

Anglican Peace & Justice Network

The global newsletter from the grassroots

Prayer during Covid-19 Pandemic

God of compassion, be close to those who are ill, afraid or in isolation.

In their loneliness, be their consolation;

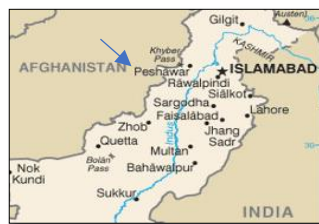
in their anxiety, be their hope;

in their darkness, be their light;

through him who suffered alone on the cross but reigns with you in glory, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Staying Faithful in the Face of Injustice

Dr Khushbakht Peters,
Peshawar, Pakistan



Our country Pakistan was created as a place where people would have tolerance and mutual respect for all the religions. “You are free; .. free to go to your temples. .. free to go to your mosques or to any other places of worship ... You may belong to any religion, caste or creed—that has nothing to do with the business of the state.” These were the words uttered by the founder of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah. We were free and safe to live as people of the faith to which we belonged. Yet 73 years later, Pakistani Christians are still trying to maintain their distinct existence and identity.

The Church in Pakistan has faced hostilities in many forms: the burning alive of a Christian couple on the basis of a financial strife; the attacks and burning of our churches and houses; the case of Asia Bibi, who was falsely accused of blasphemy; many Christians beaten to death by police; mental torture in schools and at our workplace, forceful conversion and acquisition of church properties. These are to name just a few.

Full churches

With that being said, we have seen throughout this history that atrocities have always lead to the growth of the faith of the Church. For all the mistreatment and oppression that we have faced over the years, we now have a stronger faith in Christ and are able to draw nearer to God. We have realized that we cannot and will not compromise our faith. This can be noticed in our Sunday Services, where our churches are full and 30% of the congregation are young people.

April 2020

Issue 02

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Serving those of other faiths

We continue to work for the betterment of our neighbours and our nation, trying in our own style to fulfill the Great Commission. We work with Muslim, Hindu, and Sikh communities. Recent projects include youth interfaith summer camps which were attended by members of these communities, as well as the Ba'hai community. Work has been done at a grassroots level by teachers in church-based schools promoting interfaith harmony and tolerance amongst the younger children. The Church has Mission hospitals in the province that are providing active service to all communities irrespective of religion, caste or creed, and therefore maintaining their Christian identity.

In this time of Covid-19 where the government hospitals have announced closure of Out-Patient Department and Elective Surgery, checking only emergency cases, our hospitals are still functioning as usual.

Despite all the difficulties we face, we strive to be a source of blessing for the entire nation of Pakistan irrespective of creed or colour.

Dr. Khushbakht Peters is an ophthalmologist at Mission Hospital, Peshawar, and freelance interfaith correspondent

Lockdown & Fake News in Zambia: the local church models a response to Covid-19

An interview with Katete Jackson Jones, April 2020

The fight against the Coronavirus is said to be largely prevention: preventing oneself coming into contact with the virus. This entails citizens confining themselves to their homes so that the virus doesn't spread itself around through people-contact.

In countries with better economies, people can more easily be confined to their homes because they can store food to survive or they can organise

a home delivery by ordering online or using their phones.

The situation in Zambia where so many people have a 'hand to mouth' existence makes any such 'lockdown' difficult if not impossible. We have to fetch our food literally on a daily basis. People have no savings. The choice is stark: either die in your home from hunger or risk contracting coronavirus by going out to fetch food, which may lead to death. Both options are risky. Zambians need help as do many other countries with weaker economies.

Many Zambians wonder what will happen to them: if the coronavirus has brought UK, America, Italy, France, Germany and other countries to their knees, how are we with a much poorer economy going to survive? In addition, many resources have been taken out of Africa by those who would exploit us; our traditional way of life has been changed; and our social safety nets are no longer as strong as they were.



Archdeacon Katete on national Zambian TV

Practical protection

The Anglican Church, which was the first church in Zambia to declare church closures, initiated practical action in Kaunda Square Parish in Lusaka. The women, together with their parish priest, the Venerable Canon Katete Jackson Jones decided to provide face masks and hand sanitisers to members of the community so that they could go out and fetch food for their families. 450 masks were hand-sewn and distributed amongst the community and

were readily accepted. There is another challenge however for Christians in Zambia.

Fake news versus faith

Some people in Zambia have been tempted to judge those who take such practical action against the Covid-19 virus as lacking faith. This has confused some Christian believers about how they should respond.

Rev. Jones has warned his parishioners against this danger:

“we need to be vigilant, careful and wise as we are bombarded with fake news, fake prophecies and unwise theologies. Don’t be misled by some mischievous church preachers, fake prophets and teachers of doom. Let’s not put people’s lives in danger by propagating untruths.

God gave us our brains and they are important in serving and worshipping Him. Coronavirus is real and deadly. Be wise, be faithful: wash and sanitise your hands, and disinfect your homes. Don’t live in dirty homes just because you are a Christian believer!”

Inspired by his message, the Zambian national television channel (ZNBC) broadcast the story to motivate other communities to take similar action and help the communities survive the coronavirus epidemic. The women of Kuanda parish now have over 1000 orders for handmade masks from other areas of the country. The Zambian government has also publicly advocated the use of hand-sewn masks.

Katete Jackson Jones is Archdeacon of Anglican Diocese of Lusaka, Zambia & Volunteer Director - Anglican Children's Programme

Fear in the Eye of a Storm – the devastation of climate change

Canon Reid Simon, West Indies



Destruction of Roseau, Dominica post hurricane Maria, 2017, ©Carisealand

Someone once said that the fear of death is worse than death itself. I am inclined to think this is true for many people in the West Indies. Their reality is that between the months of June to November, there is a profound feeling of fear, deep uncertainty and unease as to what will happen during the hurricane season. Almost every island in the Caribbean has been affected by a storm in the last few years. There are plenty of places where you can still see the effects of a storm.

Stronger hurricanes

The people of the region have seen a marked increase in the ferocity of hurricanes in recent years. The climatologists list hurricanes on a scale of Category 1 to Category 5 with the latter being the most dangerous. However in 2017 one hurricane was listed as being ‘Category 5 plus plus,’ which meant that this storm had broken new ground, and had gone beyond Category 5 strength. Dominica, Bahamas, St. Maarten, Anguilla, Puerto Rico all have a story to tell about the extremely dangerous storms which have come their way, and with increasing frequency in recent years.

Soaring costs as island economies are decimated

The effects of global warming are now felt acutely in the Caribbean. Hurricanes and tropical storms are wreaking havoc on the lives of people. It is estimated that since the occurrence of a Category

5 hurricane in 2017, there has been an estimated \$3 billion US in damages. And the costs are skyrocketing. The economies of small island states are virtually being decimated. It takes years to rebuild economies. And then there is the loss of life which comes with the economic devastation.

We note that there are many countries which must shoulder the blame for the global warming phenomena. Why is it that some industrialised nations are not doing enough to curb their emissions as well as mitigate against the pollutants which contribute to these new weather patterns? There may be some who seek to deny the presence of global warming, but the wrath of the storms meted out on the people of the Caribbean region bears testimony to its effects.

Church partnerships for disaster mitigation

The church along with civil society has been looking at ways to change the structure of buildings so as to withstand the wind speeds of these increasingly strong storms. This increases the cost of construction which takes a further toll on the poor and vulnerable. We are very thankful to the

Anglican Alliance and its Regional Co-ordinator Mr. Clifton Nedd for providing training in disaster mitigation through the hosting of a Caribbean Disaster Forum. This was vital to the ongoing discussions on disaster preparation and management. Participants have been challenged to liaise with the Caribbean Facilitator to provide information on disasters, including relief needs and preparation and response activities within the Diocese. It was also encouraged parishes and individuals to participate, to shape and help deliver the Alliance's global and regional advocacy initiatives.

The people of the Caribbean remain extremely vulnerable to these hurricanes and must live with this fear of never knowing what will be their ferocity in any given year. It is indeed unpredictable. The prayer of the people of the region is that God will grant protection during the hurricane season; it is also the prayer that should these storms arise, there will not be any loss of life. We continue to pray that more persons would become engaged in addressing the disastrous effects of global warming. Let us remember that the earth belongs to the Lord.

Racial & Environmental Justice through the Eyes of A Wild church

Laurel Dykstra and Elizabeth Mathers, Canada

Salal + Cedar is a ministry of the Anglican Diocese of New Westminster, Canada, on the unceded traditional territory of the Coast Salish people. This is where the Fraser River meets the Salish Sea. We explore wilderness, sustainability, and justice themes in Christian scriptures and Anglican social teaching in our multi-racial context of indigenous-settler history of lower-mainland British Columbia. The Coast Salish People are the Indigenous People of this part of Turtle Island and the unceded traditional territory is land where Aboriginal Title has never been surrendered by them.



We are a community of people in and around Vancouver who have a heart for creation, feel most connected to God in ocean, forest, river, and field, and are deeply concerned about the global climate emergency. We want to respond effectively. We want to bring our faith to work for ecological justice; we are environmental activists, who keep our faith quiet, and we believe racial justice, economic justice, and environmental justice are all connected.



<https://anglicanpeacejustice.net>

<https://www.facebook.com/AnglicansforPwithJ/>

We ask ourselves: *“What does it mean to be a Christian, to follow the discipleship Way, in our particular part of creation, with these particular species, geography, and histories of human intervention?”*

A Wild Church

We are a Wild Church, who worships outdoors and sees the creatures, elements, and geography of the natural world as co-leader and participant. We are part of the Wild Church Network, a movement across Turtle Island (North America) of communities of Christians re-connecting to the creation-values and land covenants at the core of our tradition. We uphold the growing commitment in the Anglican Communion to the Fifth Mark of Mission, ***“to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.”***

Our group is diverse; we strive to make our events accessible for all bodies, all ages, all genders, and all families. We practice contemplative ecology and spiritually-rooted action, meeting regularly for worship outdoors, action and education.

Action against injustice

In our action, we connect with other groups who share similar interests. We have stood with local First Nations in grass-roots resistance to the planned twinning of the Trans Mountain Pipeline, which would increase the flow of diluted bitumen from the Alberta Oil Sands to the coast. Members of the Salal + Cedar community have been arrested and have served jail time.

With a grant from the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, we have been working with a local parish to improve wildlife habitat on the portion of the creek that runs through their property, by removing invasive plants and replacing them with native species.

In our education, a focus has been the annual **Sacred Earth Camp**, a residential environmental leadership program for youth and young adults, in which the campers get to know their bio-region, learn the climate justice issues in Coast Salish territories, and grow the practical skills and spiritual practices for effective change.

Laurel Dykstra is Priest of Salal + Cedar and serves on the diocesan anti-racism training team

Elizabeth Mathers, is Deacon of the Salal community

In our worship, we meet regularly in different locations for innovative outdoor liturgy. Our watershed-focused Eucharistic Prayer is being used in the diocese, ecumenically, and in a few cases internationally. A live Nativity with farm animals, the wild-crafting of Holy Oils for the Holy Week Chrism Mass, an annual environmental Holy Saturday Stations of the Cross and a spring blessing of bicycles have marked the seasons.

On invitation, a team from the community visits local churches for the main Sunday worship to provide liturgical leadership and preach.



Kayak protest against the Trans-Mountain Pipeline Tanker Berth construction on Burrard Inlet

Serving the Poor during the Coronavirus Lockdown in the Philippines

James Boliget, Philippines

The order to stay at home because of Covid-19 has caused thousands of people in the Philippines to go hungry. This is especially true in the informal sectors of society or those engaged in daily paid jobs. The loss of mobility and jobs has consigned them to a situation where their only source of food is relief goods from government and non-government agencies. To augment this, the dioceses and some parishes of the Episcopal Church in the Philippines have also launched food relief operations.

The whole of Luzon has been on lockdown since the first week of March and our Diocesan Bishop, the Rt. Rev. Rex Reyes Jr. initiated a fund raising from local members and churches in order to bring food parcels to some of our urban poor communities that were not yet served by government agencies.

With the same spirit, the Episcopal Church in the Philippines launched a program through the Episcopal CARE (ECARE) foundation called “Voucher Support System” to provide cash relief to those in need. The program will give cash to people who are in need but are willing to render their service in the future after the lifting of the lockdown based on the skills and jobs they can perform. Parish priests will be the ones to endorse a parishioner’s application.

ECARE has run this scheme in the past. It is inviting Episcopalians/Anglicans to support this program by contributing funds as well as contributing to the relief of needy communities. Those who will contribute are assured that their contributions are repaid in the future in cash or in service. ECARE guarantees such repayment.

James Boliget, Episcopal/Anglican church in the Philippines

APJN NEWS!

The [Anglican Peace and Justice Network](https://anglicanpeacejustice.net) (APJN) Steering Group met in Aylesbury, England, in December 2019. In a spirit of prayerful reflection and sharing, those present affirmed and strengthened the network’s mission, which is based on the Fourth Mark of Mission: ***‘To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation’.***

The Steering Group received reports from various regions of the Anglican Communion on how the church has been engaging in peace and justice issues some of which are reflected in this newsletter.



The APJN Steering Group

They affirmed the aim of the network as enabling and encouraging Anglicans working for peace with justice by

- walking alongside those who contribute to peacebuilding
- connecting people with common interests
- standing in solidarity with those working to make a difference to the lives of the oppressed in every society

The Steering Group’s areas of focus include migration, gender, environmental justice, reconciliation, advocacy economic justice, the arms trade, Safe Church, the Church’s role in ministering to those who have been traumatized by conflict. The network asked for the prayerful support of those in the Anglican Communion to bring into being God’s Kingdom of justice and peace for all.

Striving for Peace in South Sudan

Rev. Canon Dr. Joseph Bilal, South Sudan, in conversation with Jane Basa Namurye, Archbishop of Canterbury's Reconciliation Ministry, U.K.

The Episcopal Church of South Sudan (ECSS) has had a significant impact on peacebuilding, forgiveness and reconciliation amongst the different communities of South Sudan.

A key broker has been the Mediation Team (MT), formed in 2018, by the church's Justice, Peace & Reconciliation Commission (JPRC). Tasked with the work of promoting advocacy and peace building across the whole county as part of the implementation of the Revitalized Peace Agreement, the team focuses on three strategic areas.

Building security

The team engages the government and opposition to speed up implementation of the security arrangements particularly establishment of cantonment sites; another is reunify and train the national army.

Facilitating the return of those who have fled

The team helps facilitate the rehabilitation the internally displaced people (IDPs) and returnees. During the conflicts thousands of South Sudanese Refugees who fled to the neighbouring countries had their plots and houses occupied by others. Some occupants went as far as processing documents or land title deeds to own the land. The Church mediation team advocates for the peaceful return of the property including lands to their real owners upon their return.

Good governance

The team also advocates for the approval of newly drafted constitution and policies that support and promote a system of good governance throughout the whole of South Sudan.

Since its formation, the mediation team was able to reach out to over 1000 stakeholders (politicians, chiefs, communities' leaders, youth and women)

across the whole country. Their engagement has had a significant impact. They have helped the warring parties stay the course of peace, and this in turn has led to the formation of the new Government of National Unity in the country.

Grass roots work to heal inter communal conflicts

In addition, the mediation team were able to bring cattle keepers and farmers together for dialogue which has reduced the conflicts between these two groups. For example, a three-day conference which brought five communities (Bari, Yangwara, Mundari, Pajulu Tijor and Pajulu Wonduruba) of the two defunct states of Jubek and Terekeka together in December 2018, enabled those communities to end their conflicts and restore peace and co-existence among themselves.

Another inter-communal issue is cattle raiding and rustling associated with revenge killing. The mediation team held regular meetings with community leaders to encourage action on reducing negative attitudes towards others. Together the communities drafted, modified and shared action points encourage the parties to forge a common interest for the welfare of their communities.

JPRC has trained experts on trauma healing and reconciliation. Those experts who were trained in Rwanda are facilitating trauma healing and reconciliation at the grassroots levels.



Mama Lucia Thomas leading a trauma healing workshop in Rwanda, 2018



Group discussions in Train the Trainer (TOT) workshop on trauma healing in Juba, February 2020.



Sunday Antony, one of the women trained by Mama Lucia in Rwanda, training others in Juba, February 2020

Gender-based and sexual violence (GBSV)

Furthermore, JPRC plan to initiate an amendment of oral customary laws in South Sudan to address the issue of Gender Based and Sexual Violence in the country. The GBSV indicates that there is cultural and traditional gap in various communities in South Sudan that needs to be addressed. It is therefore important to build the capacity of the traditional leaders to play a major role in identifying the negative cultural practice and views against women.

Empowering army chaplains to deal with trauma and violence

ECSS through JPRC is also involved in training of the army Chaplains as part of capacity building to the chaplains. They are not only trained on pastoral care and counselling but also on mediation, dialogue methods, trauma counselling and GBSV issues. The

plan is to expand this training into the South Sudan Defence Force (SSDF) divisions in Bahr el-Ghazal and other states. Under JPRC ECSS is doing consultation with the community leaders the prospect of peaceful and voluntary disarmament. There are so many guns in the hands of civilians resulting into unnecessary loss of lives. This also will be included into the army chaplains training package.

The Mothers Union has just concluded a successful workshop. The church is waiting to see how women leaders in the church could coordinate with the newly formed Peace Office to consolidate peace and reconciliation processes.

Signs of hope

As of January 2020, there is relative calm and signs of peace taking shape across the whole country, although inter-communal and tribal violence is taking place in Pibor between Lou Nuer and Murle communities. Both the Presidency and church leadership are trying to mediate to calm the situation there.

Prayer for the new Government of National Unity

The Presidency and New Cabinet for the Government of National Unity was sworn in on 22 February 2020. There are new faces in the cabinet but 85% of the ministers are old guard particularly from the government side and opposition as well. We pray that they may be able to do something new or implement the reforms including Security reforms, law reforms and economic reforms which are top in the priority list. There are nine women in the cabinet although majority of them had been in the government for a long time. Despite the Coronavirus pandemic, the ceasefire seems to be holding across the country. It is still too early to say but we pray that all will go well. The formation of state governors and ministers and members of Legislative national and state assemblies is yet to happen.

The Rev. Canon Dr. Joseph Bilal is Acting Deputy Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Admin and Finance, The Episcopal University (TEU) of South Sudan.