

WHAT DOES FREEDOM MEAN TO YOU?

& ARE
YOU
FREE?

PRISONS
WEEK

PSALM 111:9

13TH-19TH OCT 2019



THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND



Community Chaplaincy Association



LANGLEY HOUSE TRUST
HELPING PEOPLE TO LIVE CRIME-FREE LIVES



The Methodist Church



'He sets his people free. He made his agreement everlasting. He is holy and wonderful.'

Psalm 111:9 (NCV)

God's will and intention for all his people is freedom – the freedom to be the people he created them to be. As Prison Chaplains we work with people who often find it hard to believe that God has any interest in them or their lives. They struggle with the concept that they are made in the image of God and do not dare to hope that they may have a future in God which does not involve crime, arrest and imprisonment. In the same way, those whose lives have been marred by crime and its effects, or whose work brings them into daily contact with its destructiveness, often struggle to see a new future in which the promise of freedom in Christ might be fulfilled.

This Prisons Week we give thanks that the freedom which God offers is available to all, even to those whose liberty has been temporarily or permanently taken away by society. As we pray together for all those who come into contact with the criminal justice system in any way, we share in that work of establishing God's covenant of redemption – that each person, precious to God, might discover what freedom can truly mean for them.

– The Ven. James Ridge, Chaplain General/Head of Faith Services, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service

Every year, our Prisons Week of Prayer begins with God's offer of freedom to all, echoing the Psalmist.

SUNDAY: THE PRISONS WEEK PRAYER *Lord, you offer freedom to all people. We pray for those in prison. Break the bonds of fear and isolation that exist. Support with your love prisoners and their families and friends, prison staff and all who care. Heal those who have been wounded by the actions of others, especially the victims of crime. Help us to forgive one another, to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly together with Christ in his strength and in his Spirit, now and every day. Amen.*

MONDAY: PRAYING WITH PRISONERS

Is freedom found outside the walls or inside ourselves?

Holy God of all creation, you see inside each one of us, knowing us better than we know ourselves. You see the hurt and harm, the brokenness and sin. You know the truth about our past and our present, all that traps and imprisons us. Unlock our hearts to let Christ in, so that his love and strength can help overcome all that imprisons us and lead us to the freedom he promised in life, in death and in eternity. Holy God, set us free. Amen.

*"Take me prisoner, Lord
And truly set me free;
Help me lay down my sword,
Then victorious I shall be."*

A prisoner's prayer for Prisons Week

TUESDAY: PRAYING WITH THE VICTIMS OF CRIME

Where is freedom now?

Loving God, always close to us, be very present in lives shattered by crime, and with those searching for a freedom unjustly taken away. May your Spirit of comfort and healing find ways of breaking through walls of mistrust, fear and injustice, working through all who build us up with love and care, taking one step at a time on the path to freedom. Loving God, set us free. Amen.

*"Unbind me from the bonds of grief and fear
that I may become again
the person you created me to be –
a person of joy, of love, of trust, and hope."*

Prayer of a victim of crime

WEDNESDAY: PRAYING WITH FAMILIES

Why was our freedom taken away with theirs?

Faithful God, who watches and waits with those who are betrayed and suffer; draw near to family members who are affected by crime and imprisonment. Give us your strength to persevere through pain and disappointment, soothe our anger and heal the wounds of separation and loss. Help us to know your grace to find forgiveness and hope for the journey ahead. Faithful God, set us free. Amen.

*"To my Son I miss U and I pray to God you won't
come back here again."*

*"God, I miss my Daddy. Try to help him. Please
bring him home."*

Prayers from prisoners' families for Prisons Week

THURSDAY: PRAYING WITH COMMUNITIES

Are we free where we live?

Everlasting God, who leads his people in every age to places where we are called to be community together, make us mindful of those places in our own communities that are subject to fear, violence and rejection. Equip us by your Holy Spirit to share your love, peace and acceptance with all. May we learn to love each other as ourselves, living as neighbours were intended to and join our prayers together. Everlasting God, set us free. Amen.

*"We ask that you knit our hearts, our vision &
our actions together across our community that
we may all be totally free to live life abundantly
in your love."*

Prayer for communities affected by Domestic Violence

FRIDAY: PRAYING WITH THOSE WORKING IN PRISON

Are we free to work well?

Gracious God, who calls, equips and knows us, be with all who work in prison. May we not lose heart in a place where the reality of trauma and the risk of violence is a daily occurrence. Keep us from being imprisoned by our roles but instead set us free by your love, able to meet with others and understand their true needs in Christ. Tune us in to the surprising movement of your Spirit. Gracious God, set us free. Amen.

*"We ask that you bless and protect all who work
in our prisons today. Those with uniforms on,
suits, overalls, hard hats, and chef's whites. May
we serve them well and rely on your strength
to bring a sense of your grace and peace
wherever we go."*

A Prison Chaplain's prayer

SATURDAY: PRAYING WITH THOSE WORKING IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Are we free to do what is right?

God of majesty and power, who establishes the order of the universe, and upholds justice in your mighty right hand, sustain and inspire all who seek to bring justice in our communities. Where the truth is complex or hidden, help those making decisions that seek to reveal the truth, to do so wisely, with a vision of your righteousness, justice and mercy. Majestic, powerful God, set us free. Amen.

*"Lord, give all of us the courage we need to do
what is right. And to serve you, the Judge of
all, with fidelity."*

A prayer for courts and judges

For more information, to make a donation or to order more of these prayer leaflets please visit our website at www.prisonswalk.org, email us via info@prisonswalk.org or write to: **Prisons Week, c/o Free Churches Group, 27 Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9HH**

For over forty years Prisons Week has prepared prayer literature for the Christian community to use as they pray for the needs of all those affected by prisons: prisoners and victims, their families, their communities, those working and volunteering in prisons and the criminal justice system. Please pray each day during Prisons Week but also ask yourself whether there is one thing that you as an individual, or as a church, can do to help any of the people that you are praying for.

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PRISONS WEEK
A WEEK OF PRAYER

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