

Meet your election candidates: page 8



# spark

news from Church Action on Poverty  
summer 2024

Speaking Truth to  
Power in Sussex  
page 11

Praying for an end to  
poverty  
page 14

## Dreams & Realities

## LET'S END POVERTY



An art exhibition that tells the stories and aspirations of people in poverty:  
read about it on page 6



“Here is liturgical resistance in practice. This is a great book of witness.”

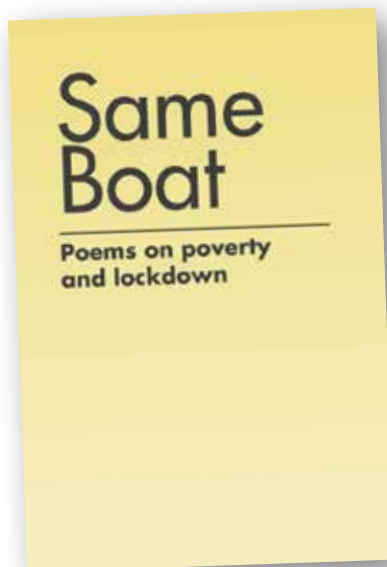
Kathy Galloway,  
former Head of  
Christian Aid Scotland

### Stories, prayers and reflections from 40 years of Church Action on Poverty

An invaluable new resource for churches and individuals who want to be part of the movement to end UK poverty. We've drawn on our 40 years of work and on the insights and creativity of over 40 contributors, including many who have personal experience of struggling against poverty, to create an inspiring collection of...

- Prayers, hymns and liturgies
- Stories of people's real experiences and struggles against poverty
- Stories of hope, transformation and challenging injustice
- Poems
- Drama
- Bible studies
- Theological reflections

**Order now at**  
[www.ionabooks.com/product/dignity-agency-power/](http://www.ionabooks.com/product/dignity-agency-power/)



### And check out these other great publications from Church Action on Poverty and our partners...

#### Same Boat

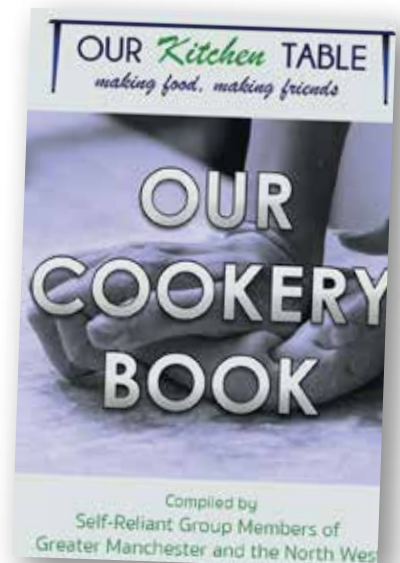
Poems about people's experiences of poverty during the Covid lockdown.

Read some poems and order the book at [www.church-poverty.org.uk/sameboat](http://www.church-poverty.org.uk/sameboat)

#### Our Cookery Book

Members of Self-Reliant Groups in North West England share their favourite recipes, and the stories that make them special.

Order the book at [www.church-poverty.org.uk/ourcookerybook](http://www.church-poverty.org.uk/ourcookerybook)



# Act now for a future where poverty can't keep anyone down



Our Chief Executive Officer **Niall Cooper** calls on you to be part of the movement with us.

**L**et's End Poverty is a diverse, growing movement of people who are united behind a vision for a UK where poverty can't keep anyone down. Whoever you are, whatever your experience, join us. Let's end poverty - now, together, forever. There doesn't have to be poverty in the UK. But over many years, our society has been built in a way that traps people in hardship and keeps them there.

**Now, we urgently need to build something better.**

At Church Action on Poverty we recognise that people and communities on the frontline of poverty face difficult realities – but also have powerful hopes and dreams. Our task is to work with people and communities to forge a better and more hopeful future together. People like Jo from Bootle, featured on page 12. Jo is passionate about bringing

hope and change to her corner of Merseyside:

“Ten years from now, I would like to see a real financially healthy, viable Linacre ward, where there are prospects for young families and children.”

Now is the time to speak out.

Ahead of the forthcoming General Election, we're also calling on all our political leaders to make tackling and ultimately ending poverty in the UK a core priority.

There are many ways to do this as part of Let's End Poverty. Could you share stories of Dreams and Realities (page 6–7), send postcards, host a Let's End Poverty banner, arrange to meet your MP or parliamentary candidates (page 8), or hold a Neighbourhood Voices event (page 9)? If you're able, why not join us, at the Dignity for all conference in York on 8 June?

## Church Action on Poverty

28 Sandpiper Court  
Water's Edge Business Park  
Salford  
M5 3Ez  
0161 872 9294  
info@church-poverty.org.uk  
www.church-poverty.org.uk  
facebook.com/churchpoverty  
twitter.com/churchpoverty  
instagram.com/churchpoverty  
Registered Charity no 1079986  
Company no 3780243

## give

**Buy books of poems, prayers and recipes**  
See opposite

## act

**Write to your MP and call for action to end poverty**  
See page 8

## pray

**Pray for action to end poverty**  
See page 14

## In this issue

- |                                  |                                    |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 4 News and events                | 10 Speaking Truth to Power: Lewes  |
| 5 Church on the Margins          | 12 Speaking Truth to Power: Bootle |
| 6 Dreams and Realities           | 14 Let's End Poverty prayers       |
| 8 Let's End Poverty action ideas |                                    |
| 9 Neighbourhood Voices           |                                    |

# news

## Congratulations, Penny!

Compassionate community campaigner Penny Walters was awarded the British Empire Medal in the New Year Honours.

Penny is a caring and inspiring social justice activist, who Church Action on Poverty has been privileged to work alongside in recent years. Penny's commitment, tenacity and sincere desire to help improve society with her community are incredible to witness. She has supported so many people in recent years, and courageously spoken up locally and nationally to bring about a more just society.



## Welcome, new trustees!

Five new trustees have joined our Council of Management, bringing fresh skills, insights, ideas and dedication. We're pleased to welcome Rich Jones, Amanda Mallen, Ashleigh May, Martin Stringer and Tracy Porter.

Read more about them at [church-poverty.org.uk/newtrustees](https://church-poverty.org.uk/newtrustees)



## An outrageous, counter-productive Budget

That was our expert advisers' verdict on the Budget in March. It further punishes and marginalises people on the lowest incomes.

Our advisers, all of whom have direct current experience of poverty, called for a more just tax system, action to fix the UK's broken housing system; and investment in a long-term future for everyone rather than short-term tweaks. Their responses were featured widely in the media, including on BBC Radio 5, many local radio stations, and much of the church press.

Read more at [church-poverty.org.uk/2024budget](https://church-poverty.org.uk/2024budget)



# events

## DIGNITY FOR ALL

8 June, York

A major conference for anyone interested in tackling UK poverty, led by the real experts – people with experience of poverty.

See the enclosed flyer, or find out more and book your place at [www.church-poverty.org.uk/dignityconference](https://www.church-poverty.org.uk/dignityconference)



## What is a Pantry?

Join one of our webinars to find out what makes Local Pantries so special, and learn how your church could set up a Pantry in your community.

Sign up at [bit.ly/pantryevents](https://bit.ly/pantryevents)



## Artists for Change; Dreams and Realities

To involve more people in the Let's End Poverty campaign, we're organising a touring art exhibition, as well as arts, music and poetry events across the UK.

Find out more on page 6, or visit [letsendpoverty.co.uk/artists](https://letsendpoverty.co.uk/artists)



14–20 October

An opportunity to... celebrate what we're doing to tackle poverty in our communities; share

our visions of a world without poverty; and challenge politicians to play their part too. Can your church or project take part?

Visit [challengepoverty.co.uk](https://challengepoverty.co.uk) to find out more, get resources, and register your event

# Church on the margins



## Hope built on action

Church on the Margins Officer **Adam Spiers** has been bringing churches together in the North West of England.

**W**hat does it mean to build Dignity, Agency, and Power within communities experiencing economic and social marginalisation? For the last few months, Church Action on Poverty has been speaking with local practitioners around the country who are engaged in this kind of work as part of our Church on the Margins project. This April marks a turning point in this process: the launch of our first Community of Praxis.

Communities of Praxis will offer collaborative spaces for local practitioners working in various contexts to participate in a process of shared reflection on theology and practice around the themes of Dignity, Agency, and Power.

Wisdom shared from different people and places can play an important developmental role, and it is hoped the group's dispersed and online approach to community will offer a diversity of context, experience, and access, positively informing the collaborative learning process.

Facilitating collaborative and mutual spaces has the power to play a significant role in catalysing transformative change because it encourages, and indeed requires, a willingness to both share and receive knowledge and wisdom, paying attention to where power is located.

With these same principles in mind, participants will be facilitated to share their wisdom and learning more widely through a number of planned resources including printed and online written materials, as well as multimedia resources.

Church Action on Poverty has always placed a high value on the process of action-reflection rather than simply one or the other. As Isaiah 58:6–7 says:

**“Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?”**

These verses urge us to actively dismantle systemic oppression and to stand in practical solidarity with those in need. They remind us of the holistic nature of our calling – to challenge structural injustices while embracing the immediate needs of our neighbours.

Communities of Praxis reaffirm Church Action on Poverty's commitment to building a society free of the scandal of poverty. Hope built on action is not 'false hope', but an acknowledgement of the real power that already exists in our communities – a power that can stand up to systemic injustice, stand with those experiencing it, and stand for a more equitable society.



**“You stay where you are, they will never come. So it's about me, the church going out of the walls into the community. We can bring them in... It's about relationships and sticking with it.”**

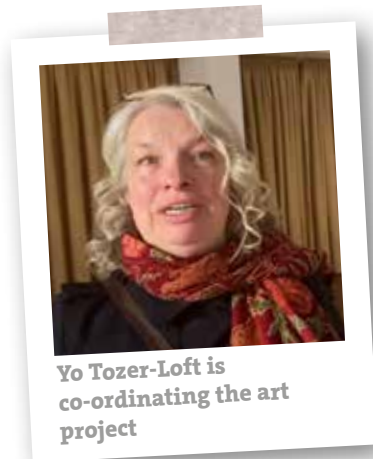
This is one of the reflections shared by communities that took part in our initial research on what it means to be a church on the margins.

Read about the work that led to these Communities of Praxis – and the theology that drives this work – at

**[www.church-poverty.org.uk/cotm](http://www.church-poverty.org.uk/cotm)**

# Dreams & Realities

**A powerful new art exhibition has been launched, telling the stories and aspirations of people in poverty.**



Yo Tozer-Loft is co-ordinating the art project

**All humans have**

**dreams and as**

**humans together**

**we should**

**enable each**

**other's dreams**

**D**reams & Realities is on display at St Mary's Church in Sheffield, and will then go on tour as part of the Let's End Poverty campaign.

Stephen Martin, a local artist, has painted portraits of nine people living in poverty in Sheffield, including himself. Each picture shows the person, something that depicts their economic reality, and something that represents the dreams and ambitions they would pursue if they were not held back by poverty and unjust systems.

The project has been coordinated by Yo Tozer-Loft, who runs a community choir at St Mary's, with support from Church Action on Poverty. Yo says:

"I really hope the paintings show the reality for a lot of people in this country. There are still a lot of people constrained to live on the frontline of poverty and I really hope this project shows their humanity by their dreams. All humans have dreams and as humans together we should enable each other's dreams, and Governments should enable the health and the dreams of the people they govern."

Stephen's self-portrait includes a wellbeing journal, which has helped him with his mental health. The background is black, as the electrical circuits in Stephen's home blew more than ten years ago, so he has lived without electricity ever since. His income is only £340 a month. Stephen says:

"Just being on benefits, I feel the pinch come the end of the month. It's a struggle just to get by day by day, so I hope the message we're putting over in this exhibition about poverty does have an effect in the General Election campaign and it does become a major issue within the election."

The stories in the exhibition are deep and diverse. For instance, Wayne, who is homeless and who supports people hit hard by the cost of living scandal, dreams of empowering others to overcome issues such as racial injustice and homelessness. Liudmyla moved to Sheffield as a refugee from Ukraine, and the school where she had taught was bombed in the war. Her dream is to gain English teaching qualifications so she can resume teaching, but the great uncertainty around the war and her right to stay in England are represented in the painting by a crystal ball.

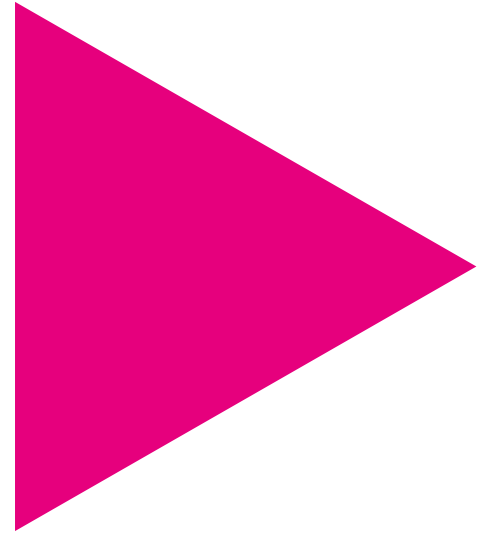


**LET'S END  
POVERTY**



**Find out when the paintings  
will be near you at  
[letsendpoverty.co.uk/artists](https://letsendpoverty.co.uk/artists)**

# LET'S END POVERTY



Here are four ways YOU can act now for a future where poverty can't keep anyone down.

## Action 1: Write to your MP

Tackling poverty has to be a key issue at the next General Election. With 1 in 5 people across the UK struggling against poverty, we urgently need change for our communities.

Our political leaders need to know that we want tackling and ultimately ending poverty to be one of the top priorities for the next government.

MPs have a part to play in making sure their party's plans to tackle poverty are set out ahead of the election.

Email your MP asking them to make sure the next General Election marks the beginning of the end for poverty in the UK: [letsendpoverty.co.uk/action](https://letsendpoverty.co.uk/action)

## Action 3: Hold a meeting with your MP or candidates

Join our online briefing and training session, to help you plan and prepare to meet your existing Member of Parliament or Parliamentary candidates to discuss how to make UK and global poverty a priority ahead of the coming General Election. Come along for practical tips and ideas for holding successful meetings in advance of the General Election that can make a real difference. Let's come together to create positive change in our communities and our world.

**Thursday 18 April 7:00–8:30pm**  
[ActonPoverty.eventbrite.co.uk](https://ActonPoverty.eventbrite.co.uk)

## Action 2: Put up a banner

Could you host a Let's End Poverty banner outside your church or public building, to show that you want to see an end to poverty?

We've teamed up with international development agencies Christian Aid and CAFOD to design these banners for you to show your support.

You can purchase a banner to be delivered directly to you at [www.church-poverty.org.uk/banner](https://www.church-poverty.org.uk/banner)



## Action 4: Join the Action Gathering

Join us for monthly gatherings for anyone and everyone who wants to help build the movement. We'll gather together online to share updates, hear stories of success from the movement and get equipped to take action together. These gatherings will take place on the fourth Thursday of every month.

The next Action Gathering is on Thursday 25 April at 7:00–8:30pm. See [letsendpoverty.co.uk/latest/events/action-gathering-april](https://letsendpoverty.co.uk/latest/events/action-gathering-april)





# Neighbourhood VOICES

The UK needs to get serious about ending poverty. And to do that, we need to have meaningful conversations including a wide range of voices.

**In the lead-up to this year's General Election, we can all help make that happen, and show that every voice matters.**

We're inviting you to host a conversation in your community, and to share your neighbourhood voice via Let's End Poverty.

Could you bring a group of people together to talk about their hopes, dreams and challenges and the action they would like to see at the General Election, and share their voices with others?

We want community groups or churches in low-income areas to hold a Neighbourhood Voices conversation, enabling new voices to be heard loud and clear.

Already, in Sheffield, at Mt Tabor Methodist Church, we have heard from people about life in deep hardship, and about how the church provides valuable community as well as access to shared food. But we also heard what needs to change – people told us of a lack of provision for young people, a shortage of opportunities for school-leavers, the inadequacy and uncaring nature of the benefits system, and of the impact that the cost-of-living scandal is having on household budgets. Bryan, one regular, told us:

"I want people in the election to give young people a bit of a helping hand, help them get on.... We need more work here. More jobs for people. There are not enough jobs, not enough secure jobs or YTSs or apprenticeships for people. It's a vicious cycle, with a lack of opportunities, so people struggle more."

Jonathan told us:

"The low benefit levels are a big issue for people around here. Reaching a realistic level of income is important for people. We need to see an uplift in benefit levels, and support the real Living Wage."



Jonathan took part in a Neighbourhood Voices event in Sheffield

**We need to see  
an uplift in  
benefit levels,  
and support the  
real Living Wage**

Read more from the Sheffield conversation at [church-poverty.org.uk/tag/neighbourhood-voices/](https://church-poverty.org.uk/tag/neighbourhood-voices/)  
Find the toolkit to host your own conversation at [letsendpoverty.co.uk/neighbourhoodvoices/](https://letsendpoverty.co.uk/neighbourhoodvoices/)

## DIGNITY FOR ALL Let's End Poverty

Saturday 8 June 2024,  
10am–4pm  
Priory Street Centre,  
York

**An event for anyone interested in tackling UK poverty, led by the real experts – people with experience of poverty**

With the General Election approaching, this year's Dignity For All conference will focus on how we can call on politicians to make ending UK poverty a priority – and how we can ensure the voices of people with lived experience are heard in policy-making.

*The conference is organised jointly by Church Action on Poverty, the APLE Collective, and the Joint Public Issues Team.*

**Find out more and book your place at [www.church-poverty.org.uk/dignityconference](https://www.church-poverty.org.uk/dignityconference)**



# How **11 people** spoke **truth to power** in Sussex



A new project reminds us that powerful and amazing things happen when people who want change come together. **Jane Perry**, our Research and Evaluation Coordinator, has been part of it.



**W**e know the cost-of-living scandal continues to harm our lowest-income communities, and in recent months, a group of residents of Lewes District, East Sussex, have been coming together to see what they can do.

They've been discussing the impact on their lives, and looking at what changes could be made, in a project called 'Feeling the Pinch! Have Your Say'. Over two months, 11 local residents with experience of financial struggle met fortnightly for workshops. They jointly explored challenges they faced and ways they had found to survive. They then moved on to identify the systemic problems underlying their experiences, and to develop recommendations for change.

The project culminated in an 'Inequality Truth Hearing' bringing the panellists together with representatives from local councils, third sector and community organisations, and local enterprises. The result was a fascinating and powerful discussion, with lots of lively, respectful interaction and generation of ideas for practical next steps. Here, three people share their thoughts on the process – Ruby, who helped set the group up, and two people who took part: Claire, and another participant who would prefer not to be named.



## What was the appeal for you?

### Participant 1:

"When more people talk about it, it means you can talk more openly. The shame is not there. It makes the community less isolated. We've met people we might not meet in everyday life, and I've enjoyed that.

"In Lewes, there are quite a lot of rich people but also hidden poor people. It's nice to know you are not the only one."

### Claire:

"Being able to talk about it is part of the solution. I did not tell many people in my friendship group that I was going to a food bank, but when I was doing the workshops I started telling people I attended a food bank and I was doing these workshops.

"I found I was more relaxed with people experiencing the same issues. We were just all human beings, and didn't have to keep explaining everything...

"When the participants spoke, we came across as the authorities of our own lives, with our own opinions... We did not have a bunch of professionals telling us what to think, or say, or do. I felt like an equal. People are usually either amazed about you, or speak down to you. The conversation has to change.



"More and more, I feel like I am the community. I am this country. The people I meet; we are 'the country'. There are not special people who are 'the country', but we are not hearing enough from so many people."

## What advice would you give to others?

### Ruby:

"Be OK about not having the time or resources you might want. Things like Poverty Truth Commissions can be long projects with hundreds of thousands of pounds. We felt a bit overwhelmed, but we would say 'go for it'.

"Make sure you talk to someone experienced around the ethics of it... We prioritised having a clear, ethical guideline, and we are hoping to create a toolkit that other groups could use..

"We made sure it wasn't a case of 'tell me all the shocking things that have happened in your life'. It was very strength-based. It's about what we bring to the table.

"We didn't want to put anyone on the spot, so it felt very natural – just a group of people sharing their thoughts and experiences. There was no feeling that people had to prove why they were there. It's all about being human beings, around the table, and building connections."

**Claire:**

“I’m quite big on the ethics. There was an ethical framework. Also, we always had a proper lunch – and we were paid. Our time is as valuable as anyone else’s, and there’s a dignity and respect in that.

“Also there was nothing attached to it like faith or religion, or what you used to be. We were all together. There was nothing attached to what we had to do.”

**Participant 1:**

“Because I was brought up very poor, and there was a lot of shame, I just do not want other people to be like that, spending their whole lives in shame. Just take the shame away. I want to be involved because I really feel quite passionate about it. I just want to keep going. I want other people to be able to make their own communities and feel they’re not on their own.”

**Background**

Lewes District Food Partnership, who coordinated the project, work to connect communities and organisations to build better food systems for everyone. Ruby, from the Partnership, says:

“People felt we were doing this work, but people were not being heard or asked their opinions. And it came from people saying they would like to see people’s stories amplified. We were fed up hearing people talk ‘on behalf’ of other people, especially politicians, and we were fed up hearing the same narratives around budgeting.

“Recruitment was a lot of me going out to talk to people and projects. I went to social groups and coffee mornings aimed at reducing isolation and various key community food projects. I work directly with a Lewes food bank so could talk to people directly here as well.”

**Next steps**

The organisers have secured funding to repeat and extend the programme, with a focus on access to advice and support around welfare and benefits issues. Thanks to the project, Lewes District Council have already committed to increased co-design and participation, and are incorporating recommendations into a cost-of-living action plan.

Organisers are also working with Human Nature and the Food Foundation on a Health and Food Strategy for a significant new development in the town.



Ruby works for Lewes Food District Partnership, who coordinated the project

It’s all about

being human

beings, around

the table, and

building

connections



Church Action on Poverty staff supported ‘Feeling the Pinch’ as part of our Speaking Truth To Power programme, supporting people with first-hand experience of poverty to become more effective advocates for change. You can read a fuller version of this report, and other amazing stories from the programme, at:

[church-poverty.org.uk/tag/speaking-truth-to-power](https://church-poverty.org.uk/tag/speaking-truth-to-power)

**SPEAKING  
TRUTH TO  
POWER**

# Hopers and changers



Our Media and Storytelling Coordinator **Gavin Aitchison** has been hearing stories of hope from one of our partner groups on Merseyside.

**“We don’t want to do something new if it doesn’t empower people. I want people to have the resources, and to take things on.”**

**J**o has a dream – but it’s not for herself. It’s for her community, the residents she sees every day, and for the children of the future.

Her dream is that local youngsters will dream big, and start to have bolder, brighter hopes for their future.

A recent survey of local people here in Linacre ward, Bootle, commissioned by local social landlords, found that young people’s ambitions were notably more local and practical than elsewhere.

“It was quite clear that the aspirations here were about local issues and safety,” says Jo. “It wasn’t about people wanting to be astronauts or to go traveling, like in other places. People’s aspirations were to have a warm house or a clean safe park.

“The vision overriding all of this is hope. In ten years, I would like local kids to have very different answers when asked their aspirations for their life.”

Jo is helping to drive that transformation, by linking up with other like-minded hopers and changers. She joined a recent Speaking Truth To Power training session and is now working to build local people power in Bootle, towards a better future.

Jo is a community development worker at St Leonard’s Youth and Community Centre in Bootle, which provides wide-ranging support and friendship to local people. She leads weekly groups including a craft hub, local weekly guided walks, a women’s space group and a men’s space group (growing numbers of local men are struggling with living and mental health).

Jo also promotes regular cookery courses at St Leonard’s, a weekly community lunch, and helps support people to access an in-house benefits advisor and onward referrals. St Leonard’s operates a weekly food bank and Your Local Pantry and also offers over-55s’ activities.

She also supports lots of people who present at St Leonard’s in crisis and helps them access the most appropriate services or support. This could include people in fuel or food crisis, debt, housing

or health issues. Jo also recruits volunteers (people who have previously accessed St Leonard’s for help) to help support the range of activities on offer.

“We regularly hear of the challenges pre- and post-pandemic, in the local community; inadequate housing, debts and money difficulties, unemployment, and issues around basic public services. People tell us they feel undervalued and ignored by local services and regularly speak about their frustrations with regard to their local environment: refuse collection, fly tipping, pest control and street cleansing.

“People have unaddressed environmental issues outside their front doors and are struggling financially. We had one woman here saying she felt like she was feeding the meters more than the children.

“I was born and brought up in Waterloo, so a near neighbour of Bootle. I can walk a short distance from here and be in a really wealthy area where rich footballers live, but here there is real poverty. Sefton is strange like that – a single street can separate wealth and poverty.

“What we really want to do came out of the Pantry, and us wanting to do Speaking Truth To Power. We want a community forum where people can come and offload if they need to, but we want to do it in a particular way and place that then has the task of trying to address these challenges.

“Last year local registered social landlords commissioned a consultation of ‘The Poets’ Streets’ around here (streets named after poets). A lot of people were bringing different challenges, but not talking about what they themselves might be able to do, or finding confidence and power within themselves to address challenges or difficulties. We don’t want to do something new if it doesn’t empower people. I want people to have the resources, and to take things on.”

The Speaking Truth to Power programme aims to support people in low-income neighbourhoods to



**It's a privilege.**

**We are making**

**a difference every day,**

**helping give people hope.**

jointly harness local insight, expertise and resolve, to tackle challenges and injustices together. In August, emerging leaders gathered in Manchester to learn new approaches, and share ideas, and Jo was among them.

She began working in the voluntary sector in the early eighties, working for different charities locally, regionally and nationally, mainly in the areas of mental health and social inclusion. Jo then chose to come back to her home patch. She says:

**“What drives me is people and community. I am passionate about equality and want to see that here in Linacre ward where local residents can have something more to hope and aspire to.**

**“I like working in the community. It’s a privilege. Everything we do is a real privilege. We are involved in people’s lives every day and people trust us to disclose some uncomfortable and challenging things, and it’s**

**a privilege. We are making a difference every day, helping give people hope.**

**“I don’t know if the phrase ‘Truth To Power’ will resonate with people here, so we are trying to come up with the right name.**

**But I’ve spoken to a lot of people here and in the food bank and asked if they would like to be involved, and the answer was an overwhelming yes. It might look at neighbourhood litter or crime or domestic issues or rats but we want to take it a step further, so our work is enabling people to move forward and address things.”**

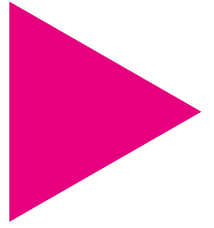
**“Ten years from now, I would like to see a real financially healthy, viable Linacre ward, where there are prospects for young families and children.”**

## **SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER**

Read more about the people and groups who are speaking truth to power with Church Action on Poverty on page 11

# Praying for a change

# LET'S END POVERTY



In this General Election year, it's vital that we engage with our politicians, and tell them they must make tackling poverty a priority. These prayers will help your church to reflect and prepare for that task.

## Being the change we want to see – an opening prayer

*(Originally written for Church Action on Poverty's 30th anniversary in 2012)*

*These opening responses are possibly best led by three separate voices, from behind or from within the body of the congregation. Each piece should be spoken with the relevant passion, compassion, gentleness ... How about asking your older children or young people to lead it?*

**One:** "Hey," says God the Creator, "I'm speaking to you, and I rarely beat about the bush. This world is beautiful, and lovely – but too many people suffer. I love you – but I don't love the injustice. So with and through you I'm going to transform the world."

**All:** Give us courage to join the journey.

**Two:** "Yo," says God the Son, the brother, the companion. "Journey with me here and now, and together we stand beside the hungry, the poor, the suffering. I promise, I won't let you down. I'll be with you now and for ever – for the long haul."

**All:** Give us courage to join the journey.

**Three:** "Sshhhh," says God the Holy Spirit. "I am the stillness, the small voice, the grain of sand, the light that will never go out. So come with me, and together, with quiet, tender, partnering passion, we can 'be the change we want to see in the world.'"

**All:** Give us courage to join the journey.

*Ruth Harvey*

## A confession

*(Originally written in 2014 to support Church Action on Poverty's work on food poverty and hunger)*

If you asked us to walk in another's shoes and we did not

Holy Spirit,

Forgive us and give us your peace

If you asked us to listen to another's story and we did not

Holy Spirit,

Forgive us and give us your peace

If you asked us to witness an injustice and we did not

Holy Spirit,

Forgive us and give us your peace

Forgive us and inspire us,

to do the work you call us to,

Empowered with confidence and hope.

*Marie Pattison*

Is your church nervous about engaging with your MP or election candidates about poverty? Why not build up people's confidence with our *Act On Poverty* programme? It will get people thinking about the issues, and planning how to take action. Published jointly by CAFOD, Christian Aid, Church Action on Poverty, the Joint Public Issues Team and SVP, *Act On Poverty* makes a great Lent programme but can be used at any time of year.

Download it at [www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/act-on-poverty](http://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/act-on-poverty)



### **Come Holy Spirit – intercessions**

*(Originally written in 2014 to support Church Action on Poverty's work on food poverty and hunger)*

Come Holy Spirit

We live in a world where there is plenty for all,  
yet many are hungry

Help us to share the riches you have given us

Your kingdom come

**Your will be done.**

Come Holy Spirit

You give us a vision of a better world

Give wisdom to those with the power to change it

Your kingdom come

**Your will be done.**

Come Holy Spirit

You call us all to be prophets of your truth

Inspire us to speak out for justice

Your kingdom come

**Your will be done**

Come Holy Spirit

You heal the sick and bind up the broken-hearted

Lift up those who need your care

Your kingdom come

**Your will be done**

Come Holy Spirit

You bring peace to those who are afraid

Send us out with your message of Hope

Your kingdom come

**Your will be done**

*Marie Pattison*

### **God is among us**

*(Originally written for Poverty & Homelessness Action Week 2012, based on Psalm 147 and Mark 1:29–39)*

God is among us

breaking down barriers;

**God is loving, God is good.**

God is among us

challenging prejudice;

**God is loving, God is good.**

God is among us

healing communities;

**God is loving, God is good.**

God is among us

calling us to get involved;

**God is loving, God is good.**

*Ruth Burgess*

### **Each day**

Ever-present God, each day is made brighter and our spirits illuminated by your love, but suffering follows quickly when it is clouded by hopelessness and hate.

Spirit, break through the clouds that blind so we can see the beauty in everyone.

Whatever challenge life brings, may we be in sync with you, Spirit, and guided by your gentle, silent voice.

May your light guide our every step on the path of life. Manifest the wonders of your love in our lives each day.

Give us the strength to overcome anything that attempts to bring us down every day.

Remind us to be grateful to you and considerate of others each day that we are granted the gift of life.

*Julaine and Jimi Calhoun*

### **God of**

God of peace and justice, you give us reason to rejoice each day. You are our joy, our hope, our truth in life.

Forgive us when we lack faith to trust.

Pour out your mercy on us. Lead us and provide the faith and trust to follow you.

For those that are weary, give them strength.

For those that have a troubled soul, give them peace.

Help us to live in your presence and find rest there.

God of heaven and earth, help those that feel disconnected from you, see the beauty in themselves that you see in them.

God of all people for all time, a refuge to the poor, thank you that you are near to all.

*Julaine and Jimi Calhoun*



Many of these prayers are taken from *Dignity, Agency, Power*, the anthology published by Wild Goose Publications to mark 40 years of Church Action on Poverty in 2022.

The anthology includes many more prayers, as well as poems, stories, Bible studies and more. It's a wonderful resource for praying and reflecting on a faith that does justice.

**Order your copy at**  
[www.ionabooks.com/product/dignity-agency-power](http://www.ionabooks.com/product/dignity-agency-power)

# Your Local **PANTRY**

## Will your church be home to the next Local Pantry?

**More than 90,000 people have experienced greater dignity, choice and hope through Your Local Pantry membership, in over 100 neighbourhoods across the UK.**

Pantries soften the blow of high living costs and create the conditions for communities to grow and thrive, by bringing people together around food.

Pantries are strengthening communities, fostering friendships, loosening the grip of poverty and contributing to healthier, happier lives.

Pantries operate as membership food clubs and neighbourhood hubs, often serving as springboards to other community initiatives, opportunities and ideas.

### **You could be part of it.**

Over half of the Pantries in the network are run by churches. If your church wants to build community and connection while tackling food poverty, perhaps you could open a Pantry too!

Church Action on Poverty offers a range of practical support to help you set up and run your Pantry – and you get the benefits of being part of a UK-wide movement.



Come to a **'What is a Pantry?'** webinar to find out more – book online at [bit.ly/pantryevents](https://bit.ly/pantryevents)



Or visit...

 [www.yourlocalpantry.co.uk](https://www.yourlocalpantry.co.uk)

   [@yourlocalpantry](https://twitter.com/yourlocalpantry)

**“We want to reach people in the area and build relationships. With a Pantry, people come back every week and start opening up and you hear how much it means to people. We are a church so we can direct people in the church to the Pantry, and also let Pantry members know about other things like the toddler groups.”**

*Jo at Portsmouth North End Pantry*