

PRAYERS TO CONFRONT POVERTY IN SCOTLAND

Challenge Poverty Week 15-21 October 2017



CHALLENGE
POVERTY
WEEK

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*CHALLENGE POVERTY IN
SCOTLAND? AYE, WE CAN!*

Introduction

The 17th of October is the United Nations Day for the Eradication of Global Poverty.

On that day, across the world, people come together in solidarity with those who suffer poverty and injustice. For a number of years, I have attended one such gathering in Glasgow's George Square. As I have listened to the injustice that people suffer, tears have welled up in my soul and anger in my stomach.

In recent years, the Poverty Alliance has promoted Challenge Poverty Week around the 17th of October. Its purpose is to highlight the scandal of poverty and to encourage us all to take action. As Christians there are very specific reasons why we should be involved in that struggle, including:

- Our understanding that all of humanity is made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). Therefore, whenever a person is scarred by poverty, that person is less able to reflect the beauty and wonder of God. We are all poorer as a result and the glory of God shines a little less brightly in the world.
- Jesus' promise to continue to be with us in the poor and the dispossessed (Matthew 25:31). So whenever we choose to take sides with those who struggle for their dignity in the face of poverty we take sides with Jesus. I do not fully understand this mystery but I know it to be true in my own life and in the lives of others.

During Challenge Poverty Week, we would encourage congregations and individuals to pray for (and with) those who experience poverty. And certainly in your individual prayer life, do your best to pray for people by name. Poverty has a human face.


We would also encourage you to make friends with those who struggle against poverty. This is more than serving those who experience poverty, important though that is. Jesus calls us to friendship and not just service.

Finally we would encourage you to get involved in the messy work of solidarity and justice. Our calling is not simply to feed the hungry but to ask why, in a world and nation of such abundance, too many do not have enough to survive let alone flourish.

I hope that you will find this short resource helpful in these tasks both during Challenge Poverty Week and also throughout the year.

Martin Johnstone
Secretary, Church & Society Council

Prayers to confront poverty in Scotland

- Day 1** Ms Wendy Young, Worship and Theology partnerships, Christian Aid (Scotland) 
- Day 2** Justice and Peace Scotland, the Justice and Peace Commission of the Catholic Church in Scotland
- Day 3** Rev Trevor Jamison, Environmental Chaplain, Eco-Congregation Scotland
- Day 4** Rev Alan Donaldson, General Director, Baptist Union of Scotland
- Day 5** Ms Pauline Edmiston, Transformation Team Coordinator, Faith in Community (Scotland)
- Day 6** Ms Shirley Grieve, Priority Areas Secretary, Ministries Council, Church of Scotland
- Day 7** Rt Revd Dr Derek Browning, Moderator, General Assembly of the Church of Scotland

We would like to thank all those who submitted prayers for this resource. For further materials regarding Challenge Poverty Week 2017, please go to www.povertyalliance.org/challenge_poverty

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Day 1

God who became flesh
Move us into our neighbourhoods
To encounter the reality of poverty
Behind the closed doors
Of high-rise and tenement flats
Of semi-detached houses and rural bungalows
Of farm houses and croft cottages
Of hostel dormitories and night shelters
Of hotel rooms and church manses.

Unlock closed hearts and minds
Open us all up to the shared experience
Of living together in this bonnie land
Moving us to challenge poverty
To participate fully and
To thrive together.

In your name we pray.

Amen.



*Wendy Young
Worship and Theology partnerships
Christian Aid (Scotland)*

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POVERTY
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Day 2

God of Justice, open our eyes to see you in the face of those in poverty.
Open our ears to hear you in the cries of those who feel ignored, or unloved.
Open our mouths to preach your love in the public squares as well as by our private deeds.
Remind us that what we do to the least, we do to you.

Jesus Christ, migrant and exile. Born in poverty in fear of the authorities.
In you we hear the voice which speaks truth to power.
In you we see hands which stretch out to heal and calm.
Remind us that we cannot worship your Presence on a Sunday, but ignore you lonely and alone on a Monday.

Holy Spirit, burn through Scotland.
Stand with us as we challenge inequality, and demand the best from our society.
Stand with us as we grow community across our country, reaching out to the margins, and making space for the stranger.
Remind us to stand with our neighbour, to challenge poverty, and build up a kingdom of justice.

Amen



*Justice and Peace Scotland,
the Justice and Peace Commission
of the Catholic Church in Scotland*

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POVERTY
WEEK

Day 3

Generous God,
You want us to be wealthy,
But not at the cost of others' poverty.

So help us, we pray, to create a nation
Where wealth is shared
So that we may all enjoy abundant life.

Amen

*Rev Trevor Jamison
Environmental Chaplain
Eco-Congregation Scotland*



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POVERTY
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Day 4

Deut 15:11 (ESV) "For in your land there will never cease to be poor in the land. Therefore I command you, You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor."

Our Father, God of righteousness, justice and grace, teach us to walk in your ways.

Release a generous spirit in your church for the sake of the poor in our Nation.

Open our hearts to receive from those who live on the margins of society.

Teach us to listen to the voice of the voiceless.

Show us how we might restore those who are sidelined by poverty.

Strengthen our resolve to live out these convictions.

In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen

*Rev Alan Donaldson
General Director
Baptist Union of Scotland*



**CHALLENGE
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Day 5

Amy sits alone, she saw the Challenge Poverty Week poster at the local project and prayed...

Oh God. If only this poverty had lasted just a week
But it hasn't been a week ... it's been grinding me away day by day, week by week, month by month, year by year;
challenges that drive me deeper and deeper into despair...

How I wish I only had to challenge poverty in my life for a week!
I could manage that, knowing it will end.

I could manage to cope with the searing pain in my belly brought on by the fear that this week will be the week
when the foodbank can't help us.

I could manage to cope, I think, with the knowledge that the lecky will run out before the potatoes are properly
boiled through and that I will have to use that water to fill a hot water bottle which will at least put a little
warmth into my daughter's damp bed.

I could cope with the hours and days upon days sitting at the projects, computer looking for the elusive
'employment opportunity' that will 'transform my life' and kick off the label of 'scrounger' that pains my very
soul.

And God answers 'Challenge poverty in Scotland? Aye, together we can...and must!

*Pauline Edmiston
Transformation Team Coordinator
Faith in Community (Scotland)*



CHALLENGE
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Day 6

Dear Lord,

In this week when we are called to challenge poverty, we ask for your strength to help us. In those situations, however small, where we think we could make a difference, help us find the voice to challenge injustice. Lead us to walk with people as they deal with the effects of poverty, doing what we can to support people in their daily lives. We know that poverty diminishes us all and we ask for your help in building a better, fairer, more loving society.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen



*Shirley Grieve
Priority Areas Secretary
Ministries Council
Church of Scotland*

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Day 7

Lord Jesus,
You tell us the poor will always be with us,
How then shall we be with them?
How shall we be generous without patronising?
How shall we be supportive without controlling?
How shall we be caring without diminishing?
When we see the breadth and depth of poverty,
Help us not to be overwhelmed into despair,
But imaginative about engagement.
Let us be honest,
Let us be gracious,
Let us be willing to learn,
And let us be ready to receive
As well as to give.

Lord Jesus,
You tell us the poor will always be with us.
Help us show our love in seeking justice,
Help us live our love in opening our hearts.
For You are the Lord of both rich and poor,
And wish lives of fullness and fulfilment
For all Your children.
We ask these things in Your Name.

Amen

*Rt Revd Dr Derek Browning
Moderator, General Assembly
of the Church of Scotland*



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