconnectedness between people and the environment, expressed through concepts like '*fonua*' and the '*moana*.' These are powerful, holistic views that shape the persistent cry for justice and call for world leaders to listen, act, and honour the sacred relationship between humanity and the Earth. The communities whose islands have been wiped out face not only the loss of land but also memories,

stories of ancestors, and cultural experiences.

As we walk together, we do so with hearts, spirits, and strength renewed. The story of the persistent widow calls us to stay steadfast in prayer, courageous and firm in our advocacy and faith. Our cries for justice rise like incense before God. This is a time not only for reflection but for returning: to God, to each other, and reconnecting with creation. It is an opportunity to repent of systems and choices that have caused harm, and to recommit ourselves to walking gently, humbly, and justly upon the Earth.

We do not journey alone. We carry the voices of our ancestors, the strength of our communities, and the hope of future generations, just like the persistent widow. Let our faith not be overwhelmed by the tides and disasters, but increased by believing that God is near through Jesus our just and faithful intercessor, and that he hears our cries and walks with us. He will return to make all things right.



As we walk together, we do so with hearts, spirits, and strength renewed.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Who does the persistent widow represent in today's world, particularly in your own context?
2. What does this parable teach us about God's response to justice compared to the judge's?
3. What does "praying without losing heart" look like in the context of environmental injustice?

Why not jot down your thoughts and ideas and share them online by tagging @USPGglobal with the hashtag #JustPeace2026. Let's share and inspire others!

PRAYER PROMPTS

Use these prayer points to guide your time of prayer

- Let us offer our prayers for communities that are suffering from the impact of climate injustice.
- Pray for a change of heart in leaders and unjust systems. Ask God to move the "unjust judges" of today to act justly and urgently for the sake of creation.
- Pray for our own persistence and courage. Ask for the strength to remain faithful and hopeful and to be a voice for justice and a steward of God's Earth.



INDIA

SESSION FOUR – JESUS AND ZACCHAEUS THE TAX COLLECTOR

Written by The Revd Philip Peacock

The Revd Philip Peacock is an ordained minister of the Church of North India. He currently serves the World Communion of Reformed Churches based in Germany as Executive Secretary for Justice and Witness. His work includes a campaign for just taxation called the Zacchaeus Tax Campaign.

THE CHURCH OF NORTH INDIA

India is a land of many religions. It is also a land with numerous people still continuing to live under poverty. In this land, Christian witness has involved both strengthening interreligious relationships as well as striving for liberation.

Inaugurated in 1970, the Church of North India (CNI) is one of the four United Churches (alongside the Church of South India, the Church of Pakistan, and the Church of Bangladesh) which are part of the Anglican Communion. A majority of India's Christians in general (nearly 75%) are from the marginalised Dalit (previously known as untouchables) and

Adivasi (tribal) communities.

In the CNI this could be even higher. It is therefore a church of the margins. The CNI carries out its mission through education, medical care, pastoral ministry and social transformation. Mission in the context of the CNI is mission from the margins – where the marginalised people are considered the agents of God's mission.



Mission in the context of the CNI is mission from the margins



BIBLE READING

LUKE 19:1-10

¹He entered Jericho and was passing through it. ²A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax-collector and was rich. ³He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. ⁴So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. ⁵When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today.'

⁶So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. ⁷All who saw it began to grumble and said, 'He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner.' ⁸Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, 'Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.' ⁹Then Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost.'

REFLECTION

Luke Chapter 19 recounts the story of a man called Zacchaeus, who is described as a wealthy chief tax collector that encounters Jesus. Jesus visits the man in his house, much to the consternation of the people who accuse Zacchaeus of being a sinner. The text continues to show, as in many other narratives of Jesus, that the encounter changes Zacchaeus.

Tax collectors, toll collectors, and tax farmers were regarded as agents of both the Romans and the Herodians, who were the royal family established by imperial interests. The text further notes that Zacchaeus was short, which is explicitly mentioned and suggests he may have had some form of dwarfism. It is likely, then, that

Zacchaeus was ridiculed for his condition, and, like many disabled individuals both then and now, he would have been shunned by society, blamed for his disability, and looked down upon.

To see Jesus, Zacchaeus climbs up a sycamore-fig tree, and the opposite occurs. Jesus spots him. For someone whom everyone

looks down upon, both because of his size and occupation, Jesus looks up at him. Then he declares that he will stay at his house. The break in the text is significant. Jesus breaks social norms; he breaks the usual posturing. Looking up, he calls him down and then states that he “must stay at his (Zacchaeus’) house.”

The encounter with Jesus prompts justice; he is now moved to give away half of his possessions to those in poverty and four times as much to anyone he has cheated.

Nevertheless, an alternative view exists. Verse 9, which states that Zacchaeus will give away half his wealth and four times the amount to those he has cheated, might also suggest

that Zacchaeus is claiming he is already doing this. The encounter with Jesus does not necessarily transform Zacchaeus but instead offers a chance for him to show what he has already been practising.

This alternative interpretation is also important. It demonstrates that the marginalised Zacchaeus was already setting an example of justice and fairness. The same remains true today, as on the fringes of our society, there are already examples of an alternative economy rooted in care and solidarity, founded on the fair redistribution of wealth for the common good. We should turn away from centres of power and learn from what happens on the margins to foster alternative economic practices.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What forms of economic injustice are prevalent in your part of the world?
2. What examples can we learn from the margins about how we can think of alternative economic models of justice?

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PRAYER PROMPTS

- Pray for people living in poverty without access to food or healthcare
- Pray for Faith and other organisations that are working for a just economic system
- Pray for the New International Financial and Economic Architecture (NIFEA) project, a collaborative ecumenical economic justice advocacy project in which USPG is a partner.



MYANMAR

SESSION FIVE – WHAT DOES THE EMPTY TOMB MEAN FOR US?

Written by Archbishop Stephen Than Myint
Oo, Primate and Archbishop of The Church
of the Province of Myanmar

THE CHURCH OF THE PROVINCE OF MYANMAR

Anglican presence in Myanmar can be traced back to 1825 when Anglican chaplains exercised their ministry under British rule. However, the Church of the Province of Myanmar was formed in 1970 nine years after the declaration of Buddhism as the state religion and four years after all foreign missionaries were forced to leave the country. Today the church serves about 70,000 Anglicans in the Country.

The church carries out its ministry in the midst of political instability and natural disasters. Since the military coup in 2021, Christians in Myanmar have faced rising violence and tighter

restrictions. Yet the church has been resilient in its witness. The primary focus of the Church's mission has been on evangelism, clergy training, and education.



He is not here;
He has risen!

BIBLE READING

LUKE 24:1-12

¹But 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.

REFLECTION

On that first Easter morning, the women came to the tomb with spices in their hands and sorrow in their hearts. But what they found changed everything—the stone was rolled away, and the tomb was empty. *“Why do you look for the living among the dead?”* the angels asked.

“He is not here; He has risen!” (Luke 24:5–6). This proclamation is the foundation of our hope as Christians. But what does the empty tomb mean for us today?

For the Anglican Church in Myanmar, the resurrection is not

an abstract theological truth. It is a lived reality—a source of hope amidst hardship, a sign of life in the face of despair, and a call to unity in the midst of conflict. In a nation plagued by political unrest, economic collapse, and armed conflict since the military coup of 2021, we know what it means to approach the tomb in grief. Many have experienced loss—of loved ones, homes, freedoms, and dreams. Yet, in the face of death and violence, the empty tomb stands as a defiant testimony that death does not have the final word.

Through our witness and solidarity, the Anglican Church in Myanmar seeks to embody this resurrection hope. Local churches provide food, shelter, and prayer within IDP Camps (Internally Displaced Persons Camps). In war-torn regions, clergy and lay leaders serve as peacemakers and voices of compassion. Amid fear and oppression, our congregations continue to gather—sometimes in secret, often in simplicity, but always in faith. These actions are our way of proclaiming, “He is risen”, not just with words, but with lives laid down in love.

In such a context, Christian unity becomes not just a theological ideal but a survival necessity. When believers come together across ethnic, cultural, and diocesan boundaries—sharing what little they have, praying for one another, and standing together in suffering—they testify to the power of the risen Christ. Unity in Christ is not uniformity, but a deep sense of

shared purpose and shared hope. In Myanmar, it often takes the form of joint prayer gatherings, cross-diocesan relief efforts, and ecumenical solidarity with other Christian bodies.

The empty tomb reminds us that peace—shalom—is not the absence of conflict, but the presence of Christ. It is found in broken bread, open arms, and courageous witness. Our solidarity as a church is rooted not in our own strength but in the victory of Christ over death. Our hope is not naïve optimism, but a living hope grounded in the reality that Christ is alive, and therefore nothing is impossible with God.

So in this season, as we reflect on the empty tomb, may we in Myanmar and across the Communion be renewed in our commitment to witness boldly, love sacrificially, and stand together in hope. For Christ is risen—and that changes everything.



peace – shalom
– is not the
absence of
conflict, but
the presence
of Christ.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. In what ways does the reality of the empty tomb challenge or transform the way you respond to suffering and injustice in your own context?
2. How can you participate more deeply in acts of solidarity and unity within the body of Christ—especially across cultural, ethnic, or denominational boundaries?
3. How can the presence of the risen Christ reshape your understanding of peace—not as absence of conflict, but as faithful presence in the midst of it?

Why not jot down your thoughts and ideas and share them online by tagging @USPGglobal with the hashtag #JustPeace2026. Let's share and inspire others!

PRAYER PROMPTS

- Pray for the Church in Myanmar—that it may continue to bear faithful witness to the risen Christ amidst suffering, fear, and conflict. Ask God to strengthen the faith of believers, especially those ministering in dangerous or displaced contexts.
- Pray for unity and solidarity among Christians—across dioceses, ethnic groups, and denominations. May the Church be a visible sign of resurrection hope through shared prayer, mutual support, and sacrificial love.
- Pray for peace rooted in Christ's presence—that the people of Myanmar may experience true *shalom* even in the midst of turmoil. Ask for healing, justice, and the breaking of cycles of violence through the power of the risen Lord.



PALESTINE

SESSION SIX – ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

Written by Kristy Shammas

Kristy Shammas is a Projects Manager at MA'AN Development Center, a Palestinian NGO in Ramallah, where she is currently involved in projects focusing on social and economic empowerment of youth and women. She has a passion for leading initiatives serving marginalised communities and a strong commitment to social justice and advocacy.

Photo: W. Robrecht

THE CHURCH IN PALESTINE

The Church in Palestine is one of the oldest Christian communities in the world. The land itself is the birthplace of Christianity, where the Gospel first took root. From Pentecost onward, Palestinian Christians have borne witness to the love of God revealed in the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Today, however, Palestinian Christians make up only a small minority. Once around 10% of the population in the early 20th century, they now number less than 2% across Israel/Palestine, and even fewer in the West Bank and Gaza. Decades of political instability, military occupation,

war, economic hardship, and restrictions on movement have forced many to emigrate. Yet, despite these hardships, the Church in Palestine continues to embody the example of Jesus and to hold fast to God's dream for the world.



BIBLE READING

LUKE 24: 13-21, 28-35

¹³Now 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.'

²⁸As 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.

REFLECTION

Palestine is a country tormented by decades-long colonialism, political turmoil and economic hardships. It is a persistent

challenge for Christians to remain a beacon of light in a land marked by suffering.

Hardship and uncertainty are

seasons faced by Christians all over the world that bring forth the question of: How do we as Christians overcome and move forward when there is no clear end to the despair and confusion, and how do we accompany others and help them do so on their journeys as well?

The story of the “Road to Emmaus” in Luke 24 is one that perfectly depicts our relationship with the risen Christ and what it truly means for our lives.

Here we have two images to reflect on: the accompaniment of Jesus, and his support and guidance, that serves as an example of servant leadership for us in our ministry whether as individuals or churches; and the image of the disciples and their transformational journey, showing us how to be followers of Christ and to draw near Him in times of despair.

Just like the two disciples, we are often faced with times of grief and confusion; unaware and clueless to the presence of God with us. But God in Christ is right there with us even when we are blinded by the weight of grief, and very often false expectations of his presence and plans for us. We feel let down and uncertain because our own goals and vision are not unravelling as we might have hoped. This is because we

have not fixed our eyes on Him and His will for our lives.

The two disciples had a set idea of Jesus and His mission. They say, “But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel” (v 21). However, Jesus appears to them as one of them, who understands grief. He comes to them as one who accompanies them and as a companion (literally one who shares bread with them). Through Jesus’s accompaniment the disciples are reminded of the suffering Christ and his resurrection. Their eyes are opened afresh to the scriptures, and they are in turn oriented afresh to their purpose and mission, and the Lord’s promises for them. Christ’s co-suffering opens us to a new understanding of the cross we also carry as Christian believers, and the tribulations we will face. It opens our hearts and minds to God’s solidarity in Christ.

As churches we are called to seek others, meet them where they are, and make sure no one is left behind, just as Jesus has done. We then must be open and welcoming to all; and make space to listen to others’ feelings and fears without judgment and then walk with them as Jesus walked with the disciples in helping them better understand the Lord’s teachings and promises.



However, Jesus appears to them as one of them, who understands grief.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What is your own story of the “road to Emmaus”? And how has Christ shown his face to you?
2. What does it mean for those overwhelmed with grief to experience the companionship of the risen Christ?
3. How do we live out the example of Christ and accompany others on their faith journeys as they navigate feelings of loss and despair?

PRAYER

1. Pray for Jesus’s companionship and guidance and for strength to withstand trials and tribulations.
2. Pray for the work of St. Andrew’s Church in Ramallah and the Diocese of Jerusalem in Palestine, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. For sustenance of ministry amid the complex challenges these regions face.
3. Pray for the perseverance of Christian presence in the Holy Land; the steadfastness and resilience of Christian faith amidst the continuation of Israeli occupation and its oppressive policies and practices.
4. Pray for the unity of Church and its integral role in the community.





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ISSN 2631-4959
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