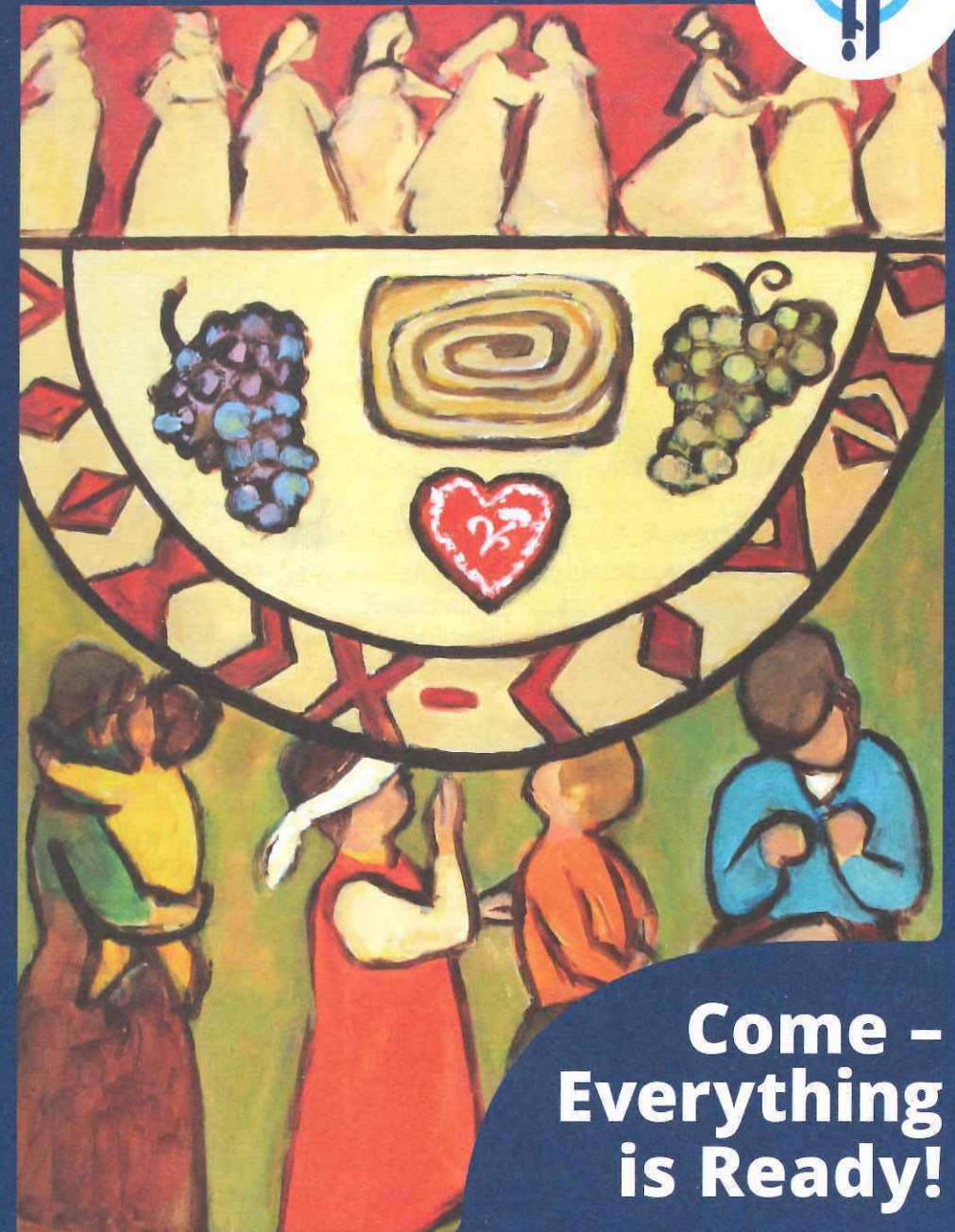


# World Day of Prayer

A WOMEN LED, GLOBAL, ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT

1st March 2019



**Come –  
Everything  
is Ready!**

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Registered Charity No: 233242

PREPARED BY CHRISTIAN WOMEN OF **Slovenia**



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### Front cover artwork designed by Rezka Arnuš



Publication produced by  
Footprint Innovations Limited.

### About the Artist

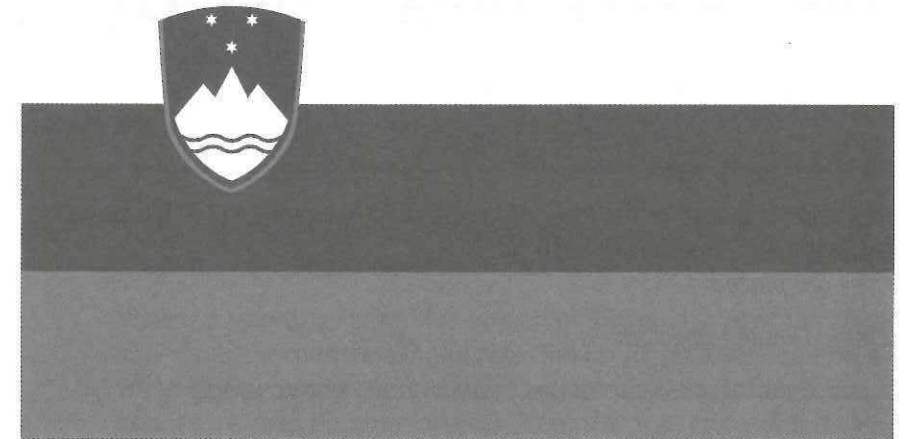
Rezka Arnuš comes from Dolenjske Toplice in Slovenia and originally trained as a physiotherapist. However, deteriorating eyesight forced her to take early retirement and for the last 18 years she has been creating different forms of artwork. Rezka's favourite motifs are landscapes and still life, but lately she has been creating figurines, nudes and abstract paintings. Her special style combines national traditional figures and symbols of inner thoughts and feelings. She has won many awards and prizes and has exhibited in both solo and group exhibitions in Slovenia and abroad; a considerable achievement, and even more remarkable given that she has only 5% normal vision in good light.



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## Introduction

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Welcome to the 2019 World Day of Prayer! As we participate in this service, we will be part of a great wave of prayer encircling the globe – starting as the sun rises over Samoa and ending some 38 hours later back in the Pacific, as the sun sets over American Samoa. We will be praying and sharing with people in over 120 countries and islands around the world.

Each year the service is put together by a different country. This year it has been written by the women of Slovenia, who are relatively new to the WDP movement.

At the heart of the service is an open invitation for all to come to God's table; 'Come – everything is ready!' We hear the voices of some of those coming to the table: wives, mothers and grandmothers, Roma people, refugees and migrant workers. Their stories reflect the political and economic situation of Slovenia from the time it was a socialist-communist state to the present day.

While listening to these stories, we ask forgiveness for being silent in the face of injustice, and we pray that God may open our hearts to compassion and understanding. We leave with a prayer of blessing to mutually support one another on the path of freedom, justice and peace.

We thank the women of Slovenia for this service and pray that it might be both challenging and a blessing for us all.

## The Service

# Come – Everything Is Ready!

### PREPARATION

*A bare table is placed at the front of the worship area with 5 chairs around it (3 set at the back and one at each side).*

*Nearby are placed:*

- *a folded white tablecloth*
- *a vase containing red carnations (real or paper) and rosemary*
- *bread in a bread basket*
- *wine in a majolica (ceramic) jug*
- *water*
- *salt*
- *a ceramic bowl*

*These items will be used to 'lay the table' at the start of the service.*

*More detailed notes to help in the preparation of this service are to be found on p26 of this booklet.*

*giftaid it*

*If you are a UK tax payer and wish to Gift Aid your offering, please use the Gift Aid envelope provided and be sure to fill in all the details.*

### ENTRANCE AND GREETING

*At the beginning of the service Slovenian folk music or the Moj Psalm is played during which 2 or 3 people come forward and set the table as for a meal. The 5 women (Marjeta, Mojca, Marija, Ema and Natasha) are then welcomed and invited to come and sit at the table.*

**Leader:** *DOBER DAN!* (Doh-ber dan – Good day) or *DOBER VEČER!* (Doh-ber veh-cher – Good evening).

Warmest greetings from the women of Slovenia, one of the smallest and youngest countries in Europe. God in his goodness endowed us with natural beauty: from the Pannonian plains to rolling hills; from green forests to high mountains; from the mysterious Karst caves to the coast of the Adriatic Sea.

Come – everything is ready! Let us praise God together.

**HYMN** *Tune: Lasst uns erfreuen. Metre: LM and alleluias*

From all that dwell below the skies  
Let the Creator's praise arise:  
Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Let the Redeemer's name be sung  
Through every land, by every tongue.

*Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Alleluia!*

Eternal are Thy mercies, Lord;  
Eternal truth attends Thy word:  
Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Thy praise shall sound from shore to shore  
Till suns shall rise and set no more.

*Alleluia! Alleluia!...*



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In every land begin the song;  
To every land the strains belong.  
Alleluia! Alleluia!  
In cheerful sounds all voices raise,  
And fill the world with loudest praise.

*Alleluia! Alleluia!*  
*Alleluia! Alleluia!*  
*Alleluia!*

Isaac Watts (1674–1748)

### CALL TO PRAYER

**Reader 1:** God of history, for eleven centuries people in Slovenia have known you. As Christians we have affirmed your love, and we give you glory, honour and praise.

**All:** **We praise you with the sound of waterfalls and the waves of the sea; in our fruitful vineyards and fields, green forests and snow-capped peaks.**

**Reader 1:** Jesus Christ, Son of God, whose word works wonders among us, you inspire us to loving action.

**All:** **We praise you in nature, in birds singing and wild game calling, and in the villages and cities, with the sound of the organ, accordion, guitars and zither.**

**Reader 1:** O Holy Spirit, with your gifts you bring us together in unity despite our differences.

**All:** **We thank you for the relationships which you build among us; in your hands we place the future of young people, the hopes of families, and the acceptance of our elders.**

**Reader 1:** Welcoming God, in your love you have prepared a table for all and you inspire us to open our hearts and our homes to those who are not yet at the table.

**All:** **We praise and thank you and proclaim the Kingdom of Love in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

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**HYMN** *Tune: Ode to Joy. Metre: 87 87D*

Sing to God new songs of worship:  
All His deeds are marvellous;  
He has brought salvation to us  
With His hand and holy arm:  
He has shown to all the nations  
Righteousness and saving power;  
He recalled His truth and mercy  
To His people Israel.

Sing to God new songs of worship:  
Earth has seen His victory;  
Let the lands of earth be joyful  
Praising Him with thankfulness:  
Sound upon the harp His praises,  
Play to Him with melody;  
Let the trumpets sound His triumph,  
Show your joy to God the King!

Sing to God new songs of worship:  
Let the sea now make a noise;  
All on earth and in the waters  
Sound your praises to the Lord:  
Let the hills be joyful together,  
Let the rivers clap their hands,  
For with righteousness and justice  
He will come to judge the earth.

Words: ©Michael Baughen/Jubilate Hymns, copyrightmanager@jubilatehymns.co.uk. Used by permission.

### WOMEN'S VOICES

**Leader:** Let us listen to the experiences of some Slovenian women. With them, let us reflect and pray. First we hear from Marjeta (*Mar-yeta*) who was born at the end of the Second World War when her country was a part of Yugoslavia, a Marxist socialist republic.

**Marjeta:** I was taught to pray by my widowed mother and grandmother who shared their faith with me. At that time our country was a socialist-communist state. Religious people were considered second-class citizens, and when I finished secondary school I could not get a

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student grant and had no other source of funding to allow me to study. I went abroad, as did many other workers from the former Yugoslavia. In Switzerland I found a job, but I felt very strongly about how foreign workers were looked upon. After retiring, my husband and I returned home. I am very happy that my former parish has welcomed us into the community. I try to share my happiness by volunteering in the parish and also by participating in the World Day of Prayer.

**Reader 1:** We Slovenes have experienced what it means to be refugees and migrant workers. At the end of the Second World War many had to leave the country, either because of opposition to Communism or to find work abroad, so that families could survive. We have to confess that now we tend to forget this experience when it comes to our attitudes towards people who have had to leave their own ruined homes in search of peace and a better life.

**All:** **Merciful God, forgive us when we stop ourselves from speaking out in the face of injustice.**

#### **INSTRUMENTAL: Le mi**

**Leader:** Let us listen to Mojca (*Moy-tsa*), who grew up in the newly established Slovenia after independence in 1991.

**Mojca:** I am thirty-four years old. I was able to access higher education, which in Slovenia is free of charge. When I was twenty-one, I fell in love and got pregnant, but my boyfriend left me. It was very difficult to continue my studies, but I received support from my family and was among the best students in my class. I raised my child, and had a second with my husband, who accepted my first son as his own. I am now a researcher in a scientific institute. I wish, however, that the balance between family care and work could be more favourable to families and less restrictive to women in the workplace. In spite of full legal equality, women still have to bear a double burden.

**Reader 1:** We give thanks for all those women who have overcome barriers to raise their children in the midst of adversity. We thank you, God, for those communities that surround women and children with love.

**All:** **Thank you, loving God.**

#### **INSTRUMENTAL: Le mi**

**Leader:** Let us listen to Marija (*Maria*), who is over eighty and lives in the countryside.

**Marija:** I live with my son's family. My son and daughter-in-law are unemployed and we rely on my modest pension, from the factory where I used to work, to sustain us. It helps that we are able to produce food for our own use on our small farm. However, my neighbour is not so fortunate. Her children moved to the city to find jobs, leaving her alone in a big house, with a farm she is no longer able to maintain and manage.

**Reader 1:** We recognise that in many places ageing parents and elderly people are not receiving the care and attention they deserve. They feel isolated and in need of mutual encouragement and togetherness. We should develop initiatives for intergenerational cooperation. Our grandmothers and grandfathers have helped to keep our Christian faith alive, for which we are grateful.

**All:** **Thank you, caring Creator.**

#### **INSTRUMENTAL: Le mi**

**Leader:** Let us listen to Ema, a forty-year old mother of two, whose life has been greatly affected by alcoholism.

**Ema:** I was born into a family where my father was often drunk and violent, and my mother also drank. I swore that my children would never suffer like that and that's why I never drink alcohol. I got married and we built a house. We have two children who are now in school. Then my husband lost his job because his company had gone bankrupt and he began to drink. He became violent with me and the children. I didn't know what to do. I didn't like to bring my children home to see a drunken father, even if he was very affectionate to them when he was sober. He would promise me almost anything then, but he wouldn't agree to go and get help. With confidence, I pray to God that my husband will face his addiction and our lives will improve.

**Reader 1:** We have neglected to recognise the disruptive effects of alcohol in our personal lives. Sometimes, it causes both adults and children to become victims of violence. We pray for young people who, like adults, are using alcohol to enjoy themselves or to cope with stress. Lord, we pray for all families who face alcoholism and alcohol abuse. May all hear and joyfully accept the invitation to your banquet.

**All:** **God, open our hearts; make us more compassionate and understanding.**



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## **INSTRUMENTAL: Le mi**

**Leader:** Let us listen to Natasha, who belongs to the Roma ethnic minority.

**Natasha:** I am forty-six years old, married, with two children. I spent my childhood with a loving and caring family in a Roma village. Both my parents had jobs, which allowed us to grow up in a carefree environment and to have a good education. Our Roma village was accepted by the large community around us, and I almost never experienced rejection because of my ethnicity. However, my family's experience does not fully reflect the social and economic situation of the Roma people in Slovenia or Europe. Many of them live in impossible conditions, with no running water or electricity in their homes. Access to school is limited and Roma children are often mocked and excluded. They are not able to obtain a good education, which affects their job prospects and their ability to free their family from poverty.

**Reader 1:** We confess, O God, that social exclusion is current in our society. We find it hard to accept otherness, believing our way of life to be the measure of how everyone should live and we are very quick to exclude.

**All:** **Lord, have mercy on us.**

**Reader 1:** Thank you, God, for those who are respectful and open-minded, as Jesus was. Thank you for those who do not tire of embracing excluded and marginalised people, thus enabling them to develop their self-esteem.

**All:** **Loving Father, stand beside us in our efforts.**

## **INSTRUMENTAL: Le mi**

### **CONFESSION AND PRAYER FOR FORGIVENESS**

**Leader:** We confess our faults, merciful God. We have so many that we cannot even count them.

**Reader 1:** We are your beloved children, God. See our tears and the repentance in our hearts! Because of your forgiveness, we dare to hope for a new day when all will build relationships based on justice, peace, and love.

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**SONG** God forgave my sin in Jesus' name,  
I've been born again in Jesus' name;  
And in Jesus' name I come to you  
To share His love as He told me to..

*He said: 'Freely, freely, you have received,  
Freely, freely give;  
Go in My name, and because you believe  
Others will know that I live.'*

All power is given in Jesus' name,  
In earth and heaven in Jesus' name;  
And in Jesus' name I come to you  
To share His power as He told me to.

*He said: 'Freely, freely...'*

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### **WORD OF GOD**

**Leader:** While reflecting on the one hand our relationship with God and on the other hand our relationships in our community, let us hear Jesus' parable from Luke's Gospel, chapter 14.

**Reader 2:** One of the dinner guests, on hearing this, said to him, "Blessed is anyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!" Then Jesus said to him, "Someone gave a great dinner and invited many. At the time for the dinner he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for everything is ready now.' But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of land, and I must go out and see it; please accept my regrets.' Another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please accept my regrets.' Another said, 'I have just been married, and therefore I cannot come.' So the slave returned and reported this to his master.

Then the owner of the house became angry and said to his slave, 'Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.' And the slave said, 'Sir, what you ordered has been done, and there is still room.' Then the master said to the slave, 'Go out into the roads and lanes, and compel people to come in, so that my house may be filled. For I tell you, none of those who were invited will taste my dinner.'"

*Luke 14:15-24*

## Come Along, The Feast is Ready

Aine Pedersen

Unknown, Slovene folk song Kaj boš, Janko, jutri dela!

♩ = 116

Come a-long, the feast is read-y Je - sus calls Come a-long the ta-ble's all set,

God in - vites

1.Sor-ry but I	bought a new field	I can't	come
2.Sor-ry, I just	bought some ox - en	I can't	come,
3.Sor-ry, but I	just got mar-ried,	I can't	come
4.Lis-ten, can't you	see we're bu - sy	We can't	come

Sor - ry but I	must in - spect it	Count me	out
Sor - ry, I must	set them ploough-ing,	Count me	out.
Sor - ry, I can't	leave my new wife	Count me	out.
Tell your Boss to	keep his Din - ner,	Count us	out!

**SONG** See music opposite

*Come along the feast is ready, Jesus calls.  
Come along the table's all set, God invites.*

Sorry, but I bought a new field, I can't come.  
Sorry, but I must inspect it. Count me out.

*Come along ....*

Sorry, I just bought some oxen, I can't come.  
Sorry, I must set them ploughing. Count me out.

*Come along ....*

Sorry, but I just got married, I can't come.  
Sorry, I can't leave my new wife. Count me out.

*Come along ....*

Listen, can't you see we're busy, we can't come.  
Tell your boss to keep his dinner. Count us out!

*Come along ....*

Words and folk song adaptation by Aine Pedersen Lee  
Slovene folk song: Kaj boš, Janko, jutri dela!

## PROCLAIMING THE GOOD NEWS

### REFLECTION

Based on the artwork by Rezka Arnuš See p18



**SONG** *Tune: Scarlet Ribbons. Metre: 87 87 D*

If we claim to love our neighbour  
while the hungry queue for food,  
are we prey to self-deception?  
Is perception quite so crude?  
If we sit beside our neighbours,  
begging for the things they need,  
we might share their own injustice  
in a world that thrives on greed.

If we punish those with nothing,  
blaming them for where they stand,  
is this love of friend or neighbour,  
do we still not understand?  
Love of neighbour is not easy,  
cuts us till we feel the pain,  
sharing hurt that they are feeling  
till they find new life again.

Love of neighbour sets us squarely  
in the place where they now sit,  
till the richness God has given  
builds a pearl around the grit;  
till each person shares the comfort  
of the love of which we preach,  
till we live as fact the Gospel:  
none can be beyond love's reach.

**Andrew Pratt**

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**OFFERING**

**Leader:** The World Day of Prayer is a worldwide, ecumenical, women-led movement. Each year we admire the strength of the communities who participate, empathize with their concerns, and are encouraged by their faith.

Our vision is a world in which all women can make decisions about their own lives. As we move forward we look for signs of encouragement and solidarity. Our offering today is one of these signs as it will be used to strengthen communities throughout the world by supporting programmes which enable women and children to have a better quality of life.

*As the offering is taken, the song Daritev is played and a red carnation, signifying celebration, is given to each member of the congregation. See note on p27.*

**DEDICATION OF OFFERING**

**Leader:** Gracious God, we thank you for all the gifts you have given to us and for the vision that has called us to worship and prayer today. May these gifts we offer be a blessing to those who receive them and may we be true followers of you as we seek to serve others through informed prayer and prayerful action.

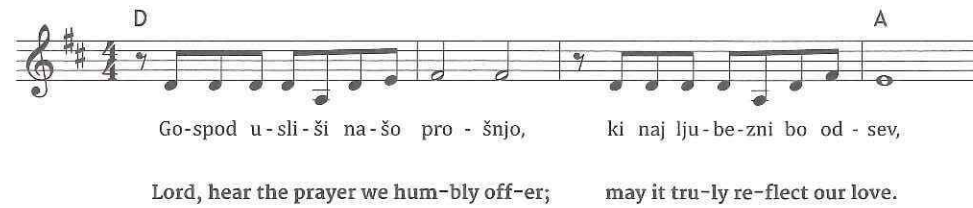
**PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING**

**Reader 1:** O God, we thank you for the Slovenian people who have overcome many difficulties throughout their history and still stand together in strength. Let them be open to others and welcome those who come to them in need.




## Daritev (odpev)

Barbara Wahniz



Go-spod u - sli - ši na - šo pro - šnjo, ki naj lju - be - zni bo od - sev,  
Lord, hear the prayer we hum - bly off - er; may it tru - ly re - flect our love.



naj se iz - pol - ni tvo - ja vo - lja, naj vsr - cu ču - tim njen od - pev.  
Your kingdom come, your will be done, Lord; your song be felt with - in our hearts.

### SONG Daritev chorus

Lord, hear the prayer we humbly offer;  
may it truly reflect our love.  
Your kingdom come, your will be done, Lord;  
your song be felt within our hearts.

Original words and music: Barbara Wahniz. English paraphrase: Kathleen Skinner  
© Copyright: Barbara Wahniz.

**Reader 1:** O God, we thank you for countries that are establishing democracy.  
Help us to build solidarity around the world, across communities,  
homes and nations.

**SONG** Lord, hear the prayer we humbly offer;  
may it truly reflect our love.  
Your kingdom come, your will be done, Lord;  
your song be felt within our hearts.

**Ema:** O God, we thank you for instilling in us the attitude of sharing so  
all can have enough to eat, access to health care and social security.  
Help us to be more attentive to the spiritual needs of those around us  
and to be supportive of those in difficult situations.

**SONG** Lord, hear the prayer we humbly offer;  
may it truly reflect our love.  
Your kingdom come, your will be done, Lord;  
your song be felt within our hearts.

**Mojca:** O God, we thank you for free education and the opportunity to  
study abroad. We call for the leaders of our countries to recognise  
the universal right of the child to receive a good education, either  
at home or abroad. May that education lead to jobs which enable a  
peaceful future for our families and countries.

**SONG** Lord, hear the prayer we humbly offer;  
may it truly reflect our love.  
Your kingdom come, your will be done, Lord;  
your song be felt within our hearts.

**Marija:** O God, we thank you for grandparents who support young families  
by taking care of the grandchildren and sharing their faith. Help us  
to look after the elderly in our communities: to be good to them in  
our nursing homes and in our neighbourhoods.

**SONG** Lord, hear the prayer we humbly offer;  
may it truly reflect our love.  
Your kingdom come, your will be done, Lord;  
your song be felt within our hearts.

**Natasha:** O God, we thank you for the voice and witness of minority  
communities. May the call for justice and inclusion be heard  
in all parliaments. Sustain the refugees and migrants among us.  
Help us to walk with 'the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.'  
May we always hear their cry!

**SONG** Lord, hear the prayer we humbly offer;  
may it truly reflect our love.  
Your kingdom come, your will be done, Lord;  
your song be felt within our hearts.

**Marjeta:** O God, we thank you for helping us to improve ecumenical  
relationships and interfaith cooperation; to learn to respect our  
differences, and to recognise how we have been enriched by our  
interactions with others.

**SONG** Lord, hear the prayer we humbly offer;  
may it truly reflect our love.  
Your kingdom come, your will be done, Lord;  
your song be felt within our hearts.

**Reader 1:** O God, we thank you for your standing invitation to your banquet.  
We thank Jesus for being at the centre of our fellowship and of our  
community around the globe. We thank you for the World Day of  
Prayer movement, through which we find the strength to go out and  
share the concerns, hopes and joys of the women of Slovenia.

**SONG** Lord, hear the prayer we humbly offer;  
may it truly reflect our love.  
Your kingdom come, your will be done, Lord;  
your song be felt within our hearts.

**All:** **O God, you are the one who invites us. You bring us to the same  
table and lead us in the path of life and hope. We are important  
in your eyes; you have called us by name and so, as your beloved  
children, we dare to pray the Lord's prayer:**

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy Name;  
thy kingdom come;  
thy will be done;  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation;  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever.  
Amen.**

#### **DISMISSAL AND BLESSING**

**Leader:** God of all goodness,  
help us to respect the wonders of nature  
and to protect them with all our power.

Help us to respect human life,  
to accept it in its uniqueness  
and to mutually support one another  
on the path of freedom, justice and peace  
as equal members of your family.  
May we be blessed in this endeavour by  
God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

**All:** **Amen**

**HYMN** *Tune: St Clement. Metre: 98 98*

The day thou gavest, Lord, is ended,  
the darkness falls at thy behest;  
to thee our morning hymns ascended,  
thy praise shall sanctify our rest.

We thank thee that thy Church unsleeping,  
while earth rolls onward into light,  
through all the world her watch is keeping,  
and rests not now by day or night.

As o'er each continent and island  
the dawn leads on another day,  
the voice of prayer is never silent,  
nor dies the strain of praise away.

The sun that bids us rest is waking  
our friends beneath the western sky,  
and hour by hour fresh lips are making  
thy wondrous doings heard on high.

So be it, Lord; thy throne shall never,  
like earth's proud empires, pass away;  
thy kingdom stands, and grows for ever,  
till all thy creatures own thy sway.

John Ellerton (1826-1893)

*At the end of the service Slovenian music may be played as the 'guests'  
leave the table and process out.*



## Reflection

*To be read slowly and thoughtfully by the Leader or other chosen person.  
Allow plenty of time in the pauses for people to think and reflect.*

*A picture of Rezka Arnuš's artwork needs to be clearly seen. Either have a projected image on a large screen or ask everyone to turn to the front of their booklet and look at the image there.*

### **Come, everything is ready!**

The invitations have been sent; the meal is prepared; the table is set; the guests are awaited.

But they do not come.  
They all make their excuses.

And so, the invitation goes out to different guests to come and share in the wonderful feast which has been prepared.

### **Come, everything is ready!**

Slovenian artist, **Rezka Arnuš**, was asked to paint something specifically for the 2019 WDP service from Slovenia, based on this story found in Luke's gospel.

Rezka says of her painting: *"I wanted to present two topics: the country of Slovenia and the main biblical story of the worship service"*.

Let's bear that in mind as we look at her artwork and reflect on its message to us.

### **Look briefly at the painting for a few moments.**

What first catches your eye?  
The colours? The food? The people?

**Now look at the picture a little more closely.**

### **Look at the semi circle in the centre.**

It represents a plate or table, elements to be found at any meal, but it's decorated in the style of traditional Slovenian embroidery – signifying that this is a special meal.

*Note: a white cloth embroidered in red is often used for celebrations in Slovenia.*

### **Look carefully at the table.**

It is set for a celebration. It's a table full of good food – food that is typical of Slovenia.

There are:

- grapes (Slovenia is a wine producing country)
- potica (*poticka*) – a national speciality (a sort of doughy cake, rather like a Chelsea bun, with a nut filling)
- Slovenian licitar (*litsitar*) – heart-shaped biscuits, made with honey from Carniola bees and decorated with a carnation (a common Slovenian flower). These biscuits are given as gifts and as an expression of love – often at weddings.

What does the food on the table say to you about God's invitation 'Come, for everything is ready!'?

*Pause for thought.*

Perhaps it is an indication that

- God offers an abundant feast – a celebration.
- It is offered in love.
- It is welcoming.

**Look at the people at the top of the picture.**

Who are they?  
What are they doing?

*Pause for thought.*

- Are they
- Greeting one another?
  - Dancing?
  - Celebrating?

Rezka has depicted the figures as Slovenian women in national dress, wearing traditional lace cap, mob cap and scarf.

What does this part of the painting say to you?

*Pause for thought.*

- Could this part represent
- Those who are originally invited to the celebration?
  - Those whose main focus is getting on with their own lives?
  - Those who are unconcerned about the people below?

*Pause for thought.*

**Now look at the people in the bottom half of the picture.**

Who are these people?  
Where are they positioned?

*Pause for thought.*

Are these people those who are side-lined, on the edges?  
They are placed at the bottom of the picture – and **under** the table.

What does that signify?

Does it remind you of another story in the Bible (*Matt 15:22-28*) – of a conversation between Jesus and a Canaanite woman – of dogs eating the crumbs that have fallen under the table – the leftovers?

**Are these people** the ‘leftovers’ in society – people ‘unseen’, ignored, vulnerable?

*Pause for thought.*

If you are holding a party or celebration – who do you invite?

- Friends?
- Family?
- People you know and like?

*Pause for thought.*

Think of the people you would be **least likely** to invite to a celebration.

- A homeless person?
- A drug addict?
- An alcoholic?
- Someone who has been in prison?
- A person who has a disability which makes communication difficult?

*Pause for thought.*

In the painting, the people underneath and ‘on the edges’ are more prominent than those at the top.



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**What does that say to you about God?**

- That God especially cares for those who are weak and vulnerable?
- That the 'have nots' may be much nearer to God's kingdom than the 'haves'?

The story in Luke ends with a warning to those who were originally invited, that they should not to be complacent. They will be the ones to miss out.

Perhaps it's a warning to us, too, and a reminder that we are **all** God's children – that everyone is valued and that God's kingdom is open to all.

**Come, everything is ready!**

The meal is prepared;  
the table is set;  
all are invited.

**Come, share this feast in the Kingdom of God.**

*Short pause.*

*Ask the congregation to turn to p12 in their booklets for the hymn  
'If we claim to love our neighbour'.*

## Hymn Tune Sources

**Moj Psalm** (can be found on our music CD)

**From all that dwell below the skies** (vv1,2,4) – Isaac Watts

Singing the Faith 75 (v 1,2 only)

Hymns and Psalms 489 (v1,2 only)

Songs of Fellowship 119

Rejoice and Sing 723 (v1,2 only)

Church Hymnary 4th Edition 146 (v1,2 only)

Tune: *Lasst uns erfrauen*. Metre: LM and alleluias

**Sing to God new songs of worship** – Michael Baughen

Songs of Fellowship 1002

Complete Mission Praise 600

Church Hymnary 4th Edition 173

Hymns Old and New 447

Tune: *Ode to Joy*. Metre: 87 87 D

**Le mi** (instrumental – music sheet available)

**God forgave my sin in Jesus' name** – Carol Owens

Singing the Faith 424

Complete Mission Praise 181

Songs of Fellowship 129

Hymns Old and New 167

**Come along, the feast is ready** (printed in booklet. Large music sheet available)

**If we claim to love our neighbour** – Andrew Pratt

Singing the Faith Plus (on web)

Tune: *Scarlet Ribbons* (see *Singing the Faith* 131). Metre: 87 87 D

**Daritev** (printed in booklet. Large music sheet available)

**The day thou gavest**

Available in most hymn books

## SLOVENIAN SONGS

**Daritev (odpev)**

Barbara Wohniz

Go-spod u-sli-ši na-šo pro - šnjo, ki naj lju-be-zni bo od - sev,  
naj se iz-pol-ni tvo-ja vo - lja, naj v sr-cu ču-tim njen od - pev.

**Daritev chorus**

*Slovenian words. Pronunciation guide in italics.*

Go-spod u - sli - si na - so pro - snjo, ki naj lju-be-zni bo od - sev,  
Go-spod oo - sli - shi na - sho prosh-nyo kee nigh lyu-bez-nee bo od - sev,

naj se iz-pol-ni tvo-ja vo - lja, naj v sr-cu cu-tim njen od - pev.  
nigh se iz-pol-nee tvo-ya vo-lya, nigh v se-tsoo choo-tim nyen od - pev.

**Daritev chorus**

*English translation*

God, please hear our prayer,  
which should be the reflection of our love.  
Should your will be fulfilled,  
let me feel your refrain in my heart.

**Le mi** – a song about opening our hearts to God

**Moj Psalm** – a song of praise to God

Note: The Scripture quotation contained herein is from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, Anglicized Edition, copyright © 1989, 1995 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America, and are used by permission. All rights reserved.



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## Notes to help in the preparation of the service

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### BEFORE THE SERVICE

The service starts with Slovenian folk music or the Moj Psalm being played and a table being set, as it would be in a typical Slovenian farmhouse. Various significant items are placed on the table, welcoming the anticipated guests:

- a basket of bread – in differently shaped loaves or rolls, if possible
- wine (or grape juice) in a decorated ceramic jug, as Slovenia is a wine-producing country
- water
- salt – a symbol of the Piran salt-pans found on the Slovenian coast
- a ceramic bowl
- a vase of red carnations and rosemary – a symbol of celebration.

The carnations can be real or made from paper (see our tutorial for making them at [www.wwdp.org.uk](http://www.wwdp.org.uk)). These are to be distributed to everyone during the offering, so make sure you have plenty of flowers in the vase or bowl, with extras easily to hand if you anticipate a large congregation.

Place a folded white tablecloth on or near the bare table and have the other items easily accessible, so that the table can be quickly and efficiently laid. Two or three people will be needed to lay the table. These could be the Leader and the two Readers, or previously chosen members of the congregation.

Place 5 chairs around the table for the 5 women 'guests'.

When the table has been laid, the 'layers' welcome their 'guests' (Marjeta, Mojca, Marija, Ema and Natasha) and invite them to sit at the table.

The table layers then return to their places.

### PARTICIPANTS

Try to reflect the diversity of your community and to be as intergenerational as possible in the choice of readers. The ages of the 5 women range from mid 30s to 80+.

### REFLECTION

The theme of the worship service is the invitation to **'Come – Everything is Ready!'** In the Reflection (which can be found at the end of the service on p18) we are asked to think about the theme and the Bible passage it comes from, and to explore its relevance to us today.

### MUSIC

The Slovenian writing group provided several songs written especially for the service, two of which form an integral part of it. We felt it was right to include these (*Le mi, Daritev*). In some places we have used only the music (*Moj psalm, Le mi*). For *Daritev*,

we have used an English paraphrase, but have included a version in the original language on p25 with a pronunciation guide for congregations who wish to try singing it in Slovene (perhaps using our CD or with a small music group or choir leading).

All the music and songs can be found on our CD, available from the office in Tunbridge Wells.

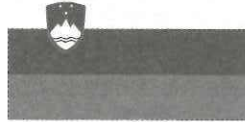
### OFFERING

The Slovenian writers suggest that red carnations are given out as the offering is taken. These could be taken from the table and distributed by the 5 women, or by chosen stewards.

### AFTER THE SERVICE

Why not try out some of the recipes in *Together in Prayer* and serve them with a hot drink after the service? The honey biscuits are particularly good!

## Background information on Slovenia



### Flag

The national flag, adopted in 1991 has three equal red, white and blue horizontal stripes. In the top left corner is the national coat of arms: the triple-peaked Mount Triglav, two blue wavy lines (representing the Adriatic Sea and many rivers) and the golden stars from the coat-of-arms of a 14th century Slovenian dynastic house.



### Geography

Part of former Yugoslavia. Became independent in 1991. Capital is Ljubljana. One of the smallest countries in Europe. Bordered by Italy, Austria, Croatia and Hungary. Mountains, high plains and extensive limestone caves. Short coastline. Climate – mostly temperate but cold winters in mountain areas, and mild in the coastal areas.

### Population

2,000,000. About 50% live in towns, and 28% in capital. Majority of population (82%) are Slovenes, but also Croats, Serbs, Bosnians, Macedonians, Montenegrins and a small number of Roma. Official Language: Slovene, but also Hungarian and Italian for those minorities.

### Religion

Slovene region mainly Christian since 8th Century.

Religious conviction persecuted under Tito's socialist regime.

2002 Census: Roman Catholic (approx. 60%), Orthodox (2.5%), Lutheran (about 1%) and Islam (2.5%).

Islam and Orthodox Churches found mainly in former Yugoslav areas, Lutheran in areas formerly under Hungary.

### Education

Means-tested pre-school education for children from one to six.

Free compulsory primary education six to fifteen.

Over 450 national primary schools, five private schools and 28 schools for children with special needs.

Post 15 focus on vocational, technical or specialised education.

There are 40 higher educational institutions and five universities.

### Environment & biodiversity

Heavily forested. One million trees planted each year. One third of the country is protected national parks.

Rare and endangered species live in the forests and mountains.

Many native birds and a great number of European migrant birds.

Slovene waters rich in fish, freshwater crabs and 'human fish' (white salamander).

Native Carniolan bee valued for its nonaggressive nature, 90,000 bee-keepers.

### Economy

Wealthiest and most politically open of former Yugoslav republics.

Main trading partners: Germany, Italy, Croatia, Austria and France.

Joined EU in 2004, currency is the Euro.

Suffered from financial crisis in 2008, but since 2014 has been improving. Some unemployment, but below European average.

Two thirds of the population are employed in the service sector and one third in industry and construction.

Area dedicated to farming declining. Dairy farming on small family farms. Increasing diversification into homemade produce.

### Timeline





## Health and Social Welfare

Welfare system provides access to health services, social assistance and benefits.

Free health services include: cancer screening, care of the elderly, special needs care, contraceptive and gynaecological services.

Most health care is provided by public institutions, although not everything is totally free.

Free outpatient services, funded by donations, for those without insurance.

Unemployment, homelessness and alcohol abuse are growing problems.

Young people living with parents longer, marrying and having children later, due to low-paid jobs and high-priced housing.

More children being born to unmarried couples.

Paid maternity leave for working women from a month before the birth until the child's first birthday.

Paternity leave possible. Mothers of four or more children may stay at home until the youngest child is ten.

Grandparents increasingly involved in care of grandchildren whilst parents work.

Many grandparents also still work due to low levels of pensions.

More background information about Slovenia can be found in the *Together in Prayer* magazine No. 36.

## Women

Women make up just over half of the population of Slovenia.

Those born after 2000 have an average life expectancy of 82 years.

Same access to education as men, similar numbers of women and men attend universities.

65% of women work. Of those, 92% work full time. Most women work in health and social services.

Women on average earn 7% less than men, except in construction where women's wages are higher.

Child care and housework is still mainly seen as women's role.

World Day of Prayer first held in Slovenia in 2000.

## Food and Drink

Influenced by the landscape, climate, history and neighbouring cultures.

24 different regions and wide variety of cuisine.

In socialist era, country people ate what they produced, mainly vegetables. Meat was only eaten on special occasions.

Today, Slovenia is in the middle of a slow-food, organic food revolution that values original recipes and fresh, quality ingredients.

Some excellent red and white wines and beers, with several mineral water springs.

National dishes include: **Medenjaki** – honey biscuits for special occasions, **Buckwheat-Soba bread** with walnuts, **Struklji** – filled pastry snacks.

## Bible Reflection

# Come – Everything is Ready!

Luke 14:15-24

## Opening Prayer

God of love and justice, you created us in your image, and long for us to share your hospitality. Give us the grace to accept your invitation and the wisdom and generosity to share it with others.

In the name of your Son, Jesus Christ  
Amen

## Setting the Scene

A banquet is a celebration. To the Jews, a shared meal was something very personal, intimate, an act of friendship, and a place of bonding with people. "To share a meal with someone" signified for a Jew "being one with them" and "uniting with them".

The prophet Isaiah speaks of God preparing a banquet on the mountain for all people, at which the veil around the people would be torn asunder (Isaiah 25:6-9).

In Jesus' time it was customary to invite guests to a feast on a particular day without specifying a time until the feast was prepared. Thus the guests knew in advance that "this was the day" of the banquet in the Kingdom of God.

Jesus also announced the Good News by eating with people. Jesus got along with the ones considered sinners in his time. He shared meals with them, healed them and in a special way

restored them to communion with God. You could say that all Jesus' teaching and work was about showing how to prepare for and accept the invitation to the banquet in the Kingdom of God – an invitation to life in all its fullness.

In this passage we can get a foretaste of what Jesus is going to do. It is he who will serve at the banquet and give his body and blood. By sharing the meal we all share in this sacrifice. Therefore, new relationships between people must prevail at this banquet, and in this way the Kingdom of God is made present.

## Explaining Luke 14:23: "and compel people to come in..."

In most Bible translations, the verb "compel" used in verse 23 disturbs people. The verb "compel" used in this extract means to act forcefully, urgently. The Greek verb "*anagkazo*" (translation: oblige, force, invite compellingly) also suggests persevering. This is a metaphor for the kind of insistent hospitality which won't accept a "no".

In the Old Testament there is the famous example of Abraham who, when he was visited by the three men, almost forced them, in the name of hospitality, to stay with him and let him give them a meal (Genesis 18:15). In the New Testament, the Greek verb



used in Luke 14:23 appears also in Luke 24:29: the disciples on the road to Emmaus with the stranger (Jesus) "... they urged him, stay with us..."

This practice, this kind of "pushy hospitality" is still practised today by people in many Arab countries and the Balkans.

### Interpreting the parable

Jesus Christ said that we should first invite the poor to sit at the table of the great banquet. That is the only way to bring about a radical breakthrough into God's grace. This breakthrough is like conversion, a radical change. Our response to this conversion leads to a new relationship with our neighbours. In this relationship, care and mutual acceptance reflect God's love where there is no place for discrimination. We all receive God's grace although we don't deserve it.

In this parable, Jesus demonstrates God's prodigal generosity through a bountiful table laden with choice foods intended to feed and nourish humankind. Here is the food, here is the bread with which God fills us, builds us up and renews us in his image. In this Gospel story, Luke places a strong emphasis on "the poor, crippled, blind and the lame" (verse 21), to whom God shows mercy. The people in this story have no idea why they have been invited so unexpectedly to this banquet. The Good News comes to us when we least expect it which is why it keeps surprising us. The heart

of God's insistent invitation lies in inviting a person to do something which is not just a matter of course. We are all invited to the feast, but this invitation demands a positive response from us. Our mission then lies in sharing God's Word with others.

This passage from Luke's Gospel emphasises that we, as Christians, may not desist from acts of radical hospitality. Jesus wants us to be lovingly insistent. And that insistence is the call of God's love. We don't take "no" for an answer. We don't use force, but on the other hand we cannot be indifferent to our neighbour and so we keep on inviting "until the house is filled". There is still space at the table, let's go to the streets and say "**Come - everything is ready**".

### Questions for group discussions

*The reflection pointers below are designed to help us understand the implications of God's generosity by inviting all to his banquet, to understand how shocking this all-inclusiveness is, and then apply it to our own situation today.*

1. Can you imagine how the host would have felt when all his guests said that they had more important or urgent things to do? How would it make you feel if you were the host?
2. Have you ever rejected an invitation without good cause? How did it make you feel?

3. God is inviting us to His feast. We too can be good at finding excuses for turning Him down. Ask yourself about your excuses and how you can come to God's table, which is open to all.
4. Imagine that you are one of the original guests who came to the feast. When you arrive the house is full of strangers, "*the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind*". What would you do - stay or walk away? Who represents for you the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind (Luke 14:13) in your community?
5. Jesus announced the Good News of God's Kingdom by sharing meals with people, including the ones marginalized in his time. Is your table open for others?
6. Conclude the conversation with the reading of Isaiah 25:6-9:

On this mountain the LORD Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine - the best of meats and the finest of wines.

On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; he will swallow up death forever. The sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove his people's disgrace from all the earth. The LORD has spoken.

### Future Themes

- |      |   |
|------|---|
| 2020 | <b>Zimbabwe</b><br><i>Rise! Take Your Mat and Walk</i>                          |
| 2021 | <b>Vanuatu</b><br><i>Build on a Strong Foundation</i>                           |
| 2022 | <b>England, Wales &amp; N Ireland</b><br><i>I know the plans I have for you</i> |
| 2023 | <b>Taiwan</b><br><i>I have heard about your faith</i>                           |
| 2024 | <b>Palestine</b><br><i>I beg you bear with one another in love</i>              |

*giftaid it*

### Envelope provided in this Order of Service

The extra monies raised from your kind donations will help the work of World Day of Prayer in England, Wales & Northern Ireland and projects run by Christian charities around the world.

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## Grants Allocated 2017

### CORE GRANTS

The charities receiving the core grants spend the money as they wish.

	£		£
Bible Reading Fellowship	2,000	Scripture Union	2,000
CAFOD	5,000	Tear Fund	5,000
Feed the Minds	5,000	The Leprosy Mission	4,000
Lifewords	5,000	Torch Trust for the Blind	1,000
MAF UK	3,000	Wycliffe UK Ltd	5,000
Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen	2,000		

### PROJECT GRANTS

The money allocated to these charities is for specific projects.

	£
Hands of Mercy International (Philippines) – <i>build homes for homeless families</i>	6,000
OMF International UK (Philippines) – <i>places for students in secondary education</i>	4,000
Missionary Society of St Columban (Philippines) – <i>water drainage system for new settlement built to rehouse families left homeless by typhoon in 2011</i>	5,000
Bible Society in Northern Ireland – <i>Bibles for women in the Philippines</i>	10,000
Porridge and Pens – <i>a water pump in Ghana</i>	500
Helping Uganda Schools – <i>projects to help 10 women in Uganda</i>	1,000
Kids Club Kampala – <i>towards 3-day residential for teenagers</i>	4,000
Karibuni Children – <i>for social workers involved with schools</i>	5,500
Serving in Mission – <i>water tower, transitional house in Nigeria</i>	2,400
Anglican International Development – <i>helping refugees to farm land</i>	8,000
Traidcraft – <i>development of exotic fruit juice in Senegal</i>	7,000
Homes of Promise – <i>street children in Uganda</i>	4,000
Health Help International – <i>wheelchairs and spare parts</i>	5,000
Family of Hope – <i>playground for special needs children and the community</i>	5,000
Viva Network – <i>young people to make informed choices about their health and help protect themselves from HIV infection</i>	1,000
Britain Yearly Meeting of Religious Society of Friends Turning the Tide project in Kenya – <i>train women to address inequalities and violence</i>	7,000
USPG – <i>help to prevent HIV</i>	7,000
Christian Aid – <i>help women in Bangladesh in agriculture</i>	5,000
Partners Relief & Development UK – <i>help women and children in Myanmar</i>	5,000
Hope for Justice – <i>care for trafficked girls in Cambodia</i>	10,000
Mission India (UK) – <i>adult literacy classes for women</i>	2,700
TeachBeyond UK – <i>2-year professional development for teachers in India</i>	6,000

L'Arche – <i>build accommodation for girls at Kolkata Community in India</i>	7,000
All We Can – <i>supporting women to earn a living in India</i>	8,000
Rope Charitable Trust- <i>HOPE on Wheels truck in Lebanon</i>	3,000
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Toybox – <i>workshops for vulnerable and at-risk children in Bolivia</i>	9,000
The Morning Star Trust – <i>vulnerable and at-risk young people in the UK to sail on the sea</i>	3,500
Sixty-One – <i>equip and support churches in the Greater Bristol area to support offenders</i>	2,500
SPCK – <i>scripts for school assemblies in the UK</i>	4,000
Livability – <i>developing a dementia-friendly churches programme in the UK</i>	5,000
Operation Noah – <i>mobilise a Christian response to climate change in the UK</i>	4,000
The Marylebone Project – <i>long-term accommodation for homeless women in UK</i>	5,000

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World Day of Prayer European Committee	2,000
World Day of Prayer International Committee	21,191
WDP National Committee of The Philippines	10,000
WDP workshop, Albania	3,500

### OTHER DONATIONS

	£
Royal National Institute for the Blind	4,000
WWDP Welsh Committee	15,000

### GRANTS ALLOCATED BY THE COMMITTEE FOR WELSH SPEAKING CHURCHES

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Christian Aid	500
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Sunday Schools Council	500
Y Cymod - Society of Reconciliation	500
North Wales Society for the Blind	400
CRISTION – Welsh interdenominational magazine	500
Y Goeuad – PCW weekly newspaper	400
Y Tyst – Union of Welsh Independants newspaper	400
CAFOD	300
Cytun – Churches Together in Wales	300
Y Gwyllydydd – Methodist weekly newspaper	400
Bible Society	500
Gwasy Ilston Seren Cymru – Baptist newspaper	400

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**Vice Chairperson** Nicola Hoskin-Stone

**Appointed officer** Siobhan Canham  
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## Together in Prayer Magazine

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*Together in Prayer* magazine No.36, contains further information on Slovenia, a prayer resource, plus other articles. For availability and further details please contact the WDP office – 01892 541411

To order *Together in Prayer*, No.37, Zimbabwe, available from September 2019, please use the form below:

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### Order Form for Together in Prayer Magazine No.37

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