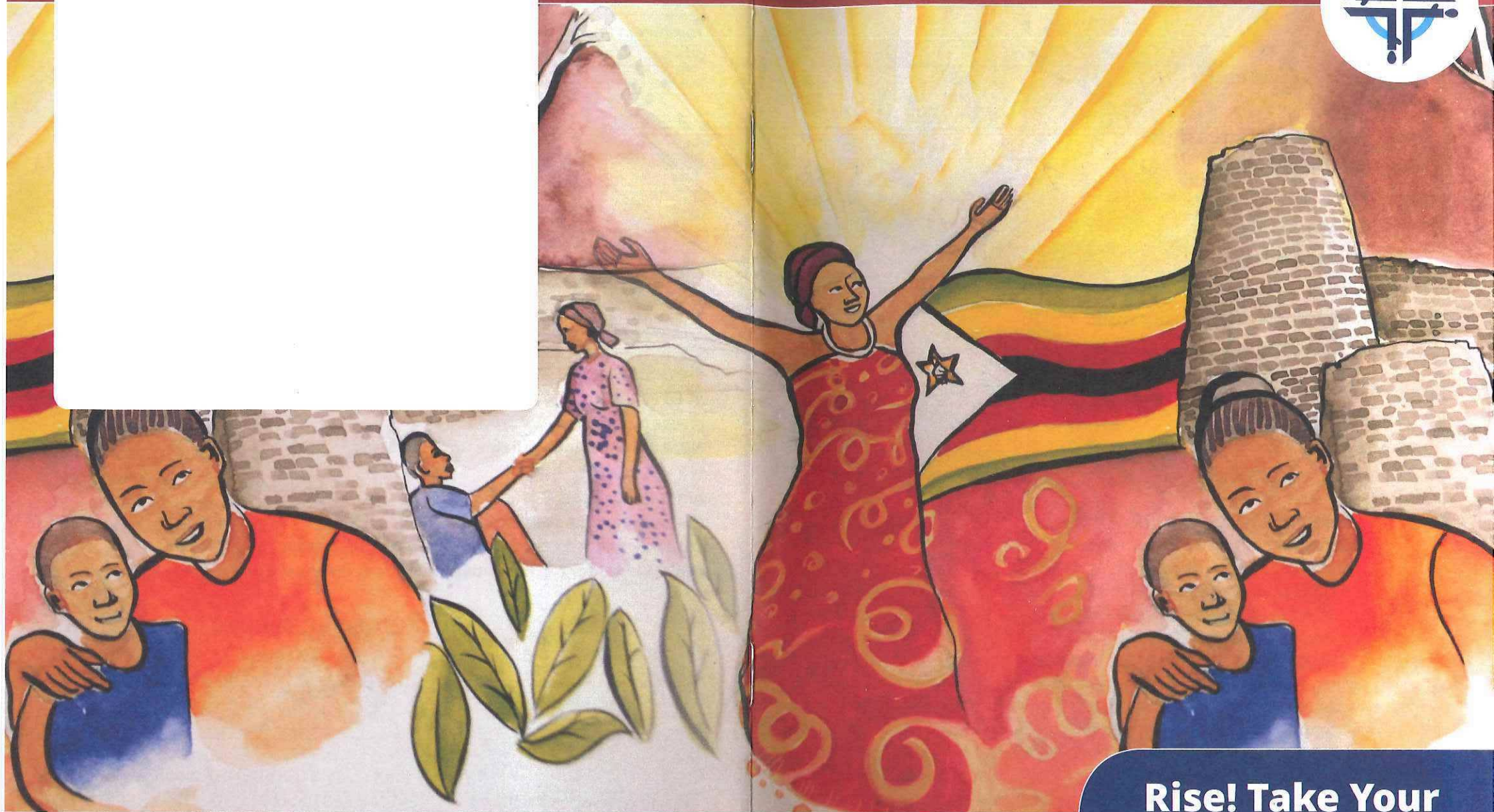


My Commitment

# World Day of Prayer

A WOMEN LED, GLOBAL, ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT

6th March 2020



**Rise! Take Your Mat and Walk**

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Registered Charity No: 233242

PREPARED BY CHRISTIAN WOMEN OF **Zimbabwe**

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### Front cover artwork designed by Nonhlanhla Mathe

#### About the Artist

Nonhlanhla Mathe is a Zimbabwean-born artist who lives in Bulawayo. She studied art at the Mzilikazi Art and Craft Centre in the late 90s, and she is now very well-known both locally and in other African countries.

She has won the National Award of Merit as the best female artist in the Visual Arts, Bulawayo. Her paintings are abstract and semi-abstract figurative works with lots of texture and an emphasis on colourful finishes. She says 'I find inspiration in people's lives, reflecting their expectations, experiences and points of view. I focus mainly on women because obviously as a woman I can relate to their lives but also because I like the idea of a woman representing women without male control' (<https://harmattan.org.uk/pages/painters>)

She has exhibited at the National Gallery of Zimbabwe and National Gallery of Bulawayo, and across Africa - in Botswana, Namibia, Mozambique and South Africa. She has also exhibited in Denmark, and has had solo exhibitions in Bulawayo and in Louis Trichardt, South Africa.

As well as being a full-time artist she teaches Art to A Level students at her old school, Townsend Girls High.

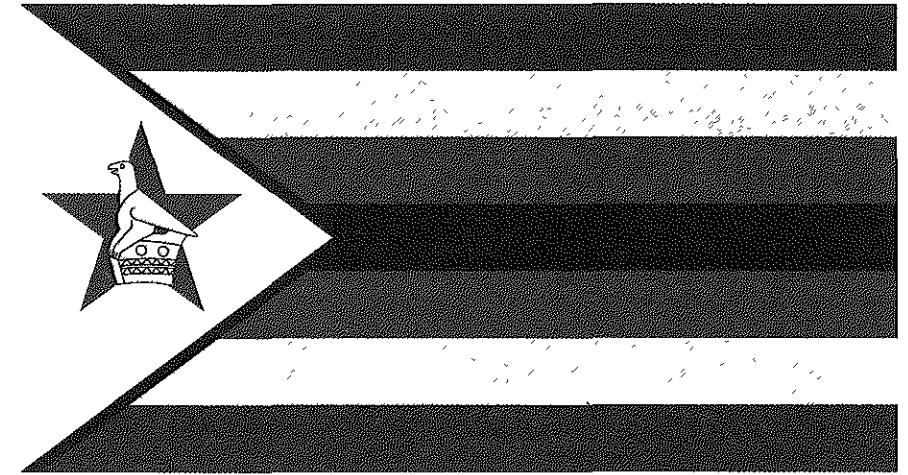
Publication produced by Footprint Innovations Limited

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## Introduction

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**Welcome to the 2020 World Day of Prayer service! As we participate in this service we are part of a great wave of prayer encircling the globe, which begins as the sun rises over Samoa and ends some 36 hours later back in the Pacific as the sun sets over American Samoa. We will be joining with people in over 120 countries and islands around the world.**

Each year the service is written by a different country. This year it has been prepared by the Christian women of Zimbabwe who call us to 'Rise! Take your mat and walk!' We are encouraged to reflect on the difficulties and unrest that have plagued their country over many years. They share the challenges they have met and the hopes they have for the future and invite us to support them as they continue their often turbulent journey towards full reconciliation.

As we hear their stories, the challenge for them and for us is that we will constantly seek love, peace and reconciliation.

We thank the women of Zimbabwe for this service and pray that our response will be positive as we commit ourselves to positive prayerful action.

## The Service

# Rise! Take your mat and walk

PLEASE NOTE that it is essential to practise before the day of the service.

### PREPARATION

Prepare a table with fabrics that display the colours of the Zimbabwean flag (green, yellow, red, black and white). Drape all fabrics on the table so they touch the floor—to symbolise unity. On the altar (or another table) place a flame lily: this is the national flower of Zimbabwe and means full of glory.

Place a red candle, a white candle and a yellow candle on the altar: these will be lit at the beginning of the service.

Add pictures or objects to represent the country and its peoples, for example:

- coat of arms, flag, map;
- musical instruments—hand rattles, drums, marimba, mbira (the classical instrument of Zimbabwe; sometimes called a thumb piano), tambourine, saxophone;
- crafts—reed or sisal mats, clay pots, beads, reed baskets, winnowing baskets, duri (pounding pot), guyo (grinding stone);
- indigenous food—maize (staple food), sorghum, mufushwa (dried vegetables), okra, madora (mopane worms), sweet potatoes, wild fruits, rice, mushroom, wheat and beans;
- WDP Zimbabwe artwork.

Other notes to help in preparation can be found on page 18.

*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

When everyone is seated, the leaders and the girls enter as Zimbabwean music is played.

Leader 1 walks with a Bible to the altar table and leaves the Bible open at John 5:2–9.

Leader 2 brings a sisal mat and lays it on the altar.

Leader 3 guides the girls to light the three candles—representing love [red], peace [white] and reconciliation [yellow]. The leader may hold up a placard with the relevant word on while each girl lights the candle.

**Leader 1:** The women of the World Day of Prayer Zimbabwe Committee invite you to this celebration. World Day of Prayer is celebrated all over Zimbabwe by many Christians in organisations, churches, universities and schools.

The peoples from the land of Zimbabwe welcome you. Zimbabwe means 'House of Stones'. We greet you in the language of the Shona people—Kwaziwai! (kwuz-WHY), and in the language of the Ndebele (N de BEL-leh) people—Sahibonani! (sah-li-bo-NA-nee). In English, we all say hello. Let us greet one another. (Give a short time for greetings.)

### SONG: Jesus We Are Here (Jesu tawa pano)

Jesus, we are here,  
Jesus, we are here,  
Jesus, we are here,  
We are here for you

Saviour, we are here,  
Saviour, we are here,  
Saviour, we are here,  
We are here for you.

Spirit, we are here,  
Spirit, we are here,  
Spirit, we are here,  
We are here for you.

---

## **PRAYER OF PRAISE**

**Leader 1:** God of peace and freedom, we welcome you in our midst

**Leader 2:** We praise you for your love which surpasses all understanding

**Leader 3:** We praise you for who you are – now and forever

**All:** **You are an amazing God.**

**Leader 1:** Creator God, we praise you for the natural resources we are called to care for the vegetation, minerals, endangered animals, waterfalls and forests of Zimbabwe

**All:** **You are a gracious God.**

**Leader 2:** Jesus, we praise you for the gift of respect, for the dignity of human life, for the love of one another, and for the friendliness of Zimbabwe's hard-working people

**All:** **You are the Bread of Life.**

**Leader 3:** Holy Spirit, we praise you for enabling us to gather in worship in Zimbabwe and around the world

**All:** **You are the Spirit of Truth. You unify us in prayers and action.**

## **SONG: Let us praise God together**

Let us praise God together, let us praise;  
let us praise God together all our days  
he is faithful in all his ways,  
he is worthy of all our praise,  
his name be exalted on high!

Let us seek God together, let us pray,  
let us seek his forgiveness as we pray  
he will cleanse us from all our sin,  
he will help us the fight to win,  
his name be exalted on high!

Let us serve God together, him obey,  
let our lives show his goodness through each day.  
Christ the Lord is the world's true light—  
let us serve him with all our might,  
his name be exalted on high!

---

## **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**Leader 2:** Merciful God, we come before you as a nation, recognising that we need a change.

**Leader 3:** We have sinned against you and our sisters and brothers through our negligent words and actions

**Leader 1:** We have disobeyed you and done things that we should not have done.

**All:** **We confess our wrongdoings and ask you for courage to change. Forgiving God, hear our prayer.**

**Leader 2:** We see women and children suffering poverty, hunger and violence

**All:** **Grant us compassion to help all those who are suffering.**

**Leader 1:** There is a lack of integrity in our lives We fail to love and to unite those who are divided for reasons of ethnicity, language or political views

**All:** **Forgive us, and heal our hearts and minds.**

**Leader 3:** Jesus asks you "Do you want to be made well?"

**All:** **We use so many excuses to avoid changes. Have mercy on us and sustain our search for healing and forgiveness. Gracious God, listen to us.**

**Leader 2:** Let us have a moment for a personal silent prayer of confession  
(*Silent moment.*)

**Leader 2:** "Give thanks for God is good, for God's steadfast love endures forever. Happy are those who observe justice, who do righteousness at all times" (Psalm 106 1, 3)

## **SONG: For the healing of the nations**

For the healing of the nations,  
Lord, we pray with one accord,  
for a just and equal sharing  
of the things that earth affords.  
To a life of love in action  
help us rise and pledge our word

---

Lead us forward into freedom,  
from despair your world release,  
that, redeemed from war and hatred,  
all may come and go in peace  
Show us how through care and goodness  
fear will die and hope increase

All that kills abundant living,  
let it from the earth be banned.  
pride of status, race or schooling,  
dogmas that obscure your plan  
In our common quest for justice  
may we hallow life's brief span

You, Creator God, have written  
your great name on humankind,  
for our growing in your likeness  
bring the life of Christ to mind,  
that by our response and service  
earth its destiny may find.

### **A LETTER FROM THE WOMEN OF ZIMBABWE**

*See preparation notes on page 18.*

Friends, in the path for justice, let us reflect and place before God our stories for the world. Our people are diverse and have a long history. From the Great Zimbabwe Empire to today there are many stories to tell. We have fought for independence from colonial power and for the formation of a national government led by leaders supported by the majority of the population. However, we have faced political violence during past national elections. Efforts to bring all sides into a process of truth and reconciliation are taking longer than most of the people had hoped. The traumas imposed by the armed conflict are still affecting Zimbabwean society.

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### **INSTRUMENTAL: Let there be love**

Since 2017, the country has been going through changes in government. People, ecumenical organisations and churches are actively raising awareness for a peaceful transition. The 2018 national election saw a great number of first-time voters, including many young people. We went to the polls peacefully even though tensions were still present afterwards. We continue to pray and educate ourselves to be peace builders and to stand for reconciliation in our land.

### **INSTRUMENTAL: Let there be love**

We recognise the unemployment in our communities. We have difficulty providing for our families. Many of the households in rural areas are headed by women who have nothing to feed their families. The husbands have moved away to search for jobs in towns and mines, while the young men and women have migrated to find work in the neighbouring countries and all over the world. Zimbabweans in the diaspora have also faced the global anti-migrant sentiment, which has made their lives more difficult.

### **INSTRUMENTAL: Let there be love**

We hear so many bad things about our country, but we can change this and be proud to be Zimbabweans. We value our community-based culture and closely-knit families, even though individualism and domestic violence affect many people.

There are laws to protect women against gender-based violence. Awareness and lobbying for gender equality have increased but despite this it is the women who look after children with special needs and disabilities by themselves. Access to schools for autistic children is very limited. Many families are headed by children who have lost their parents to HIV and AIDS.

There are so many among us who live in need of social assistance. We expect to see an improvement in social services and more opportunities for training, education and sustainable economic development.

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## **INSTRUMENTAL: Let there be love**

The majority of the Zimbabwean population is Christian, and we are always praying for the integrity of our churches and our country

As Christian women we want to be more like our predecessors who had a strong sense of identification with the needs of women and children. By the grace of God, we are working hard to follow their path.

“The mouths of the righteous utter wisdom and their tongues speak justice” (Psalm 37:30)

**All: Amen.**

## **SONG: In Christ there is no east or west**

In Christ there is no east or west,  
in him no south or north,  
but one great fellowship of love  
throughout the whole wide earth

In Christ shall true hearts everywhere  
their high communion find,  
his service is the golden cord  
close-binding humankind

Join hands then all the human race,  
whate'er your nation be,  
all children of the living God  
are surely kin to me

In Christ now meet both east and west,  
in him meet south and north  
All Christly souls are one in him  
throughout the whole wide earth

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## **BIBLE READING**

**Reader 1:** John 5:2–9a (verse 4 is not included)

Now in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate there is a pool, called in Hebrew Beth-zatha, which has five porticoes. In these lay many invalids – blind, lame, and paralysed. One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, “Do you want to be made well?” The sick man answered him, “Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, and while I am making my way, someone else steps down ahead of me.” Jesus said to him, “Stand up, take your mat and walk.” At once the man was made well, and he took up his mat and began to walk.

## **MEDITATION**

Having listened to this story, let us consider what it means to us  
*(You are invited to bow your heads as you listen)*

What does this encounter say about the man? The man of the story seems alone, he has nobody to help him get healed. He sounds powerless. Maybe that is what leads Jesus to ask him a life-changing question: “Do you want to be made well?”

What does this encounter say about Jesus? Jesus acts with compassion, love, understanding and care. Jesus in his humanity identifies himself with human suffering. Jesus in his humbleness listens to the man without judging his excuses. Jesus gives the man a chance.

What does this encounter tell us about God? Jesus uses three verbs to enable the man, who had been sick for 38 years, to experience God’s love: “**Rise!** **Take** your mat and **walk**.” The dialogue between Jesus and that man takes us beyond the physical healing. The verbs suggest that we should not be afraid to act on the word of God. God is offering us the steps for personal and social transformation.

How do we view the story through Jesus’ eyes? The miracle and transformation in the Bible story are symbolised by the mat. The mat was the place the man lies down with his excuses, even though he is searching for healing. After the encounter with Jesus, the mat becomes a reminder of this healing.

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Jesus continues to empower us through the transformation that God is offering to rise and take up our mat, whatever that may be for us, and walk. Through Jesus we are reconciled to God, to ourselves, and to our community. When we are reconciled, we can truly love, and when we truly love, we are able to walk toward peace. So, "Rise! Take your mat and walk."

We invite you to reflect briefly on the following questions and share your thoughts with those around you.

1. Where in our lives and communities do we need to hear Jesus' life-changing question: "Do you want to be made well?"
2. What are the obstacles or excuses that hinder our transformation?
3. What does "Rise! Take your mat and walk" mean for us?
4. On the cards provided, write down your commitments to support your communities with actions of love, peace, and reconciliation. You can remind yourself of your commitment by writing it on the back of your order of service. The cards will be collected during the offering and we shall be meeting later to pray about them.

*See preparation notes on page 18 for further details about the later meeting.*

### **Song: Rise! Take Your Mat and Walk.**

Rise take your mat and walk  
Rise take your mat and walk  
Rise take your mat and walk. Oh

Walk away from sin, walk away from injustice,  
Walk away from violence, walk away from hatred.  
Rise with your heart full of love.

Let us make our mat for peace  
among ourselves in Christ  
We are reconciled. Oh

Rise take your mat and walk.  
Rise take your mat and walk.

*Please remain standing if you are able.*

---

**Leader 2:** Let us experience the empowering energy of the dialogue between the sick man and Jesus. I invite you to have your heads down and let your arms hang loosely.

**Leader 1:** Jesus asks us "Do you want to be made well?"

**All:** **Yes! Yes! Yes!**

**Leader 2:** Then Jesus says "Rise! Take your mat and walk!"

*Everyone takes some steps on the spot.*

**Girl (wearing red):**

God is love. Let us rise with our hearts full of love!

*Pause*

**Girl (wearing white):**

Jesus is the Prince of Peace. Let us take up our mats for peace among us!

*Hold up your cards with the written commitments.*

*Pause.*

**Girl (wearing yellow):**

God made all things new. In Christ we are reconciled to God. Let us walk towards reconciliation! Let us walk towards a new life - a life of reconciliation.

**All:** **Amen! Amen! Amen! Hallelujah!**

*Pause.... Congregation sits.*

**Leader 3:** As you have heard Jesus' life-changing question and are willing to "Rise! Take your mat and walk," we invite you to present your commitments and offering to support communities as actions of love, peace and reconciliation.

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## WORDS OF COMMITMENT

**OFFERING** (*remaining seated*)

**SONG: Make me a channel of your peace** (*sung as the offering is taken*)

Make me a channel of your peace  
Where there is hatred let me bring your love,  
where there is injury your pardon, Lord,  
and where there's doubt true faith in you

*Oh, Master grant that I may never seek  
so much to be consoled as to console,  
to be understood as to understand,  
to be loved as to love with all my soul*

Make me a channel of your peace  
Where there's despair in life let me bring hope,  
where there is darkness, only light,  
and where there's sadness, ever joy

*Oh, Master grant that I may never seek  
so much to be consoled as to console,  
to be understood as to understand,  
to be loved as to love with all my soul*

Make me a channel of your peace  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
in giving unto all that we receive,  
and in dying that we're born to eternal life

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## PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

**Leader 1** As we bring our monetary gifts and our commitments, we pray that you will bless them and encourage us as we endeavour to use the money wisely and to honour our commitments with love

**Reader 1:** Let us join together with all the provinces in Zimbabwe and around the world to give thanks to God Let us rise and walk in Jesus' unconditional love

**All:** **From our corner of the world, we rise and walk.**

**Reader 2:** We pray that you continue to bless us with the gift of life and protection, the good rains and fertile soil that give us food

**All:** **We are caretakers of God's creation.**

**Reader 3:** We lament for our brothers and sisters who had to migrate to other countries We ask you to protect them and give them good health

**All:** **Help us to learn to love one another.**

**Reader 4:** We intercede for communities and individuals around the world who live in fear of violence in their families and in their nation

**All** **Give us wisdom and grace to be peacemakers.**

**Reader 5:** We thank you for the courageous and hard-working pioneering women of World Day of Prayer Zimbabwe, who encouraged the communities to pray, love and forgive

**All:** **May we carry on the legacy of courageous women in our communities.**

**Reader 6:** Let us be united by praying together the Lord's Prayer



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**All:** Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your Name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven

Give us today our daily bread  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil  
For the kingdom, the power  
and the glory are yours,  
now and for ever  
Amen

### **BENEDICTION**

**Leader 1:** “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God”

**Leader 2:** Go in peace to serve the world in the name of God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit

**Leader 3:** “Rise! Take your mat and walk!”

**All:** Amen.

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### **CLOSING SONG**

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

*Each participant will pick up a sisal plait that they can use as a bookmark - as a symbol of the service and their commitments - and an invitation to the follow-up meeting. See note on page 19.*

*Scripture quotations contained herein are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright © 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. and are used by permission. All rights reserved*

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## Hymn Tune Sources

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### Jesus we are here

**Patrick Matsikenyeri** metre 6669

*Words and music © 1990, 1996 Patrick Matsikenyeri, admin.  
General Board of Global Ministries t/a GBGMusik. Used by permission.*

Singing the Faith 27  
Church Hymnary 4th Edition 773

### Let us praise God together

**Calhoun melody arr. Stuart Townsend**

*Words. James E Seddon © Mrs M Seddon/Jubilate Hymns,  
copyrightmanager@jubilatehymns.co.uk. Used by permission*

Mission Praise 414  
Hymns Old & New 300  
Songs of Fellowship 303 (NB tune set to different words)

### For the healing of the nation

**Tune: Grafton** metre 87 87 87

*© 1968 Stainer & Bell Ltd, 23 Gruneisen Road, London N3 1DZ,  
www.stainer.co.uk. Used by permission All rights reserved.*

Singing the Faith 696  
Hymns Old & New 139  
Laudate 886  
Church Hymnary 4th Edition 706  
Celebration 136  
Hymns & Psalms 402

### In Christ there is no east or west

**Tune: Kilmarnock** metre CM

Singing the Faith 685  
Hymns & Psalms 758  
Laudate 831  
Hymns Old & New 244  
Celebration 136  
Church Hymnary 4th Edition 624  
Hymns & Psalms 758

### Instrumental – Let there be love

Mission Praise 411  
Hymns Old & New 298

### Rise! Take Your Mat and Walk

*Words and music by Sylvia Marowa, ©WDPIC  
Composed for WDP 2020 Zimbabwe programme. Used by permission.  
Specially composed for the service: sheet music available.*

### Make me a channel of your peace

*Dedicated to Mrs Frances Tracy Words and music Sebastian Temple  
© 1967 OCP Publications 5536 NE Hassalo, Portland OR97213, USA  
All rights reserved. Used with permission*

Mission Praise 456  
Hymns Old & New 328  
Singing the Faith 707  
Church Hymnary 4th Edition 528  
Hymns & Psalms 776

### The Day thou gavest

Available in most hymn books

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## Notes to help in the preparation of the service

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*PLEASE NOTE that it is essential to practise before the day of the service.*

### Zimbabwe Culture

As people arrive offer them a drink of water (if possible from a clay pot)  
To give a glass of water to a visitor is a welcoming gesture in most cultures in Zimbabwe. In most rural areas, water is stored in clay pots to keep it cool.

If possible, create an opportunity for people attending the service to learn more about the country. You may decide to play a slide show, Zimbabwean music, or showcase some diverse cultural food, like a glass of *maheu* (fermented loose porridge) and sweet potatoes. The CD rom with appropriate slides and information can be shown as people arrive.

Each of the three young girls should wear a T-shirt or scarf in the colours below to represent love, peace and reconciliation and carry a placard with the meaning of the colour she is wearing. Red represents love, white represents peace and yellow represents reconciliation.

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### Commitment Activity and Offering

Prepare a mat (9-10 inches diameter) of spiralled plaits for the altar.

Prepare cards and provide pens/pencils for worship participants to write down their own commitments to act in love, peace and reconciliation.

Prepare a sisal plait about 6 inches in length for each participant to take home as a symbol of the service and their commitments and an invitation card to the follow-up meeting(s).

Choose the appropriate way to distribute the cards before the service, and the plaits and invitations when participants are leaving.

Prepare separate baskets to collect the cards and the money during the offering. The ushers who collect the cards should place them over the mat at the altar before the offering prayer.

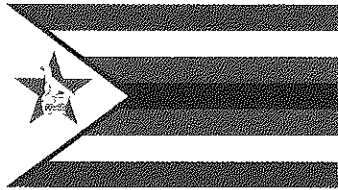
When reading the **Letter from the women of Zimbabwe** (p6) and the **Meditation** (p9) it is preferable that several readers are involved. If you have the personnel resources you might like to consider dramatising receiving the letter.

World Day of Prayer is about Informed Prayer and Prayerful Action.

During this service, we are making commitments but these commitments need to be prayed over and discussed if they are to become prayerful actions that really make a difference. Therefore, set a date a week or two after the service when all who attended the service can get together again to pray and to talk about the commitments they have made. Give out invitations at the end of the service; you will find a sample invitation card on the website.

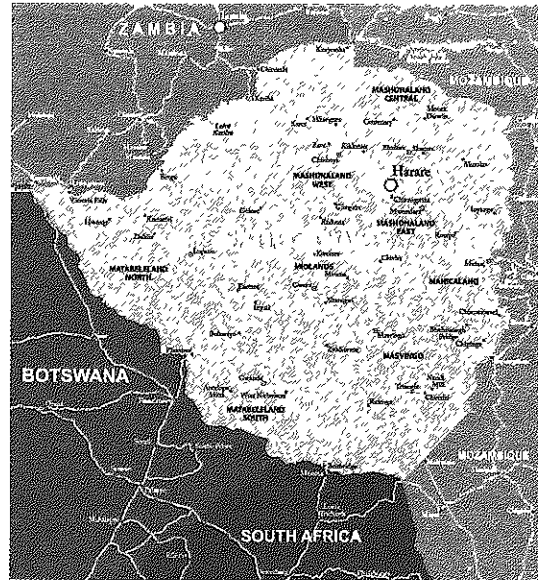
The National Committee would be most interested to hear about the prayerful actions carried out as a result of the commitments made.

## Background information on Zimbabwe



### Flag

Adopted at independence in 1980. Seven stripes in four colours represent: black (majority population), green (vegetation), red (blood shed during the liberation struggle), yellow (gold and minerals). White triangle stands for peace, red star for hope, and the bird represents the national bird.



### Population

About 16 million. 50% are young. Many different tribal groups, 16 official languages. Majority languages – Shona and Ndebele. English as first language – 2% of population. Major cities: Harare, (north east) is the capital and seat of government. Bulawayo is in the west. Major industries: mining (precious metals, clay and diamonds) and agriculture (livestock, corn, coffee, cotton, sugar cane, tobacco).

### Geography

Land-locked country in south east Africa. About twice the size of the UK. Bordered by South Africa, Botswana, Zambia and Mozambique. Mostly savanna. Mountains and tropical forest in the east. Two large rivers: Zambesi (north) and Limpopo (south). Immense beauty and diversity of flora and fauna. Climate: tropical, but varies greatly with altitude. Distinct seasons – cool, dry winters, hot, dry summers and a rainy season. Major tourist attractions: Victoria Falls, Great Zimbabwe (historical site), big game Safari. Rich in natural resources and minerals: coal, copper, nickel, gold and diamonds.

### History

Zimbabwe means 'house of stones'. Great Zimbabwe (stone city) was the capital of a sophisticated culture 1000 years ago. First Europeans (Portuguese) came in 15th century.

19th century British businessman Cecil Rhodes began exploiting the area's mineral wealth. British colonisation begins. 1895 country is named Rhodesia.

Many indigenous populations dispossessed. Long history of political uprising and suppression under white minority rule. 1965 Rhodesia unilaterally declared independence (UDI) from Britain. Sanctions imposed by the UN. 1979 unity government formed and country renamed Zimbabwe-Rhodesia.

1980 – democratic elections and majority rule. Country renamed Zimbabwe, became independent on 18 April. Two political parties dominated – ZANU and ZAPU. Robert Mugabe (ZANU) was the first Prime Minister and Joshua Nkomo (ZAPU) first Minister of Home Affairs. Continued political unrest and economic problems. In 2000 Zimbabwe embarked on a land reform programme. Many white farmers were expelled from their farms. Sanctions imposed by many West European countries. November 2017, Robert Mugabe removed from power after 37 years as Prime Minister. 2018 Emmerson Mnangagwa becomes President. Election result contested but upheld. Leader of the opposition is Nelson Chemisa. In 2019 political situation remains volatile.

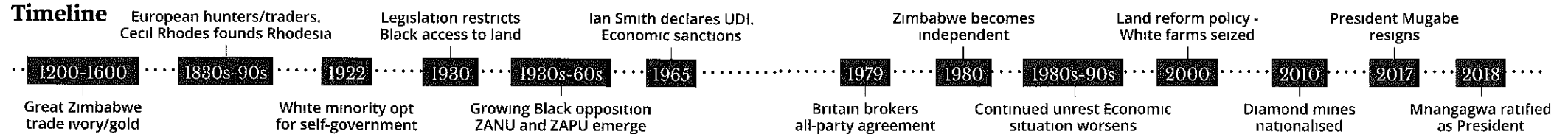
### World Day of Prayer

In 1962 Mai Rev Kachidza of the Methodist Church and Mai Major Nhari of the Salvation Army Church formed the first interdenominational prayer committee meeting.

Homes used as venues for prayer meetings for women from a range of Christian denominations. They identified with the needs of women and children. Mai Kachidza and Mai Nhari instrumental in obtaining changes to overcome problem of widows being summarily evicted.

Participation of women in WDP meetings grew steadily. They met to discuss issues affecting their community and to pray together. The power inherent in World Day of Prayer Zimbabwe is seen in the tradition of praying and helping the needy in the communities. WDP has grown from churches to schools, from universities to girls' and women's organizations. The circle of prayer and the call to help those in need has rippled out around Zimbabwe.

### Timeline



## Women

Women- 51% of the population  
Play a significant role in the socio-economic life of the country. Many rural households headed by women, as husbands often migrate to towns to find work. Young people leave their villages to work in other countries.

For economic, social and historical reasons, women and girls often face systematic disadvantage. This is particularly true for the poor, those in rural areas or from particular social groups.

It is generally women who look after those with disabilities – physical, mental and emotional. They are often forced into early marriages, and are faced with poor gynaecological and obstetric provision, violence in the home and legal discrimination regarding family law. Various groups lobbying for gender equality. Recent legislation enacted to protect women against gender-based violence. Often experience barriers to education.

Cervical and breast cancer affect many women. Typhoid, cholera and HIV/AIDS cause many deaths.

## Education

1980 education declared basic human right. One of highest literacy rates in Africa, but access to education still difficult in rural areas. Primary education is free in theory, but in practice parents still have to pay levies.

## Children

Autism widely misunderstood, generally not supported. Specialist schools exist but too expensive for most families. Highest incidence of AIDS is in southern Africa.

In Zimbabwe many children (one in four) have been orphaned. Some live with grandparents. Many have to act as heads of families, caring for younger siblings. Often they have to work to earn money for basic necessities. Difficult for many children to attend school.

## Religion

There is freedom of worship and association. Christianity is the main religion (80%), but also Islam, Judaism and traditional African religions. Missionaries brought Christianity to Zimbabwe in the colonial period. They built schools, hospitals and churches. Many of these are in use today. Churches heavily involved in education and supported the movement for independence and black majority rights.

More background information about Zimbabwe can be found in the *Together in Prayer* magazine No. 37.

## Bible Reflection

# Rise! Take Your Mat and Walk John 5:2-9a

### Focus: Peace, Reconciliation and Love

When the women of Zimbabwe were chosen as the writing country they were given the bible reading *John 5:2-9a\** with the focus of Peace, Reconciliation and Love.

So, we will look at the account of the man healed by the pool of Bethzatha.

*Read John 5:2-9a from at least two different translations.*

1. Where did it happen? (*verse 2*)
2. Who was involved in the story? (*verses 3,5,6*)
3. How did it happen? (*verses 6-9a*)
4. What happened? (*Let the group respond with their own words*)

**For our study** we are going to focus on the interaction between Jesus and the man who had been ill for 38 years.

### What does this tell us about the man?

- People by the pool were looking for healing.
- The healing came from the water.
- The man expected his healing to come from the water.
- He could not get into the water.
- Therefore he believed that he could not be healed.
- What was his response to Jesus' life changing question "Do you want to be made well?"

### What does this tell us about Jesus?

- He saw the man's need.
- He acted on the man's need.
- He showed compassion and love.
- He heard what the man had said without judging his excuses.
- He saw beyond the spoken word.

*\* John 5:4 is omitted from most translations because it is not found in any of the earliest and most accurate manuscripts of John's Gospel, which were not available when King James Version was produced. Scholars believe that this verse does not belong in the New Testament but is a much later addition.*

## What does this encounter tell us about God?

- God wants us to go beyond physical healing
- God is offering the steps for personal and social transformation

When we are made whole, we are reconciled to God, to ourselves and to our community. When we are reconciled, we can truly love, and when we truly love, we are able to walk towards peace. So, Rise! Take your mat and walk.

'Rise' means we can stand up, be on an equal level with others and look them in the eye.

'Take your mat' means we are ready to be part of the working world and the community.

'Walk' means we must be ready to take steps of faith which can lead to personal and social transformation.

A member of the Zimbabwe World Day of Prayer Preparatory Workshop said

"Zimbabwe experienced political violence for many years. And the traumas and tensions are still alive in the communities. In the process of bringing reconciliation, it is said that we must forgive, but just saying it does not make it happen. We need to be able to accept that we have been hurt and go through the process of healing. Others need to acknowledge that they have hurt and show they are sorry. We need to listen to

each other. Peace begins with me and with you. The ingredient of peace is love, and where there is reconciliation, peace comes."

In the historical context of Zimbabwe, peace and reconciliation may refer to overcoming the traumas of armed conflicts by a peacebuilding process. When the violence erupted in 2008 around the national elections, women were targeted and subjected to abuse. Truth, justice, forgiveness, repentance and even reparations are steps usually taken by truth and reconciliation commissions. A national political reconciliation may bring peace and security to communities. At the same time, churches or community organisations may also develop their own peacebuilding processes. This enables victims to overcome traumas, raising public awareness of violence prevention and promoting training for peacebuilding.

*Form small groups to reflect on the following questions:*

- 1 "Rise! Take your mat and walk." What are the steps to love, to bring about reconciliation and to live in peace in the family, work place, church, community or nation?
- 2 What are the obstacles to transformation? For example, in the context of violence what are the excuses for not building peace and reconciliation?

- 3 What could increase cohesion and change in your community?
- 4 How would the action of Rise! Take your mat and walk impact our lives today?

*Allow time for groups to feedback on these questions.*

## Closing prayer

*God of Peace, we pray for everyone to know that despite political, religious and social differences we need to love, to reconcile with each other and have peace*

*We pray for broken homes to be reconciled, for women to live in security and for the communities to be open to peacebuilding.*

*In the name of Jesus the Prince of Peace  
Amen*

## Future Themes

2021	Vanuatu	<i>Build on a Strong Foundation</i>
2022	England, Wales & N Ireland	<i>I know the plans I have for you</i>
2023	Taiwan	<i>I have heard about your faith</i>
2024	Palestine	<i>I beg you bear with one another in love</i>
2025	Cook Islands	<i>I made you wonderful</i>
2026	Nigeria	<i>I will give you rest, come</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 2018

<b>CORE GRANTS</b>	<b>£</b>
28 Too Many – <i>Ongoing work</i>	5,000
<b>PROJECT GRANTS</b>	<b>£</b>
Feed the Minds – <i>Helping to tackle unemployment by training young people to establish small businesses</i>	5,000
Bible Society – <i>Partnering with local churches, to run Trauma Healing sessions in Suriname</i>	4,000
Seed International Fund Trust (SIFT) – <i>Individual programmes of therapy, education and vocational training for young women previously involved in the sex trade</i>	2,000
Embrace the Middle East – <i>Projects to help vulnerable and marginalised people</i>	3,000
USPG, India – <i>Projects to reduce poverty and debt slavery in Dalit and Adivasi communities</i>	2,500
The Leprosy Mission – <i>Supporting disabled children in Myanmar</i>	3,000
PartnerAid International – <i>Skills development for poor women and children, in the Punjab region of Pakistan</i>	2,500
Wycliffe Bible – <i>Translating Old Testament into Kanu, for the people in the Philippines</i>	5,000
Quakers – <i>Empower 100 women in Burundi, to address inequalities and violence</i>	3,000
All We Can – <i>Help 1,027 disadvantaged people, in Cameroon, to develop small businesses</i>	2,000
Quakers, Congo – <i>Help women set up small businesses eg. weaving, agriculture, breeding goats and chickens</i>	1,150
Evangelical Church Guinea-Bissau – <i>Create a well</i>	2,500
Christian Solidarity in Nigeria – <i>Five vocational skill days, training women to make souvenir bags and detergents to sell</i>	2,000
Global Care – <i>Support Primary School teacher training in South Sudan</i>	3,000
Christian Blind Mission – <i>Treat women in Tanzania affected by obstetric fistula</i>	5,000
Quakers, Tanzania – <i>Set up a baby unit, especially for premature babies</i>	4,000
Emmanuel Int., Uganda – <i>Provide education in menstrual hygiene management, enabling 4,200 girls to attend school</i>	4,000
Mission 4 Water – <i>Provide one borehole for a primary school and another for the community, in Uganda</i>	2,500
Mission without Borders – <i>Provide support and Christian input for female prisoners in Romania</i>	2,000

Green Christian – <i>Print, publicise and distribute 'Plenty', a discussion guide, celebrating God's Creation</i>	2,000
Burslem Methodist Mission – <i>For mothers and children, in Stoke on Trent, to attend sessions on Attachment Parenting</i>	3,250
Hope UK – <i>Train one volunteer, in equipping young people to make drug-free choices</i>	1,200
Haven Day Centre – <i>Reintroduce learning and development modules, for 5 people to learn new life skills</i>	1,000

<b>INTERNATIONAL DONATIONS</b>	<b>£</b>
World Day of Prayer European Committee	500
World Day of Prayer International Committee	11,471
WDP National Committee of Suriname, writing country for 2018	10,000
WDP Workshop, Albania	5,000

<b>OTHER DONATIONS</b>	<b>£</b>
RNIB – producing the service in Braille	4,000
WWDP Welsh Committee	7,500

<b>GRANTS ALLOCATED BY THE COMMITTEE FOR WELSH SPEAKING CHURCHES</b>	<b>£</b>
SPCK	3,000
Sunday School Council	1,100
Cymdeithas Y Cymod (Reconciliation Society)	750
North Wales Society For The Blind	400
Cristion (Interdenominational Magazine)	500
Y Tyst (Union Of Welsh Independants Newspaper)	400
Cytun (Churches Together In Wales)	500
Stori'r Nadolig (Christmas Story)	250
Y Gwyllydydd (Methodist Bi-Monthly Magazine)	1,500
Capel Cana A Bancyfelin	250
Llyfrau Llafar Cymru (Wales Talking Books)	1,000
Cyfundeb Annibynwyr Gorllewin Caerfyrddin (Union Of Welsh Independents Congregational Churches)	900
Cell Caerdydd Cymdeithas Y Cymon (Fellowship Of Reconciliation In Wales)	190
Gwasg Ilston Seren Cymru (Baptist Newspaper)	400

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**Appointed officer** Carol Bourne  
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## Together in Prayer Magazine

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*Together in Prayer* magazine No 37, contains further information on Zimbabwe, a prayer resource, plus other articles. For availability and further details please contact the WDP office – 01892 541411

To order *Together in Prayer*, No.38, Vanuatu, available from September 2020, please use the form below:

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