



Church Action  
on Poverty  
**Sunday**

26 FEBRUARY 2017

**POOR**  
**CHURCH**  
**TRANSFIGURED**  
**CHURCH**

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On Transfiguration Sunday, we ask: if our churches are to be communities that put the poorest first, how must we change? What must we let go of? What sacrifices are we called to make? How can we allow God to transform us into what Pope Francis has called a “poor Church for the poor”?

**ON 26 FEBRUARY, RAISE FUNDS TO HELP  
TRANSFORM AND TRANSFIGURE THE CHURCH!**

**GIVE**

Host a soup lunch in your church or home, and donate the proceeds to Church Action on Poverty. Your money will help churches build new connections with people in poverty.  
*See page 2*

**ACT**

Share stories and spread the word. Use videos and multimedia resources to share the vision of a church of the poor – and tell people how they can make a difference by supporting Church Action on Poverty.  
*See page 4*

**PRAY**

Pray for the Church to be transformed into a church of the poor. Give out our prayer cards, and use our suggested prayers, Bible readings and hymns in your church service, house group or event.  
*See page 6*

# HOLD A POOR CHURCH SOUP LUNCH...

A simple soup lunch is a great way to bring people together, raise money, and get people talking about what it means to be a “poor church, for the poor”.

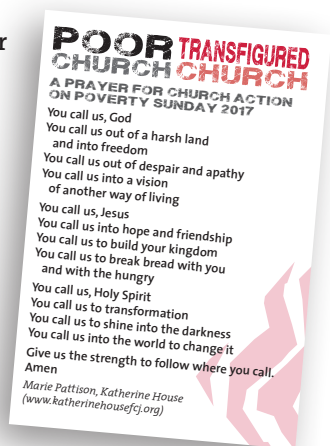
- **Choose a date.** You could hold a soup lunch on Church Action on Poverty Sunday itself, or any time during that week (or through Lent).  
If you choose the Sunday, why not use some of our prayers, resources and worship materials in your church service too? (See page 4 and page 6.)
- **Invite people.** If your lunch takes place after a church service, this is easy. If it's a stand-alone event, you could send out emails, use social media, or make an announcement in your church newsletter.
- **Plan your meal.** You can get creative and make your own soup; just use simple pre-prepared bread and soup; or ask people to bring their own food.  
If you can, download and print our special **placemats** from [www.church-poverty.org.uk/sunday](http://www.church-poverty.org.uk/sunday), and lay one at each place. They will tell people about Church Action on Poverty's work to transform churches, and allow them to make a Gift Aid declaration alongside their donation.
- **Tell a story.** Make sure your guests have a chance to think about what it means to be a “poor church, for the poor”, and understand how their donations to Church Action on Poverty will help transform churches. You could play one of our video clips if you have the equipment to do so (see page 4).
- **Raise as much money as you can!** Ask your guests for a donation per bowl of soup, but this should be entirely voluntary. You could even offer extras – bread rolls, croutons and soft drinks – for people who make an extra donation. Don't forget to ask each person to sign the Gift Aid declarations on their placemats, to make sure that every pound raised really does count.



# ... OR GIVE IN OTHER WAYS

Don't have time to organise a soup lunch? An even simpler way to raise funds for Church Action on Poverty's 'Church of the Poor' programme is simply to donate the proceeds of a collection taken during a church service.

- Use our **prayers and worship materials** (see page 6) to get people thinking about what it means to be a "poor church, for the poor" in your service on 26 February.
- If you can, **show one of our videos or invite a speaker** (see page 4) to tell the congregation about the difference they are making by supporting Church Action on Poverty.
- As well as taking your collection, make sure every member of the congregation receives one of our **prayer cards**. The cards include the Church Action on Poverty Sunday prayer (see page 6) for them to use in their own meditations, and details of how they can give online or take action in other ways. You should have received some prayer cards with this booklet – just call 0161 872 9294 if you need more!



## How to donate

You can donate the proceeds of your event by card or PayPal at [www.church-poverty.org.uk/sunday/give](http://www.church-poverty.org.uk/sunday/give).

Or make out a cheque for the full amount from your collection, payable to Church Action on Poverty, and post it to:

Freepost RTTY-JGEE-JJEZ, Church Action on Poverty,  
Unit 28 Sandpiper Court, Water's Edge Business Park,  
Modwen Road, Salford M5 3EZ.

Be sure to include any signed Gift Aid declarations along with your cheque.



# TELL A STORY

Church Action on Poverty Sunday is about celebrating the hope and transformation that our work brings to communities. We want to show churches how they really do make a difference when they support Church Action on Poverty. At your soup lunch or service, please include time to tell a story and share that vision.

“Once you have seen and heard poverty first-hand, you never see the world in quite the same way again... The experience of being listened to properly, deeply and compassionately, changes people. Immediately, they become a person with a story to tell, rather than a statistic, or someone to be judged by what can be seen on the surface...”

“I find it increasingly difficult to live with the apparent contradiction between what we preach, pray, read and sing about in church services and how involved we choose to be with those who are destitute on our doorstep.”



Revd Ali Dorey took part in our 'Listen Up' programme in Sheffield

The easiest way to do this to **play one of our video clips** of ordinary people telling stories of the transformational experiences they had when their church truly became a “church of the poor”. You can stream or download videos from [www.church-poverty.org.uk/sunday](http://www.church-poverty.org.uk/sunday).

If you don't have the technology to play a video, you could...

- **Give a presentation or talk** about Church Action on Poverty's vision of a 'poor church, for the poor'. You can download a set of notes for this – or a *PowerPoint* presentation if you prefer – at [www.church-poverty.org.uk/sunday](http://www.church-poverty.org.uk/sunday).
- **Invite a speaker.** If we have one available, Church Action on Poverty is always happy to send a volunteer or staff member to talk about our work. Just call Liam on 0161 872 9294 to enquire.

However you tell the story, it is crucial to make the congregation understand how their donations will make a difference:

**Your gifts will support our new 'Church of the Poor' programme – working closely with local churches across the UK to help them connect with people in poverty, listen to their stories, and include them fully in the church community.**

**Get out of your church and  
listen to people. To serve them,  
from the point of view of  
the gospel, you need to  
see the reality they're living**



**Dick Johnson is an  
industrial chaplain and  
a member of Church  
Action on Poverty**



**Nick Waterfield is Pioneer  
Minister at Parsons Cross  
Initiative in Sheffield**

**Listening to people's stories,  
valuing those stories, and  
using the skills you uncover  
to help in your local community,  
is a massively helpful thing to do**

**I thought Church Action on Poverty Sunday  
was 'a nice thing to do' for years. Then I lost  
my nice middle-class job and slid into poverty,  
mental chaos, homelessness. Please, please  
work hard to bring hope back to us again,  
in the name of Jesus, friend of the poor**

**'John' (not his real name) is a supporter of Church Action on Poverty**

## PRAY

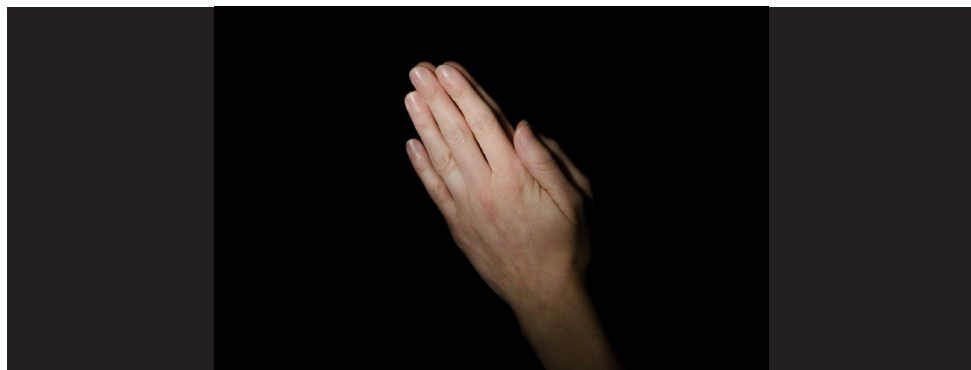
You call us, God  
You call us out of a harsh land and into freedom  
You call us out of despair and apathy  
You call us into a vision of another way of living  
You call us, Jesus  
You call us into hope and friendship  
You call us to build your kingdom  
You call us to break bread with you and with the hungry  
You call us, Holy Spirit  
You call us to transformation  
You call us to shine into the darkness  
You call us into the world to change it  
Give us the strength to follow where you call.  
Amen

*(Marie Pattison, Katherine House – [www.katherinehousefcj.org](http://www.katherinehousefcj.org))*

This is our special prayer for Church Action on Poverty Sunday. Use it, and you will be praying for a transfigured church together with hundreds of other congregations and individuals around the UK.

We have prayer cards available, with the prayer and other information about Church Action on Poverty. Please distribute the cards and ask people to join in prayer on 26 February. You could hand out cards at church services, food banks, and anywhere else where people are working to build a 'church of the poor'.

If you need more prayer cards, please contact 016 872 9294 or [info@church-poverty.org.uk](mailto:info@church-poverty.org.uk).





# WORSHIP

Use this collection of prayers, Bible readings and creative activities to get people thinking about what it means to be a “poor church, for the poor”.

There is enough material here to organise a whole church service around the theme if you wish. If that’s not possible in your church, just pick and choose whatever ideas work for you. You could also use the ideas in a house group or elsewhere.

Don’t forget to include some stories about Church Action on Poverty’s work (see page 4) and to take a collection or hold a soup lunch after your service (see page 2).

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## Non-liturgical worship

The materials are organised so that they can be used as part of a traditional liturgical service. If your church’s style of worship is less liturgical, we encourage you to use whichever of the materials is most suited to your approach. You might be particularly interested in using our multimedia resources (see page 4). You could also draw on this list of suggested topics for *ex tempore* prayer:

- Pray that your church may listen more attentively to the cry of the poor
  - Pray that people in poverty may feel welcome and valued in your church
  - Pray that people in poverty may play a full role in the life of your church
  - Pray that the church may genuinely stand alongside the poorest and most vulnerable people in society
  - Pray that the church may allow God to transfigure and transform it so that it is truly a church of the poor
  - Pray that God may help your church to understand how it must change and what sacrifices it needs to make to be a church of the poor
- 

## A statement of belief

This we believe:

We are called to the kingdom as Moses was, to lead a migrant people across a sea and through a wilderness.

**Call us again, God who frees the oppressed**

This we believe:

We are called to the kingdom as Elijah was, to share food with widows and children.

**Call us again, God of unlikely miracles**

This we believe:

We are called to the kingdom as Amos was, to thirst for a time when justice would flow like a stream.

**Call us again, God of angry prophets**

This we believe:

We are called to the kingdom as Mary was, to bring into being a vision of the hungry fed and the humble lifted high.

**Call us again, God who dwells among us**

This we believe:

We are called to the kingdom of Jesus, that there be enough bread and wine for all, healing freely given and hope for the broken-hearted.

**Call us again, God of a generous Kingdom**

(Marie Pattison,  
Katherine House – [www.katherinehousefcj.org](http://www.katherinehousefcj.org))

## Intercessions: prayers of the people

He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.

*(Luke 1:52–53)*

Lord, in a world where the rich are getting richer, and the poor are getting poorer, we know that your kingdom is not being fulfilled. Renew us, inspire us, teach us how to live out our calling. We will seek out those laid low by greed and capitalism, and we will lift them before you. We will fill the hungry with good things and help those with money and resources to use them for the good of all.

Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.

*(Luke 3:11)*

Lord, in a world where tax havens are seen as legitimate and where millions go hungry, we long to build communities where resources are shared. Help us make sure that our churches and projects are places that empower and build up resistance to oppression. Help those with money and gifts to share, use them wisely and generously.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.

*(Luke 4.18-19)*

Lord, if our church services and our prayers are not about bringing good news to the poor, then let us repent and start over. Jesus begins his ministry with the call to bring joy and freedom to those who need it most. Let our faith and our churches be led by that same spirit.

“Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled.”

*(Luke 6:20–21)*

Lord, those who have gone without know what the kingdom of God should be like. Let those who have suffered guide our worship and our discipleship. Let the refugee teach us about welcome, let the homeless teach us about generosity, let children teach us about hope and joy. Let those who have been imprisoned teach us about being free. Let us turn this world's expectations upside down.

Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

*(Luke 6:37)*

Lord, let us learn not to judge others, but to love them as they are. Let us learn not to condemn others but to embrace them. Let us learn to forgive, and forgive again, so we may be free from the wounds of vengeance and anger.

Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.”

*(Luke 22:19–20)*

Lord, as we gather to worship you, let us remember you and your teachings. You teach us to share, to love, to reach out to those in need and to be alongside the vulnerable. You teach us to be sacrificial, believing that even if the journey is hard and brings death to old customs – there will always be new life in you.

**Amen**

*(Chris Howson, Chaplain to Sunderland University)*



## Share the word

26 February 2017 is Transfiguration Sunday. The readings in the Revised Common Lectionary are: Exodus 24:12–18 (Moses meets God on the mountaintop); Psalm 2 (God's promise) or Psalm 99 (God's holiness); 2 Peter 1:16–21 (witnesses of Christ's glory); and Matthew 17:1–9 (the Transfiguration).

### The Transfiguration: an eyewitness account

Let me tell you about the day we went up the mountain, my brother James, Peter, and me, John. The climb was hard but I was feeling great about being included, about being close to Jesus. I had always known that being close to him would change me, but since that day I was transformed, made new.

It happened suddenly. Two men appeared and we knew they were Moses and Elijah; it was like I recognised friends I had always known. When I turned to look at Jesus, he was shining. I'd seen his face alight with love and joy before, but this was different; dazzling. He was so fully alive.

Peter blurted out something about building *Sukkot* – a shelter. History will tell a tale about Peter speaking from the heart before using his head but I think he only meant to express his gratitude. Our people have long made *sukkot* to give thanks. When we sleep in tents we give thanks for our deliverance from Egypt, for our freedom, for the harvest. He wanted to give thanks that these heroes of our faith were there. Moses the lawgiver, Elijah the great prophet, and Jesus who was so steeped in their tradition. Jesus; who loved the law and told us it all meant “Love God with everything you have and love your neighbour as yourself.” Jesus; who stands with the prophets calling God's people to ways of justice and peace. His kingdom will be a place where the prophet's words are fulfilled.

It was marvellous to be there and I wanted to stay. Then the voice. “This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!” I was so afraid. No one sees God and lives. I was curled up with my eyes shut.

And then his touch calmed my terror and his voice called me out of that paralysing fear. “Do not be afraid” he said. This is my commission and fear cannot hold me. “Do not be afraid” took me to the foot of the cross and into resurrection. We are heirs to his kingdom, fear cannot hold us. The world is transformed. We build his kingdom every day that we love God and love our neighbour.

(Marie Pattison, Katherine House – [www.katherinehousefcj.org](http://www.katherinehousefcj.org))

### The Transfiguration: preaching notes

**“And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white.”**

On the mountaintop at the Transfiguration, Jesus and his disciples were transformed. But they were not called to stay on the mountaintop, separate from the world. They were sent on a mission back *into* the world – a mission that led Jesus to surrender all his power and be killed on the cross.

Ask your congregation to reflect on Pope Francis' challenge to Christians everywhere: to build a “poor church, that is for the poor”. If our churches are truly to be communities that put the poorest first, how do we need to change? What must we let go of? What are the sacrifices that we are called to make?

How can we allow God to transform us into a “poor Church for the poor”?

# POOR CHURCH TRANSFIGURED CHURCH

## Respond to the word

If we have to serve God in being and becoming a Church of the poor, let us not use God as a means of acquiring wealth for ourselves, or make God an agent of empire building.

**Love God  
and dismantle mammon**

If we have to serve God in being and becoming a Church of the poor, let us give up our dishonesty and unjust activities, especially with wealth, resources and money.

**Love God  
and dismantle mammon**

If we have to serve God in being and becoming a Church of the poor, let us be faithful in little things, in simple things, in jobs entrusted to us, for God appreciates honesty and justice in little acts.

**Love God  
and dismantle mammon.**

If we have to serve God in being and becoming a Church of the poor, the Pharisees and Sadducees of our times, who extort money from the vulnerable, are to be exposed and brought to justice.

**Love God  
and dismantle mammon.**

If we have to serve God in being and becoming a Church of the poor, look for the divine among marginalised communities, for Jesus speaks on their behalf and brings good news to the poor by proclaiming bad news to the rich.

**Love God  
and dismantle mammon.**

If we have to serve God, the call to cancel debts by capitalists on the poorer, liberating the neo-colonial captives, becomes a gospel imperative.

**Love God  
and dismantle mammon.**

If we have to serve God in being and becoming a Church of the poor, allow the subalterns, the occupied, the vulnerable, the colonised, the poor to speak, for the church is called to listen to the overlooked and forgotten voices of the subalterns.

**Love God  
and dismantle mammon.**

If we have to serve God in being and becoming a Church of the poor, we are invited to join in the advocacy for the liberation of people from occupations, and see to it that all the barriers will be dismantled and justice is ensured.

**Love God  
and dismantle mammon.**

If we have to serve God in being and becoming a Church of the poor, we are called to dismantle the barriers of power, prejudice, positions and liberate the occupied by welcoming them.

**Love God  
and dismantle mammon.**

May the Holy Spirit grant us strength to be devoted to God by despising and dismantling the mammon of our times, and strive to look for God among the victims of debt.

**Love God  
and dismantle mammon.**

**Together we will  
dismantle the barriers  
and welcome the  
other to form a just,  
inclusive and liberated  
community. Amen**

*(Revd Raj Bharat Patta)*

## A hymn

All the power  
that fuelled creation,  
cosmic force  
that fired the stars,  
still leaves people  
in the darkness  
when we grasp  
for 'us' and 'ours'.

All the emptiness  
and sorrow  
we dispel  
with just a glance,  
eyes averted  
from our neighbours  
giving them  
no second chance.

All we cling to,  
all we cherish,  
stands as nothing  
in God's light,  
yet our attitudes deny it  
holding all as if by right.

All the wealth  
at our disposal  
could bring hope,  
transfigure care;  
even candles  
lit in darkness  
bring new hope  
when none is there.

All we need  
is love and kindness,  
costly kindness to dispel  
fear and poverty,  
while bringing  
deepest love  
to counter hell.

All God's love,  
when shared among us  
shatters poverty  
with grace,  
even now transfiguration  
could be felt  
within this place.

(Andrew Pratt)

*Meter: 8.7.8.7.D. The tunes 'Abbots Leigh', 'Bethany (Smart)', 'Corvedale', 'Lux Eoi', 'Rustington' and 'Scarlet Ribbons' are recommended for this text.*

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## Other suggested hymns

- 'For the healing of the nations' by Fred Kaan (various sources)
- 'Father, we have sinned' by Keith Getty and Stuart Townend (in *Songs of Fellowship 4; Singing the Faith*)
- 'Jesus, my Lord, how rich thy grace' by Phillip Doddridge (various sources)
- 'Love inspired the anger' by Andrew Pratt (in *Singing the Faith*)
- 'Take my life and let it be' (various sources)
- 'Said Judas to Mary' by Sydney Carter (various sources)
- 'Sing we a song of high revolt' by Fred Kaan (various sources)
- 'Inspired by love and anger' by John Bell and Graham Maule (various sources)
- 'The kingdom of God is justice and joy' by Bryn Rees (various sources)
- 'A rich young man came seeking' by Marjorie Dobson (in *Singing the Faith and Thanks and Praise*)
- "Alleluia, alleluia, raise the gospel' by Owen Alstott (various sources)
- 'The prophet in his hunger asked for bread' by Peter Icarus (in *Celebration Hymnal for Everyone, Complete Celebration Hymnal, and Sing a New Song to the Lord*)



# **POOR CHURCH TRANSFIGURED CHURCH**

## **A PRAYER FOR CHURCH ACTION ON POVERTY SUNDAY 2017**

You call us, God  
You call us out of a harsh land and into freedom  
You call us out of despair and apathy  
You call us into a vision of another way of living  
You call us, Jesus  
You call us into hope and friendship  
You call us to build your kingdom  
You call us to break bread with you and with the hungry  
You call us, Holy Spirit  
You call us to transformation  
You call us to shine into the darkness  
You call us into the world to change it  
Give us the strength to follow where you call.  
Amen

*Marie Pattison, Katherine House*  
([www.katherinehousefcj.org](http://www.katherinehousefcj.org))

