

LIFEWORDS

Lifewords Prayer, January 2024

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. Please join us as we pray this month.

31 December – 6 January

Thank you!

Thank you for praying for churches, groups, and individuals who used our Advent and Christmas resources. Here are two stories about how they were shared in the UK:

St Mary's Church in Bury St Edmunds ran its second "Road to Christmas" event last November. Using actors and five stage sets, they offered families the opportunity to experience the Christmas story. The actors played the parts of a Roman official, Herod, the shepherds, wise men, and Mary and Joseph, and gave children – including those from local schools – the opportunity to ask questions and take part. Visitors took home a copy of *Meet the Cast* to help them reflect further on the Christmas story.

Patricia, who lives in Norwich and is part of Mile Cross Salvation Army Church, used our *Light Up* postcards in seasonal care kits for people who are homeless. The care kits included a mixture of essentials, plus something nice to eat, and something meaningful to keep hold of, like a book or pack of postcards. Patricia worked with the Red Cross, Norfolk and Norwich Trust, as well as the homelessness charity, St Martins, to ensure that the care packages reached those who needed them most.

Pray with us

As we begin a new year, pray for everyone who encountered Jesus this Christmas, whether it was through a church service, community outreach, school assembly, or conversation with a friend. Pray that people would find like-minded communities and relationships to journey together as they explore faith.

7–13 January

The impact of Pavement Project

Clara Ngobolia, Lifewords Kenya Director, shares about a young man who was helped by Pavement Project:

"Everest* is a 23-year-old from Tanzania. He is now a happy, excited, and energetic young man, but he left his home when he was 14 years old, after being emotionally and physically abused by his stepmother. He lived on the streets for five years. One day, he was rescued and placed in

a children's home owned by one of Pavement Project's partners. There he met John, who used Pavement Project resources to help Everest find healing.

"Everest had been through serious abuse, both emotionally and physically. He was deeply hurt, felt helpless and hopeless, comparing himself to a branch that had fallen off a tree. The Bible story of Jesus raising a dead boy to life gave Everest hope. He felt upheld by God as he read the Bible message on the pocket card. He no longer saw himself like a fallen branch of a tree, but rather a tree that has big branches that bear fruit and give shelter.

"After the initial session, Everest was so encouraged that he went back to school, going through secondary and high school, and later joining university. He has just graduated as a lawyer and plans to advocate for the rights of children and young people. He also volunteers in the same organisation that helped him.

"How amazing it is to see the impact of Pavement Project, bringing the life words of the Bible to Everest's life!"

Pray with us

Give thanks for the prayer, donations, and support that ensure Pavement Project is able to help children and young people in Kenya.

Praise God for Everest, and for the healing and transformation he has experienced. Pray for him as he moves forward in his career and calling to advocate and seek justice for young people.

14–20 January

Finding Hope

Originally written for partners working with refugees and displaced people, our *Finding Hope* resource is read all over the world by people in situations of crisis, hardship, or personal trauma. Here, Clive tells us about how it has helped him:

"During a low ebb in my life when things came crashing down, especially in relation to my eyesight deterioration, daily living as I had known it became a challenge. Life changed as I lost my independence, and it became unsafe for me to go out on my own. Quite by chance – or maybe I was meant to find it – I came across [a copy of] *Finding Hope* that a friend unintentionally left behind. I found it full of encouraging and relevant messages from different books of the Bible. I could only see an inch above the text using my so-called better eye (that too was diminishing in vision) but the way the booklet had been put together and thought about brought me positivity again."

Pray with us

Give thanks for the impact God's Word has on our lives – with power to help us understand things differently and find hope despite challenging circumstances.

Pray for Clive and for others who are dealing with physical, emotional, or mental health issues. Pray that as they read the Bible and encounter God, that they would find healing, solace, and comfort.

21–27 January

Reaching refugees

In the Parkhead area of Glasgow, Lifeworlds resources are being used at a refugee outreach run by Parkhead Nazarene Church.

For the past decade, the east end of Glasgow has been home to many refugees and asylum seekers. The neighbourhood suffers from poverty and high levels of addiction, but there are a lot of good things happening in the area too, with a strong sense of community and resilience. "At the asylum/refugee outreach, our core programme is teaching English (we have around 50 registered students)," says Paul Wilson, who is part of the church and a partner with Interserve. "We also have a parents and tots' group, and a running group. Through our outreach we hope to offer welcome in the name of Jesus, break down barriers between communities, and share about the hope we have in Christ.

"Most of the people who come to our church are not Christian and are keen to learn more about our faith," says Paul. "The booklets are excellent conversation starters ... [and] really resonate with our visitors. *Afraid to Leave, Afraid to Stay* is so relevant to where many of our refugee friends find themselves. It gives voice to many of the anxieties that refugees and asylum seekers face and offers hope with words from Scripture. One woman told me that she reads it on the bus when she is going to sign on at the Home Office. In the asylum system, she often feels like 'a number', but she can look to a God who knows her name and is not indifferent to her troubles.

"The other booklet that is popular is the Arabic version of *Who Cares About Me*. The booklet is designed for children, but many of the young mothers have found it incredibly moving. [They] are some of the most socially isolated in our area, they often feel forgotten and alone. The simple truth of the booklet, which answers its titular question with 'God cares about you', is incredibly affecting. The booklet is also an encouragement to us in the ministry to reflect God's care in our words and actions."

Pray with us

Give thanks for Parkhead Nazarene and their work in the community. Pray for them as they reach out to the vulnerable and marginalised.

Pray for those who have left their homes and are making a life in a new country. Pray for the young mothers, that they would find community and friendship, and that they would discover God's love for them.

28 January – 3 February

Equipping new workers

Demand for Pavement Project training continues in many countries, with new workers learning how to use the green bag resources. Clenir dos Santos, Pavement Project Director, tells us about recent training workshops:

"We are happy to have eight new educators trained to help the children of the riverside and *sertanejas* (people who live in the *sertão* – a desert-like area in north-eastern Brazil. It's known for its annual droughts, and for its poverty). Trainers Suanny and Rebeca held two online training sessions last October.

"We have also trained the first five educators in Panama. Cynthia, one of the trainees said: 'The training filled me with a lot of spiritual edification, seeing children's ministry in a closer way. I was able to better understand and support children in the circumstances in which they live and with the burdens they carry within them.' Ivys was another person who was trained: 'I thank God because Lifeworlds is an answer to prayers for the restoration of this generation. We will

continue to pray and trust in the mighty hand of the Lord and the guidance of the Holy Spirit through this marvellous tool that is the green bag.' Zuleyka told us: 'It was a blessing for me to take part in this training and I'm excited to start using the green bag and to see how God will manifest himself in the children's lives and in mine too. Thank you very, very much Lifewords for your work through Pavement Project!'"

Pray with us

Give thanks for Pavement Project, and for how it helps children's workers in their ministry. Give thanks for the connection, relationship, and way-in to the Bible it provides.

Pray for these new workers – that God would sustain them, and give them compassion, wisdom, and grace as they help young people.

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.