



Worship materials

Introduction

This document contains outlines for two different alternative worship services. One starts immediately below, and one starts on page 4. Please feel free to use whichever service suits your needs best, or pick bits from each outline. Or you can design your own service if you prefer.

There is also a Resources section, starting on page 8, which includes suggested hymns, ideas for sermons, children's activities, and similar materials. You can make whatever use you like of these ideas.

(Note that throughout these materials, lines in *italics* should be spoken by a leader or leaders. Lines in **bold** should be spoken by all present.)

Worship service outline I

Welcome

The worship leader gives a brief introduction to the service and to the Pilgrimage Against Poverty. This is followed by a short period of silence or a hymn. (Possible hymns are listed in the 'Resources' section at the end of this document.)

Invitation to worship

Creator of the Cosmos, of eternity and time:

Be with us in this time.

Saviour of the world, healer of the nations:

Be with us in this place

Breath of all that lives, of people far and near:

Stir within our lives.

Maker-Spirit-Son, God of here and now:

**Be present in our worship,
that we may find new ways to be present in your world.**

(From *Iona Abbey Worship Book*, Wild Goose Publications)

Hymn

Say or sing the Magnificat, or another hymn of your choice.

The following version of the Magnificat can be sung to the tune 'Amazing Grace':

**Magnificat, magnificat!
Praise God, my soul, praise God.
The proud are downed,
the poor raised up;
Magnificat, my soul!**

(Adapted from *Prayer Rhythms for Busy People* by Ray Simpson, Kevin Mayhew)



Confession

*O God, we confess that your word is fruitless,
when the mighty are not put down,
the humble remain humiliated,
the hungry are not filled,
and the rich are:
We ask you to make good your word,
and begin with us.*

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.
(1 John 1:8–9)

*Open our hearts and unblock our ears
to hear the voices of the poor
and share their struggle;
and send us away empty with longing
for your promises to come true
in Jesus Christ.*

Statistics and stories

If you are in partnership with a local organisation, it may be appropriate to invite them to explain their project and how it combats poverty and exclusion. You may also wish to use and reflect on national statistics and information about poverty and exclusion, or stories and testimonies from people experiencing poverty. Church Action on Poverty can supply a range of information for this purpose; please call Liam Purcell on 0161 236 9321 if you need any support or advice.

You may also at this point introduce the campaign action or act of commitment which you will ask people to undertake at the end of the service.

Pilgrim psalm

Lead us on, Cloud and Pillar of Flame, always moving ahead of us.

*We your friends and servants bless you, dear God,
as we stand day and night in your presence.
We lift up our hands to the holiest of places,
whose walls pray the prayers of pilgrims.*

Lead us on, Cloud and Pillar of Flame, always moving ahead of us.

*To the city of peace we have come at last,
and give you, our God, our heartfelt praise.
Bless us and all you have given us,
Creator of heaven and earth.*

Lead us on, Cloud and Pillar of Flame, always moving ahead of us.

*Bless us as we move on from the shrines,
lest by lingering we become pillars of salt.
Even the stones will decay into dust,
the presence will depart from them.*

Lead us on, Cloud and Pillar of Flame, always moving ahead of us.

*Absorbing the gifts our ancestors left to us,
we set out once more on our journey.
What we thought was our goal was but a stage on the way.
and the Spirit is urging us on.*

Lead us on, Cloud and Pillar of Flame, always moving ahead of us.

Drawn as we may be by Bardsey and Lindisfarne,



*by Iona and Durham,
by Canterbury and Jerusalem,
by Santiago and Rome,
let us take courage from our ancestors of faith.*

**But let us now seek to make holy the places where we live,
and to be made holy ourselves by the God who goes on before us.**

(‘Prayer at Days Dawning’ by Jim Cotter, Cairns Publications)

At this point you may wish to leave the church or gathering place to walk together, either to a new place or around the church building, in silence or singing a hymn (for example, ‘God bless to us our bread’ or another hymn from the list at the end of this document). As you go, you may choose to stop at pre-determined ‘stations’ to reflect and pray (see the resource list at the end of this document).

Prayer of arrival

**Lord, you have taken us out of our normal lives,
helped us to step outside our routines
and take notice of those we usually choose not to see.
By your grace help us not to close our eyes again,
not to offer wounds instead of healing,
so that in us your word is good news for the poor.**

Bible reading

Read Luke 16:19–31.

Sermon or study

See the resource list at the end of this document for some ideas on preparing a sermon or study.

Intercessions

Holy and incarnate one, at whose unexpected touch the ordinary world is charged with God:

*We pray for those whose hardship is overwhelming, who cannot find you;
who live in poverty, anxiety and hunger, whose lives are fearful or lonely;
who are exploited, exhausted or ill.*

For the Word was made flesh

and dwelt among us.

*We pray for those whose ambition is overwhelming,
who do not want to find you;
whose lives are choked with overwork or consumption;
who have chosen an unreal path;
who have hardened their hearts.*

For the Word was made flesh

and dwelt among us.

*We pray for those who have begun to find you and who are overwhelmed;
for whom the risk of healing is too painful; who are afraid of your embrace;
and fear your energetic power to reconstitute the world.*

For the Word was made flesh

and dwelt among us.

*We pray for ourselves that we might recognise our common humanity
with all who are poor or excluded;
carry us beyond our safe places into action, into vulnerability
and into the streets,
to bear responsibility, take risks, choose life*

*and be used by the Spirit for God's new community of hope.
For the Word was made flesh*
and dwelt among us.

(Adapted from All Desires Known by Janet Morley, SPCK)

Action

At this point, invite people to take part in a campaigning action or a demonstration of solidarity. You should choose something that relates to concerns within your local community or your partner organisation, or to one of Church Action on Poverty's national campaigns. If you would like some help choosing and designing an action, please contact Liam Purcell at Church Action on Poverty, on 0161 236 9321.

If it is your tradition, hands could be anointed with the sign of the cross with the words "*Christ's for the world*" and the response "**Amen**". Alternatively, people could be invited to stand to show their commitment, or sign petitions or campaigning actions, or simply a card pledging support for your local partner project.

The Lord's Prayer

Offertory

Sing a hymn from the list later on, and take a collection for the local project you are supporting and for Church Action on Poverty.

Closing responses

Lead us from fear to trust.

Lead us from despair to hope.

Lead us from self-seeking to generosity.

Lead us from turmoil to peace.

Deep peace of the Son of peace

Fill our hearts, our community, our world.

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with us all evermore. Amen**

(Or a blessing may be said.)

Worship service outline 2

(Material in this service is taken from the *Iona Abbey Worship Book* unless otherwise indicated.)

Preparation

You will need: plastic carrier bags; possibly litter pickers; masking tape; tealights; matches.

Before the service, at the destination church, make an outline of a sleeping human with masking tape on the floor – easiest if someone lies down and you tape round them. Check that the floor is suitable for candles, or use small heatproof mats or coasters.

Adapt for the time and space you have available. For alternative song suggestions, see the list of resources at the end of this document.

Opening responses

O God, who called all life into being:

the earth, sea and sky are yours.

Your Spirit enlivens all who walk the earth:

with her we yearn for justice to be done,

for creation to be freed from bondage,

for the hungry to be fed,

for captives to be released,

for your Kingdom to come on earth. Amen.

Hymn or reading

Sing or listen to 'How can we stand together' (see the hymn suggestions in the Resources section) or read 'Cursing the money boys' (see the Resources section).

Statistics and stories

Here, you could have a short input from your local partner project, or share other local stories or national statistics (see the notes for the first worship service). Or you may wish to read a Bible passage and reflect on it (see the Resources section).

Affirmation

**We believe that God is present in the darkness before dawn;
in the waiting and uncertainty,
where fear and courage join hands, conflict and caring link arms,
and the sun rises over barbed wire.**

**We believe in a with-us God
who sits down in our midst to share our humanity.
We affirm a faith that takes us beyond the safe place
into action, into vulnerability and into the streets.**

**We commit ourselves to work for change
and put ourselves on the line,
to bear responsibility, take risks, live powerfully and face humiliation,
to stand with those on the edge,
to choose life –
and to be used by the Spirit for God's new community of Hope. Amen**

Set out on your pilgrimage. Ask people to walk silently but with awareness of the streets and areas they pass through. You might use the 'stations' mentioned in the Resources section, but alternatively give everyone a plastic carrier and ask them to collect (carefully) pieces of litter, fallen leaves, (legal) objects etc. as they go.



If the pilgrim group is large you may want to designate a few 'official scavengers' and, if the area merits, arm them with litter-pickers. When you arrive at the destination, all the bits collected are placed in the outline of the sleeping human. If people would like (and space permits) all sit quietly around the figure and reflect on the humanity and the otherness of the figure. Light tealights and place them around the figure as the Bible passage is read (if it hasn't already been read). If time permits, give people the opportunity to share a short reflection on the pilgrimage and the experience of sitting with the figure.

Prayer: People on the move

For people forced to travel:
refugees ... the homeless ... wayfarers ...

Be with them on the road:

Be present to them.

For people beset by danger:
living in war zones ... victims of crime ... those working on front lines ...

Be with them in their anxiety:

Be present to them.

For people lacking direction:
the confused ... the listless ... the despairing ...

Show them the way:

Be present to them.

For people whose way is barred:
the hungry ... the prisoners ... the unemployed ...

Set their feet on the road:

Be present to them.

For people who want to turn back:
the persecuted ... the failed ... the discouraged ...

Encourage them and strengthen them:

Be present to them.

For people who refuse to move:
the smug ... the contented ... the satisfied ...

Give them a hunger for justice:

Be present to them.

For people who wander in darkness:
the depressed ... the bereaved ... the dying ...

Shed your light upon them:

Be present to them.

For people who often walk alone:
the isolated ... the handicapped ... the housebound ...

Be their companion:

Be present to them.

For people who are travelling:
by land ... by sea ... by air ...

Be the hidden energy that sustains them:

Be present to them.

For people on pilgrimage:
walking to the ancient places ... facing the hazards of the road ...
journeying deep within ...

Be the cairns on their path:

Be present to them.

(From *Out of the Silence ... Into the Silence: Prayer's Daily Round* by Jim Cotter and Paul Payton, Cairns Publications, 2006)

Action

At this point, invite people to take part in a campaigning action or a demonstration of solidarity. You should choose something that relates to concerns within your local community or your partner organisation, or to one of Church Action on Poverty's national campaigns. If you would like some help choosing and designing an action, please contact Liam Purcell at Church Action on Poverty, on 0161 236 9321.

If it is your tradition, hands could be anointed with the sign of the cross with the words "*Christ's for the world*" and the response "**Amen**". Alternatively, people could be invited to stand to show their commitment, or sign petitions or campaigning actions, or simply a card pledging support for your local partner project.

Blessing

(Standing)

Lord, we do not pray for easy lives,
we pray to be stronger people.

We do not pray for tasks equal to our powers,
but for powers equal to our tasks.

We stand together:
we stand for life in the midst of death.

Amen

(From *Pattern of our Days*, edited by Kathy Galloway, Wild Goose Publications)

Resources

Outline for a sermon or study based on Luke 16:19–31

The story of the rich man and Lazarus: is a reflection of Jesus' times (when there was no welfare state), but also of our times. The rich man doesn't speak to Lazarus, but he must have had to step over him every time he went in or out of his house (verse 20). The rich man's sin is not his wealth but his inability to recognise Lazarus' humanity and need: even the dogs do that (verse 21). And Jesus recognises it too when he names Lazarus the beggar while the rich man is unnamed: he stands for every wealthy man, woman or child, then and now. Our wealth is a terrible spiritual barrier, not just tempting us to separate from God, but also from our fellow humans. How many times do we fail to notice the poor, the *Big Issue* seller, the asylum-seeker, the kids 'off the estate' that hang around our town centres, our churches and "long to eat for what falls from our table" by way of opportunities, advantages, healthcare or holidays – and sometimes simply adequate food and drink.

This story goes on to show the eternal outcome, which is a reversal of what we and Jesus' audience (who saw riches as a sign of God's blessing) might expect. The rich man asks for a blessing from Lazarus whom he ignored in life (verse 24), but the response is "too late" (reminiscent of Matthew 25:45–46). The bleak final verses (27–31) show just how hard it is for those whose attention is focused on wealth (acquiring it or protecting it or coveting it) to hear the good news of Jesus.

There is huge injustice in our country and across the world: laws and trade agreements which favour the rich over the poor, the fact that your household's income is a key determining factor in your health, the targeting of the vulnerable: asylum-seekers given no state help but forbidden to help themselves, all these things are the sores on Lazarus' body. The acceptance of these injustices by so many different strands of Christianity across the developed world, the concentration on internal disputes and silence on wider injustices damage our credibility as witnesses to truth. If we can't recognise our common humanity, if we're not good news for outsiders, then we are not living out the gospel of Christ – and Lazarus is on our church steps.

Quotations you could use in your service

"Too many people are spending money they don't have for things they don't need to impress people they don't like."

(Anonymous)

"Money won't buy happiness, but it will pay the salaries of a huge research staff to study the problem."

(Bill Vaughan)

"Millionaires seldom smile"

(Andrew Carnegie)

"Money will buy:

a bed but not sleep
books but not brains
food but not appetite
a house but not a home
medicine but not health
amusements but not happiness
a crucifix but not a Saviour
religion but not salvation
a good life but not eternal life
a passport to everywhere but heaven."

(Anonymous)

"Commitment to the poor means entering into their universe and living in it. It means no longer regarding it as a place of work but as a place of residence. It means not going into this world for a few hours in order to

bear witness to the gospel, but rather emerging from it each morning to proclaim the good news to every human being.”

(Gustavo Gutierrez)

“The way you look at people can transform them.”

(Jean Vanier)

“A radical conversion of the non-poor is needed today.”

(Maria Neal)

“When I look around at all the poverty and injustice I say: ‘thank God I’m not God’. But when I remember that in every place of brokenness there are caring men and women, I say to myself: ‘thankyou God that you are God’.”

(Desmond Tutu)

Alternatives to a sermon

These ideas would work particularly well for small groups.

Read the responsive passages from ‘Cursing the money boys’ (an Act of Witness for Economic Justice) on pages 75–79 of *The Pattern of our Days* (edited by Kathy Galloway, Wild Goose Publications).

Divide the group and each half read the passage from either the rich man’s or Lazarus’ perspective. The come back together and share what each group noticed and how they felt about it. What action does it prompt you to take?

Suggested hymns

- From *Complete Anglican Hymns Old And New* (Kevin Mayhew, 2000):
 - no 60, Beauty for brokenness
 - no 101, Christ’s is the world in which we live
 - no 161, Father hear the prayer we offer
 - no 252, Guide me O thou great Redeemer
 - no 295, How lovely on the mountains
 - no 325, Inspired by love and anger
 - no 531, Onward Christian pilgrims
 - no 666, The Spirit lives to set us free (Walk in the light)
- From *Songs of Love and Anger* by John Bell and Graham Maule (Wild Goose Publications, 1997):
 - no 58, God bless to us our bread
 - no 64, How can we stand together

‘Stations’ on the pilgrimage

Stations are places to stop, wait, and pray. There is a powerful tradition of ‘stations of the cross’, whereby you can, as it were, travel the road which Jesus travelled on his way to the cross, by stopping, waiting, and praying at 14 points along his journey, each point being marked by a particular incident, which is recalled, reflected and prayed upon. But they can also be a very good way of bringing prayer into everyday life. For the pilgrimage, use predetermined ‘stations’ along your route. Here are some suggestions which you will need to select and adapt to your area:

- **A shop** – to pray for those who go hungry or can’t afford healthy food
- **A pub** – for those who can’t afford a night out, or who are trapped by alcohol or drugs
- **The town hall** – for those who make decisions which affect the poor disproportionately
- **A park** – for those who are eaten up by financial worries and have no time for recreation
- **A field or farmyard** – for rural workers struggling to find local housing, for farmers to get a fair price for their produce

- **A wood or hedgerow** – for the destruction caused to the environment by poverty or the drive for cheaper food
- **A school** – for those whose educational horizons are limited by lack of money, children bullied for not having the ‘right’ clothes or trainers
- **A hospital or health centre** – for the reduced life expectancy of people living in poverty
- **The road** – for all those who are homeless or living in unsuitable accommodation
- **The gutter** – for those who are invisible: the vagrants, the asylum-seekers, the migrant workers
- **A telephone box** – for all those cut off from friends and family
- **A factory** – for all the unemployed, everyone on short time, or in low-paid jobs
- **A station or bus shelter** – for all those whose lack of mobility prevents them from getting jobs or participating in the community
- **A bank or ATM** – for those struggling with debt, or in fear of losing their home
- **Sheltered housing** – all pensioners living in poverty, especially fuel poverty
- Any place of particular **historical or cultural significance** locally

If you are walking your pilgrimage round the church you might wish to use some of the above and adapt them for your local circumstances, placing visual symbols at points around the building. For instance you might place a pile of books for the school, packaging for the shop, coins for the bank, a bowl of water with litter floating for the gutter (colour it brown with old teabags!), old pill bottles for the Health Centre...

These ideas are inspired by Simon Bailey's little book *Stations – places for pilgrims to pray* (Cairns Publications).

Ideas for children and young people

Get a lot of newspapers and magazines, two large empty cardboard boxes, scissors and glue. Ask the young people to select headlines or pictures that speak to them of ‘rich’ and ‘poor’ (they could be in two groups to do this, depending on numbers) and stick them on the boxes, one for each subject. When both boxes are completely covered, ask for comments and questions about the items selected. If they had the Prime Minister in the room with them, what would they want to say? Encourage them to write a letter to the Prime Minister saying how they feel. Use the covered boxes as a visual prayer, or as a focus for spoken prayers based on their comments.

Borrow a couple of digital cameras and get the young people to walk the Pilgrimage route in advance to take pictures of the places along the route that speak to them of richness or poverty. Then make a slide show of the images (with headlines or comments if they want and have the resources) to show as a backdrop to prayers in the Pilgrimage service.

These materials have been collated and written by Ruth Stock, a member of the Merseyside and Region Church Action on Poverty group.