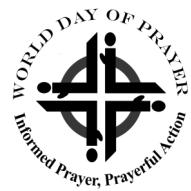


World Day of Prayer

Prepared by the WDP Committee of
Nigeria



March 6th, 2026

“I Will Give You Rest: Come”

Matthew 11 : 28



Short Service

World Day of Prayer (Scottish Committee)

Charity Number SC020446

Website <http://www.wdpscotland.org.uk>

Leader 1**WORDS OF WELCOME**

Welcome, dear friends, to this gathering of people from various communities across the globe. We come together on this day to lift our collective voices, united in prayer and action

Our theme, *I Will Give You Rest: Come*, written by Christian women in Nigeria, draws inspiration from Matthew 11:28. It serves as a heartfelt invitation from Jesus to all who are burdened and heavy-laden. And so, you are invited to come, just as you are. Bring all that weighs you down, so that you may find rest.

Leader 2**OPENING PRAYER**

Let us pray

God, our Burden Bearer, we come before you in praise and adoration! You are the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. In you we live and move and have our being.

We have gathered trusting your promise that where two or three are gathered in your name you are with us. And so, we welcome and celebrate your presence in our midst.

We commit this worship into your hands, praying that you will come among us. Help us be open to the Spirit that you are releasing upon us and let your presence fill this place.

In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

HYMN OF INVITATION – *Art Thou Weary* (Cuttle Mills or Stefanos)

Are you burdened, are you weary, do you feel oppressed?
"Come," the Voice of Love invites us to find rest.

Are you lonely, are you grieving, feeling pain, distress?
In our sisterhood of faith, you will be blessed.

Refrain

*Praying, hoping, singing, loving, will we find our rest?
Faithful people rise together, answer "Yes!"*

When we come with heavy spirits, where can we find peace?
In the arms of Love, anxiety will cease.

Can we thrive through the poverty that's holding us down?
In God's kingdom, we are honoured, we are blessed.

Refrain

*Praying, hoping, singing, loving, will we find our rest?
Faithful people rise together, answer "Yes!"*

Reader

SCRIPTURE READING - *Matthew 11:28-30 (NRSV)*

Let us turn our hearts and minds to the words of Jesus found in the Gospel of Matthew. Let us hear these words as a gracious invitation from the very heart of God.

"Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

HYMN: Brother, Sister, Let me serve you (Servant Song)

Leader 1

STORIES & PRAYERS

There's a proverb used in Nigeria that says, "The pain of one is the pain of all." As we hear these stories, let's remember that what affects each of these women also affects us.

We'll hear of widows overcoming oppression, mothers finding courage to send their daughters to school, and daily challenges testing people's faith - experiences that resonate across cultures and borders.

These stories aren't meant to bring despair. Rather, they show how God truly gives rest even in the most difficult situations.

THEME SONG – *Come Unto Me* (Chisom R Chukwumerije 2024) Composed especially for the World Day of Prayer This is available on Youtube if you have the facilities to show/listen to it

Woman 1

BEATRICE'S STORY: The Burden of Systemic Oppression

My name is Beatrice. I became a widow at 28 when my husband was killed in a communal clash. That day, I lost my partner and my place in society. Alone with three children, I faced a world that turned its back on me.

As a widow in Nigeria, I struggled with poverty, losing our income, and finding work. My in-laws, instead of supporting me, tried taking my husband's property. Some days, I didn't know how to feed my children or pay their school fees.

In despair, I found strength in faith and a church support program, where I met other widows. Their resilience and commitment to Christ

inspired me. One widow organized donations of food, clothes, and money, motivating me to help others too.

Through faith and community, we honor our husbands' memory, lay our burdens at Jesus' feet, and find strength to carry on.

Woman 2

JATO'S STORY: The Burden of Religious Persecution

My name is Jato, a Christian mother in northern Nigeria. Each day, I send my 14-year-old daughter, Amina, to school with unease, thinking of Leah Sharibu, taken by Boko Haram at the same age. Leah's story is a haunting reminder of the dangers we face.

Living amidst religious persecution is challenging. Some Christians are killed for their faith, yet by God's grace, we coexist with Muslim neighbors in parts of Nigeria. Conflicts over faith aren't new, even in Jesus' time. He taught us to love those who wish us harm, offering the promise of His light yoke.

Through faith, I've learned to love my neighbors despite adversity. In Damaturu, Christians pray for Leah's safe return. Their resilience inspires me to keep loving and living alongside all. I pray daily for Amina's safety and heart, hoping she will stand firm in faith and see God's image in all. This surrender to Christ makes our burdens lighter, offering true rest in Him.

Woman 3

BLESSING'S STORY: The Burdens of Poverty and Despair

My name is Blessing, and I've lived in Lagos all my life. Nigeria has changed, but not as we hoped. We dreamed of progress, yet poverty and despair persist.

Every day, the weight of these struggles grows. Trapped in cycles of disappointment, even good news feels unbelievable. The government focuses on itself, neglecting the people. Salaries barely sustain us, while a few grow richer. Basic foods like rice are now luxuries. Meanwhile, our youth face joblessness, leading some to despair or crime.

Despite this, hope shines through. My neighbour Grace, who lost her job and husband, started a small soap business to support her children. Her resilience inspires me. She often says, "Blessing, we are living by faith." Her words remind me of the Bible: "Those cast down will be lifted up."

This is my testimony: even in struggle, God's faithfulness endures. Though burdened, we are not broken. We continue to work, hope, and pray for the Nigeria we know is possible.

Leader 2

PRAYER

Let us pray together:

God, you are the Great Burden Bearer. We come before you as your children, from all corners of the world. We lift up our voices with Beatrice and all our siblings who carry the heavy loads of systemic oppression.

Lord Jesus, you faced persecution and stood firm in your faith. We lift up Leah Sharibu and all who suffer for their beliefs. Grant them strength and comfort in their darkest hours, inspire all of us to stand strong in the face of adversity.

Holy God, Giver of life and Sustainer of all, we give you thanks and praise for the persistence of Blessing, and all who keep moving forward despite even the most difficult circumstances. Continue to strengthen and comfort all who are weary from the burdens of life.

***HYMN: The King of Love my Shepherd is* (Dominus regit me)**

1. The King of love my shepherd is
Whose goodness faileth never
I nothing lack if I am his
And he is mine forever

2. Where streams of living water flow
My ransomed soul he leadeth
And, where the verdant pastures grow
With food celestial feedeth

3. Perverse and foolish oft I strayed
But yet in love he sought me
And on his shoulder gently laid
And home, rejoicing, brought me

4. In death's dark vale I fear no ill
With thee, dear Lord, beside me
Thy rod and staff my comfort still
Thy cross before to guide me

5. Thou spreadst a table in my sight
Thine unction grace bestoweth
And, oh, what transport of delight
From thy pure chalice floweth!

6. And so, through all the length of days
Thy goodness faileth never
Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise
Within thy house forever

Leader 1

INTERCESSORY PRAYERS

Most powerful God, we have seen your hand move before. You parted the Red Sea for your people. Now, part the sea of injustice that drowns so many around the world. Speak to the hearts of leaders everywhere, that they may govern with fairness and compassion. Move the hearts of communities to change their attitudes and actions towards all who are marginalised.

Loving Jesus, you welcomed the oppressed and lifted up the down-trodden. Do the same for all who suffer today under oppressive systems. Give us strength to keep trusting you, even when the burdens seem too heavy to bear.

God of justice, we confess the sins that tear at the fabric of our society; the intolerance that breeds fear, the hatred that fuels violence, and the indifference that allows injustice to persist. Break every chain that binds us and separates us from our neighbours.

God, you know the poverty plaguing many lands. Children go to bed hungry. Families struggle to meet basic needs. Open the doors of opportunity and soften the hearts of those who can help.

We pray for families and communities struggling to cope with the pressures of life. When stress and hardship make it difficult to support one another, remind us of your endless patience and love. Help us to extend that same grace to those around us.

THE LORD'S PRAYER:

Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our debts
As we forgive our debtors
And lead us not into temptation
But deliver us from evil
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory
Forever and ever. Amen

Leader 2

OFFERTORY (*if this is appropriate in your setting*)

We continue now with a time of giving our financial offerings. May our gifts, like our prayers, be a tangible expression of God's love in the world.

OFFERTORY SONG – When I needed a Neighbour (Irregular)
(Alternative hymn Thy Hand O Lord has guided 7.6, 7.6, 767)

When I needed a neighbour were you there, were you there?
When I needed a neighbour were you there?
And the creed and the colour and the name won't matter,
Were you there?

I was hungry and thirsty, were you there, were you there?
I was hungry and thirsty, were you there?
And the creed and the colour and the name won't matter,
Were you there?

When I needed a healer were you there, were you there?
When I needed a healer were you there?
And the creed and the colour and the name won't matter,
Were you there? *(Words and music by Sydney Carter).*

CALL TO ACTION

As we have journeyed through this service, we have become informed about the burdens carried by our sisters in Nigeria and around the world. We have prayed together, bringing these concerns before God, our great Burden Bearer.

Now, we come to a moment that calls us into prayerful action. The motto of World Day of Prayer is *Informed Prayer, Prayerful Action*, reminding us that our prayers should lead us to action for the transformation of the world.

Let us respond to this call together, affirming our commitment to be Christ's hands and feet in a world longing for hope and rest.

We find our hope in a burdened world in Christ, who bears all of our burdens.

We respond to overwhelming situations by remaining resilient, believing that the storm will pass.

We place our trust in uncertain times in God, the Giver of life and Sustainer of all.

When those around us are weary and heavy laden we should bear one another's burdens, as Christ bears ours.

Our call to action is to live out our informed prayers through prayerful action.

May we go forth with the strength of Christ, with faith, hope, and love, to be light in the world.

HYMN: The Day You Gave us Lord

The day you gave us, Lord, is ended,
the darkness falls at your behest;
to you our morning hymns ascended,
your praise shall sanctify our rest.

We thank you that your 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
your children beneath the western sky,
and hour by hour fresh lips are making
your wondrous doings heard on high.

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

BLESSING (*the congregation may bless one another by saying/singing this as follows:*)

The Lord bless you and keep you
The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you
The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace

Tune Irregular Church Hymnary 4 (CH4) 796 (Numbers 6:24)

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I Will Give You Rest: Come" was prepared by the World Day of Prayer Committee of Nigeria for the worship service and educational activities for the 2026 World Day of Prayer (WDP) annual celebration. WDP materials are developed for the exclusive use of WDP programs organized by national or local committees and their partner organizations. For any other use, materials from the WDP 2024 Resource Packet may not be reproduced without the permission of World Day of Prayer International Committee (WDPIC). Any offerings or funds collected related to WDP activities must be reported to WDP committees. Scripture quotations 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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Service written by WDP International Committee
"United in Prayer for Justice and Peace!"



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