



Fellowship of the Least Coin

2018 Prayer Concerns

These prayer concerns are our invitation to you to participate in the Fellowship of the Least Coin (FLC). Each time we pray for justice, peace and reconciliation in our own lives, we set aside one "least coin" as a symbol of our prayer and our commitment to peace, justice and reconciliation in the lives of others. For more information, visit our FLC pages at wicc.org.

january Ecumenism

I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another. (John 13:34-35, NRSV)

Though there are many branches of Christianity, ecumenism fosters unity between different denominations and Churches. John 13 reminds us that the love we have for one another will mark us as Christian disciples for all the world to see. By demonstrating love for our Christian brothers and sisters as well as those who do not yet know God, we are able to provide a living, breathing image of Christ's compassion.

Prayer:

God, we thank you for your unyielding love for us. As members of the Christian family, we pray that your Spirit will empower us to love each and every human being as unconditionally as you have loved us. We pray for Christian unity as we are called to love one another, asking that you bless us and protect us as we endeavour to

share your compassion and love with the world. Thank you for your peace, your blessing, and your guidance. May we feel your presence in us as we continue to spread your love worldwide. Amen.

*Lauren Wilks, Thorold, ON.
World Day of Prayer Liaison and
WICC Council member.*

february The Philippines (WDP 2017 Host Country)

The Philippines is endowed with rich natural resources, and the Filipinos are considered one of the most hospitable and friendliest peoples globally. But a majority of families continue to live in poverty, making them vulnerable to all forms of exploitation. Involuntary displacement; the fracturing of families; trafficking of workers, especially women and children; corruption in all levels of governance; political instability; the search for peaceful resolutions with anti-government insurgents and the current war with terrorists in the south are issues that plague the country.

Pray for the unity of churches and that they will work effectively in seeking freedom, justice, and peace for the oppressed; pray for the raising and equipping of saints in every arena of life to serve selflessly as "salt" and "light"; pray that the people will hunger for the Truth (not only physical and material comfort), and find rest in knowing Christ, our Saviour who reigns over all; pray for the deliverance of communities besieged by terrorists; pray that government leaders will be filled by the Spirit to lead in wisdom and righteousness; pray that the global Filipino diaspora would be fruitful channels through which the Good News of Christ might be known and received.

*Marian Nacpil, Toronto, ON.
WICC Communications Chair
and Council member.*

march World Day of Prayer 2018: Suriname

This year, our World Day of Prayer focus is on the people of Suriname who are very diverse—ethnically, culturally, religiously, and linguistically. Suriname is a small country north of Brazil in South America. Among ten districts, Paramaribo and Wancía account for less than .5% of the total area of Suriname but hold 65% of the population. The service highlights preserving creation so we may continue to hear the words "It is good."

A major concern for Suriname is gold mining in the Amazon which causes deforestation of their beautiful rainforest and contamination of their rivers and food supply. Populated areas allow families to better educate their children despite an average wage that is less than one-tenth of a miner's income. Constant hard work in isolated areas erodes family relationships when miners are separated many months of the year. Fatigue leaves workers susceptible to malaria. Standing water left over from sluicing for gold is a perfect breeding ground for mosquitoes that spread malaria. Mercury, used to separate gold from the soil, has contaminated waterways and fish. Crime is also a concern.

Some organizations are working to bring awareness of the ecological impact of mining. Indigenous people are being trained to monitor the mercury levels in fish and water and the results of deforestation. Initiatives, such as handicrafts and agriculture are being introduced to give an alternative, sustainable income.

Let us pray for the people in Suriname, and all people, that we embrace respect for our environment and we continue to say, "All God's creation is very good!"

*Irene Churchill, Eganville, ON.
WICC Past President and Council alumnus.*

april

Mental Health

Mental health is complex and, often, misunderstood. In the Bible we find archaic language and understanding about diseases and illnesses we can now explain through a more medical and scientific approach. But if we look at the healing stories in the Gospels, we see some of the complexity of relationships touched by mental health concerns.

Look for the parents who brought their children to Jesus for healing.

Pray for mothers who hide behind locked doors for safety because some people who care for children with mental health issues can be subjected to violent outbursts.

Look for the outcasts and untouchables from a fearful society.

Pray for those women and girls who are excluded, lonely, depressed, suicidal, and who have too few resources for help.

Look for the gratitude in the ones who have been healed.

Pray for those mental health care workers who seek to offer Jesus' loving care and compassion for the healing of bodies, hearts, and minds.

Where we tend to hang back because of societal stigma, Jesus launched into service. Where we offer help from a distance, Jesus came near—to touch, hold and heal. Jesus spread unconditional love and drove out the demons of fear, isolation, worthlessness and broken relationships. Pray that we who follow Christ's example may live his radical compassion.

*Stephanie McClellan, Lewisporte, NL.
WICC Council member*

may

Mothers—Midwifery

Anna Jarvis, in 1908, was successful in her quest to set aside a day to honour all mothers. She conceived an idea whereby people would honour their mothers with a visit, a handwritten note expressing gratitude, love. However, in his article "Mother's Day's Dark History" for National Geographic News, Brian Hadwerk reports the forgotten fact that Anna's mother, Ann Reeves Jarvis, was a peace activist who cared for wounded soldiers and created Mother's Day work clubs to address public health issues such as infant mortality. Mother's Day was not purely personal; the Jarvis legacy reflected a broad societal concern.

In 2016, a World Day of Prayer grant supported Horizons of Friendship's project in Totonicapán, Guatemala, "Maternal, Newborn and Child Health" to supplement the traditional knowledge of Indigenous midwives in remote areas of Guatemala with training in Western medical techniques. Totonicapán is located in the western highlands of Guatemala. For Indigenous women there, an emergency during labour might require a two-day journey, carried by her family in a blanket sling, just to get to a road.

With few technological aids, the midwives offer women and babies culturally safe and accessible care. A mother can ask questions and get answers in the comfort of her own language. The traditional midwives have markedly increased maternal, newborn and child health and reduced infant mortality. They have also been able to visit Canada to exchange their knowledge with midwives here.

Pray for those we honour as our mothers and for those dedicated to life-bringing care for others.

*June James, Winnipeg, MB.
WICC Secretary-Treasurer and
Council member*

june

Indigenous Health

Julie Lys, a Metis nurse practitioner, was born into a large Metis family in Fort Smith, Northwest Territories. She started her career in healthcare at 14 years old, working as a volunteer in the local hospital. She took her initial diploma in Nursing in Edmonton and graduated in 1985. In 1987, she returned to the North to work as a nurse in her home community. In 2007, she graduated with a Masters in Nursing—Advanced Nursing Practice and began working as a nurse practitioner.

Throughout her nursing career, Julie has been active in Indigenous health, education, and research. Julie has shared her experiences working as an Indigenous nurse at several conferences and gatherings, to bring Indigenous health issues to the forefront. In 2012, she spoke at a national roundtable at Rideau Hall to address ways of improving Indigenous health and healing.

With 32 years of nursing and Indigenous health knowledge, Julie is working with Northwest Territories Metis Nation to develop Indigenous on-the-land healing and wellness programs. These programs focus on connecting youth, adults and Elders to share local traditional knowledge that helps improve healing and wellness. Talking, sharing and healing circles help participants understand the history of Indigenous people in Canada and how this has affected health and wellness. Medicine walks and genealogy groups help connect participants to the land, each other, and their ancestors. Participants gain strength and resilience by understanding who they are and where they have come from.

God, we pray for the health of Indigenous people and for the efforts of healers like Julie to instill traditional ways of wellness.

*Mona Fox, Eganville, ON.
WICC Council member.*

july

Children's Programs

Proverbs 22:6 says "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not turn from it."

Whether it is "Totus Tuus" (Totally Yours) at the Catholic church, Vacation Bible Camp at the United Church, or any of the Christian churches in your area, many offer programs as an outreach of their ministries. Kids sing, learn bible lessons, make friends, create crafts, perform plays and learn how to treat others, among other valuable lessons and strengthen their bond with God.

Choosing the right program begins with determining your child's needs and interests, then looking for one that fits your family's budget, overall beliefs and interests as well.

Making time for your child to continue interacting with his/her peers is important for them and it also allows time for you to rest and renew your strength.

Whatever you choose to do during the summer, remember that our God never takes a holiday and is constantly watching over us!

Summer Prayer

Sovereign of all, thank you for the summer!

For increased daylight, warmth of the sun and the beauty of nature.

Thank you for the gentle pace of summer and time for family and friends. Draw us closer to you and remind us that we can pray anywhere and any time.

Bless and protect children during the summer and help them to grow in grace but also to become aware that many are less fortunate. Develop in them a compassionate spirit and generous heart. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

*Donna Shaddick, Brooklin, ON.
WICC Council member.*

august

Water

This is what my research has revealed to me about water:

A: Water & The Bible

Water symbolizes God's word in many places throughout the Bible. Water is mentioned 722 times in the scriptures; that is less than God, Jesus, heaven or love but many more times than faith, hope, prayers, or even worship. All 722 references link water to God's creating, blessing, and saving work. They remind us of our creator and saviour, unite us with the Spirit, and transform and purify both the world and every believer.

B: Water Facts, Our Economy and The Well Being of the World

Seventy percent of Earth is covered with water. It is essential to health; social and economic development—\$1.00 invested in water/sanitation returns in \$8.00 of economic growth.

The physical world of water is closely bound up with the socio-political world, often a key factor in managing risks such as famine, migration, epidemics, inequalities and political instabilities.

Less than 10 countries possess 60% of the world's available freshwater supply. Access to a fresh water supply is still lacking for 1.8 billion people. Since 1940, the world's population has doubled, but, the water use has quadrupled.

God, we pray that you may help us to accept the Bible and water connection; cherish and respect and honour them both as free gifts of God given to us so that the soul, mind, and body of all the peoples of the Earth can be redeemed, refreshed and nourished. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

*Nettie Dueck, Winnipeg, MB.
WICC Council member.*

sept ember

The Widening Gap Between the Rich and the Poor

Read Luke 16: 19-31, the parable of Lazarus and the rich man.

Alert: Just eight men own the same wealth as half the world (3.6 billion people). Inequality is bad for everyone; with fewer opportunities for better education, employment and health; and increased exploitation, crime, corruption, and violence.

Inequality exists between nations: the world's wealthiest countries have just 13% of the world's population but 45% of its purchasing power; the poorest nations have 42% of the world's population and 9% of its purchasing power.

The Gini coefficient measuring economic inequality shows income inequality in Canada has increased from a low of 0.281 in 1989 but has remained around 0.32 since 2000.

We need to encourage our government to help reduce inequality by budgets and laws that encourage living wages in Canada; hold Canadian companies accountable abroad; close the gender pay gap; make sure women are treated fairly at work; invest in public services like child care and elder care; and increase the aid budget to tackle global poverty.

Prayer for Economic Justice

O God, in solidarity with the poor, let us:

- refrain from wasting, by sharing fairly the earth's goods;
- refrain from ignorance, by becoming more knowledgeable;
- refrain from inactivity, by advocating on behalf of the poor;
- refrain from apathy, by showing compassion and generosity;
- refrain from discrimination, by showing God's love for all.

Amen.

*Glenda Klein, Lindsay, ON.
WICC alumna.*

october

Fellowship of the Least Coin

The Fellowship of the Least Coin is, first and foremost, a global prayer movement for peace and reconciliation. In 1956, it was created to build and repair relationships between women from Asian countries after the Second World War by having women visit, listen, and pray for and with each other. After 61 years, wars still ravage our world, and women and children are often the most vulnerable. Now, more than ever, we must visit, listen, and pray for and with each other.

The Fellowship of the Least Coin intentionally invites all women and children to participate in this prayer movement. Since each prayer for peace and reconciliation is symbolized by a "least coin" whether that's a penny, anna, or centavo, people of all socioeconomic statuses can join. Regardless of how little or how much people have, all can be generous and all can pray for peace and reconciliation.

God, help us to know that we are all a part of your world. Help us to know each other more and to listen and pray for one another. Help us to set aside the least coins that we have so that we may support those whom the world considers "the least of these." Help us to pray for all of your beloved, your children, our siblings. May these "least coins" be blessed to do great things for women, children, and communities all over our world. May women and children touched by injustice receive true peace and the beginnings of reconciliation in their everyday lives. Amen.

Awit Marcellino, Toronto, ON.

*International Fellowship of the Least Coin
Representative and WICC Council member.*

november

Peace

This month, our prayers are for peace. Our dream for peace would include the absence of war, violence, injustice, living in a world of international cooperation, in harmony with each other.

"It isn't enough to talk about peace. One must believe in it. And it isn't enough to believe in it. One must work at it." (*Eleanor Roosevelt*)

So how do we work at bringing about peace? Amongst other things, by compassion, forgiveness, justice, respect, understanding, embracing differences, and overcoming hatred with love.

"All works of love are works of peace." (*Mother Teresa*)

Maybe the first step for all of us is to "love our neighbours as ourselves".

Almighty God, accept the prayers we offer for peace in this world. We pray:

- For wisdom for the leaders of our nations in their decisions as they seek to end wars and strive for world peace.
- For courage to stand up for what we believe as we seek to end injustices and strive for justice.
- For our hearts to be open to truly love our neighbours as ourselves and that the peace which comes from that love will reign throughout the world, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

In the wise words of William Ewart Gladstone, "We look forward to the time when the Power of Love will replace the Love of Power. Then will our world know the blessings of peace."

Anita Gittens, Toronto, ON.

*WICC Membership and Nomination Chair
and Council member.*

december

Gender-based Violence

Gender-based violence (GBV) is deeply rooted in our cultures, institutions, and religions. It affects all of us. Gender-based violence comes from unequal power relationships and includes battering, intimate partner violence, sexual abuse of children in the household, sexual harassment and intimidation at work and in schools, commercial sexual exploitation, and trafficking. Usually the object of this violence is female.

Thursdays in Black was started by the World Council of Churches back in the 1980s. At a recent meeting, WICC's Board passed a motion to encourage staff and Council to wear black on Thursdays as a public witness for a global movement urging an end to rape and violence. Individuals and congregations are also encouraged to stand in solidarity with our sisters who bear the scars of violence and demand an end to violence against women.

God cares for those who suffer and calls on us to work with each other for the healing of the world. Working to end rape and violence is an important part of creating a world where all people are valued. Let us remember to wear black in solidarity with those who bear the scars of violence. Read Genesis 34: 1-2.

Prayer: Creating God, mother of us all, we will wear black in solidarity with people around the world to honour the courage and resilience of the victims and survivors of gender-based violence while committing to work toward an end to such violence. May black remind us of the hope for transformation that grows stronger every time a cycle of violence is broken and that is nurtured by each action against violence and rape.

Diane Dwarka, Winnipeg, MB.

WICC President-Elect and Council member.



Why will I this be the Last complimentary copy of Riding the Waves mailed to FLC groups? We think you will agree that FLC funds are best used to support FLC grants and scholarships for young women like Brenda Nyatanga (story, page 17). These prayer concerns are available by email or for download from our website wicc.org.

