

LIFEWORDS

Lifewords Prayer, December 2023

Nothing is impossible for God!
Luke 1:37 (CEV)

Prayer is vital to everything we do. We want to follow Jesus' example and connect with God; to ask for peace, transformation, salvation; and to pray for the impact of Lifewords work around the world.

Thank you for praying with us through this year. Happy Christmas!

3–9 December

A welcoming space

From 30 November to 7 December, Fakenham Parish Church is holding its 23rd annual Christmas Tree Festival. The church community expect to welcome around 20,000 visitors over eight days. "We support local charities by helping them raise funds through the joy of people coming into church and seeing over 50 beautifully decorated trees," says Tracy Jessop, rector. "We maintain a prayerful presence, pausing on the half hour to say a specific prayer for a charity, and on the hour to encourage everyone to say the Lord's Prayer. Our sanctuary has six large trees, where people are offered the chance to write a specific name, cause, or intention to hang on the trees. Last year, we collected over 5,000 which were prayed over and commended to God."

Lifewords resources are offered in the church space, which is staffed throughout the festival as a place for engagement and conversation. "We have used the resources before," says Tracy. "They are good for following up conversations and suggesting how people can explore faith. Very rich conversations often happen here."

Pray with us

Give thanks for church communities all over the world who are inviting people in this Christmas. Pray for Fakenham Parish Church, that they would have the opportunity to share God's welcome, and that many people would discover the love of Jesus through conversation, prayer, and reading the Bible.

Pray for other churches who are reaching out to their communities – through services, food banks, home visits, school assemblies, and social projects. Pray that the light of Jesus would shine brightly this Christmas.

>> Visit christmastreefestival.co.uk to find out more about the Fakenham Christmas Tree Festival.

10–16 December

Sharing the Christmas story

Christmas is the story of the birth of Jesus, and it is also the story of the outsiders, the broken, the weary, the scared, the grieving. It's the story of light in the darkness and hope in despair. This Christmas, people all over the world are using Lifeworlds resources to share this light.

For people who might be struggling with grief, mental illness, loneliness, exhaustion, or disappointment our *The True Light* booklet and accompanying animations speak light into dark places. *Meet the Cast* is a firm favourite with churches and families. It's vibrant and fun and perfect for reading aloud with children as a first introduction to the characters in the Christmas story. *A Story for the Whole World* incorporates patterns from around the world that reflect themes such as hope, life, and family that are mirrored in the Christmas story. Available as both an animation and booklet, *OUTSIDE/IN* tells the story of the birth of Jesus through those God chose to include – the outcasts, the ignored, the frightened.

Pray with us

Give thanks for Lifeworlds resources being shared all over the world. Pray that people would experience God's love – whatever their situation – as they read the Bible.

Pray for those who are reaching out to their friends, neighbours, colleagues, and family this Christmas – pray for opportunities to be light to others and to show generosity, grace, and love.

>> Let's continue to share the light that shines in the darkness this Christmas. Visit www.lifeworlds.global/christmas to browse our Christmas resources and find out more.

>> During December, we are sharing our advent calendar on Facebook and Instagram – each day a different digital resource will equip and encourage you as you continue to share the good news of Jesus this Christmas. Visit our Facebook (LifeworldsUK) and Instagram (Lifeworlds_UK) pages to find out more.

17–23 December

Supporting children in India

Parents who struggle with alcoholism is one of the foremost issues that children-at-risk face in India. Studies show that the problems of alcohol abuse have been associated with increased suffering of family members, which contributes to a high level of interpersonal conflict, domestic violence, financial difficulties, and psychological disturbances. In addition, the increased risk of developing diseases associated with alcohol abuse by the individual further adds to the burden on the family. Serah Thomas, Pavement Project Co-ordinator for India, shares how Pavement Project has helped one boy:

"Raju* is 13 years old. He is good at playing football but had been showing anger while playing with his peers. A Pavement Project worker invited Raju to talk to him with the green bag resources. As the worker interacted with Raju, he shared about his mother's tragic death due to his father's alcoholism and extreme physical abuse. Every day his father used to come back home from work drunk and start abusing his mother and Raju. One day, after one such incident, his mother immolated herself. Raju witnessed his mother being engulfed in fire and later fighting for her life in the hospital, until she died.

"Raju shared with the worker that he felt like a lifeless stump of a tree that has been cut off and the roots dried up. He was angry with his father and didn't trust anyone. As Raju heard the Bible stories about how God is a righteous judge, and that he can go to Jesus with his worries, Raju was strengthened. Raju kept looking at the 'light' pocket card and told the worker: 'When I feel helpless, I can ask Jesus to help me, right? I can be a tree with strong roots.'

“Since the counselling session, Raju has shown significant change in his interactions with his peers. He has become more calm, loving, and confident.”

* Name has been changed

Pray with us

Give thanks for how Raju has discovered Jesus through Pavement Project. Pray for his continued healing and restoration.

Give thanks for how Pavement Project is helping vulnerable children. Pray for the workers and partner organisations as they seek to support these young people and their families.

24–30 December

Mobile missions in Indonesia

The Lifewords team in Indonesia regularly take “mobile missions” to different parts of the country. These are opportunities to share about the ministry of Lifewords, and to train people how to use our resources. Gunar Sahari shares about a recent mobile mission to East Kalimantan:

“We took a mobile mission to Balikpapan, East Kalimantan, to continue our training for pastors. We trained them how to use Lifewords resources as part of their ministries. Afterwards, they told us that they had good experiences using our resources, and that people had listened to the Bible stories told in booklets.

“Deffri, is an alumnus from the Bible college that we work alongside. We sent him to be a full-time missionary in Balikpapan, where he was keen to use Lifewords resources to reach out to many people in Kalimantan. Deffri told me: ‘I would like to thank Lifewords. Since I have joined the training, I have courage to share good news with others, because all Lifewords booklets are simple and very easy to understand.’

“Pastor Firman is from the Nias Islands and moved to Balikpapan to start church planting, he said: ‘I have used Lifewords booklets for three years, and many people have had a good response after listening to or reading the Bible stories. Many people have received Jesus as their Saviour.’ Pastor Firman has joined our training on several occasions, and he is going to help lead our training for trainers in Balikpapan.”

Pray with us

Give thanks for the mobile missions that take place in Indonesia – for how they train church leaders and pastors to reach their communities with God’s Word.

Pray for Deffri and Pastor Firman – pray that God would strengthen their ministries and help them reach more people. Pray for Pastor Firman as he trains others.

Thank you for praying with us! Your partnership in prayer is vital to all that we do as we share the Bible’s life words around the world. You can make a donation to our work online at www.lifewords.global, by post, or by calling 020 7730 2155.