Meetings of the Reference Group and Theological Study Group for the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace

4 to 6 March 2019, Chiang Mai, Thailand

Order of Worship

Ecumenical Prayer Service on the Eve of Ash Wednesday,

5 March, 2019
18.00 Hrs

Opening service of Lenten Campaign
“Seven Weeks for Water”
Theme: A Pilgrimage of Water Justice in Asia

Leaders of the Service:

Dr Agnes Abuom, Moderator, World Council of Churches (WCC)

Prof. Dr Isabel Apawo Phiri, Deputy General Secretary, World Council of Churches (WCC)

Prof. Dr Fernando Enns, Co-Moderator, WCC PJP Reference Group

Prof Jennifer P. Martin, Co-Moderator, WCC PJP Reference Group

Bishop Arnold Temple, President of AACC and Chairperson of WCC – Ecumenical Water Network

Rev. Dr Susan Durber, moderator of the World Council of Churches' Commission on Faith and Order.

Rev. Dr Chris Ferguson, General Secretary, World Alliance of Reformed Churches

Rev. Dr Mathews George Chunakara, General Secretary, Christian Conference of Asia

Rev. Dr Cornelia Füllkrug-Weitzel, President, Brot für die Welt

Ms Brandi Friesen, World Student Christian Federation

Mr Dinesh Suna, Coordinator, WCC’s Ecumenical Water Network

Introduction: (By Dinesh Suna, Coordinator, WCC’s EWN)

The World Council of Churches Ecumenical Water Network (WCC-EWN) invites you to use
for the seven weeks of Lent and for World Water Day on 22 March (which always falls during the Lenten period).

According to the Christian tradition, Lent is a time to prepare for the celebration of the death and resurrection of Christ. During this period many people engage in fasting and practice moderation or self-denial in order to focus on repentance and consecrating oneself to God. While water has a strong spiritual significance in the Christian tradition as a gift of God, this scarce resource is threatened and denied to billions around the world.

The WCC’s Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace will have a regional focus on Asia in 2019. Accordingly, the Seven Weeks for Water this year will take us on a pilgrimage of water justice in Asia.

During Lent 2019, various activities around the Seven Weeks for Water will take place in Asia. Today we are launching this campaign here in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in collaboration with the CCA (Christian Conference of Asia) in the presence of the leaders of the World Council of Churches, members of Reference Group of the WCC Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace and other dignitaries. Tomorrow, Ash Wednesday, marks the beginning of Lenten period (according to the Western traditions of Christianity).

Biblical-theological reflections and resources on the water crisis in the Asian region are prepared and published on the WCC-EWN website along with other resource materials encouraging our member churches around the world to use these resources during the Lenten period.

L is read by one person.
C is read by congregation.

(Please rise as you are able)

Call to Worship
L: The Lord be with you,

C: And also with you.

L: Let us pray:

   Gracious God,
   In the beginning your Spirit breathed over the waters.
   From the sea you created cells, plants, creatures.
   In the warm waters of the womb,
   You already knew our inward parts,
   And formed us in your image.
   We thank you for life.
   And let the people say: Amen!

C: Amen!

L: The Spirit of the Lord is upon you.

L: Let us pray:

   God of the oppressed,
   Through the waters of the sea your people walked away from slavery on dry land.
We thank you for setting us free.
And let the people say: Amen!

C: Amen!

I: The Spirit of the Lord is upon you.

Invocation

Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters!
And you who have no money: come, buy and eat!

The Triune God invites the whole creation to the Feast of Life, through Jesus Christ who came “that they may have life, and may have it in all its fullness.”

C: Amen.
All praise be to God.
Alleluia!

The water God gives us

2. O God, we confess that we seek empty things;
we strive after wealth and the comfort it brings.
We buy things in hopes that our spirits will soar,
yet still we are thirsty and left wanting more.

3. Then just like that woman who went to the well,
we hear you, O Christ, and the truth that you tell.
You know who we are and you know what we’ve been;
you know us and love us in spite of our sin.

4. The gift that you give is the greatest of wealth:
You give living water! You give us yourself!
Prayer of confession

L: God, the very source of life,
   Whose Spirit hovered over waters at the time of creation;
   God in Jesus Christ,
   Who came as living waters to quench the thirsty;
   God the Holy Spirit,
   Who waters and brings forth the fruit;
We come to your presence confessing our attitudes of greed,
dominance and insensitivity towards your wonderful creation, particularly towards water.

C: Let justice roll down like rivers, and let rivers roll out in justice.

L: Today 1 in 3 people in the world do not have access to safely managed drinking water. 2 in 3 people in the world do not have access to a safely managed and dignified sanitation facility. More than 1000 children die every day due to preventable disease such as diarrhoea, which is primarily due to unsafe drinking water. The Asian continent shares a significant proportion of these statistics. Neither the governments, nor we as faith communities have done enough to address this issue.

C: Let justice roll down like rivers, and let rivers roll out in justice.

L: We confess that we have been irresponsible in our use of water, wasting it to satisfy our comfortable lives. In many places we have commodified and privatised water, a natural resource, denying people access to it. In the name of development projects, water sources have been drained or polluted with industrial waste, causing risk to flora and fauna and the people who are dependent on it for their survival.

C: Let justice roll down like rivers, and let rivers roll out in justice.

L: We confess our failure, as faith communities, by not adequately addressing water justice and we seek forgiveness for not speaking out for the thirsty and the dying in situations of drought.

C: Let justice roll down like rivers, and let rivers roll out in justice.

L: We confess to being silent spectators as many people from vulnerable communities in Asia and in many remote corners of the world walk miles every day in search of water for their families. We regret our involvement in the commodification of water, which has resulted in contamination and reduction of water supplies. Help us to advocate for and implement the human right to water and sanitation for all.

C: Let justice roll down like rivers, and let rivers roll out in justice.

(© SCM India)

L: God of mercy and justice
We confess our airline tickets and the need for speed which overrides the healing of the earth’s fever.

We confess our batteries and electrons on demand which often later poisons the back yards of the poorest.
We confess our use of soaps, cosmetics and synthetic shirts and blouses, ignoring that their unseen, plastic microbeads run into our streams and oceans which now resides in fish, and probably in some of us.

C: Let justice roll down like rivers, and let rivers roll out in justice.
L: Eternal God, cleanse us from all our offenses, and deliver us from proud thoughts and vain desires, that with reverent and humble hearts we may draw near to you, confessing our faults, confiding in your grace, and finding in you our refuge and strength; through Jesus Christ your Son.

C: Amen

(Book of Common Worship Adapted)

Words of Grace

L: Hear the good news from our God: When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue is parched with thirst, I the Lord will answer them,

I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers on the bare heights, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.

I will put in the wilderness the cedar, the acacia, the myrtle, and the olive; I will set in the desert the cypress, the plane and the pine together, so that all may see and know, all may consider and understand, that the hand of the Lord has done this, the Holy One of Israel has created it.

(Isaiah 41:17-20)

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 55:1-3

1. Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.
2. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food.
3. Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live. I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David.

L: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God!

Reflection: Bishop Arnold Temple, President of AACC and Co-Chair of WCC-EWN,
Let justice flow down

Let justice flow down, down like a river,
down to the valleys where the helpless cry. Righteousness flow through us forever, lead us to the stream that will never run dry

1. Flow to the mouths of the hungry, flow to the hands of the poor. Flow to the hearts of the orphans, the ravages of war.
2. Flow to the streets of the homeless, finding no place they can go. Flow to the cells of the prisoners, who face each day alone.
3. Flow through the courts of our nation, guide us in love's decree. Lead us to streams of salvation; and flood our lands with peace.
Imposition of Ashes

L: In some Christian traditions, the Lenten season begins with the Ash Wednesday, which this year falls tomorrow, 6 March. In the Ash Wednesday service, we remember our mortality, sinfulness, and need of a saviour. We renew our commitment to daily repentance in the Lenten season and in all of life. We also remember with confidence and gratitude that Christ has conquered death and sin.

Let us pray:

Almighty God, you created us out of the dust of the ground. May these ashes remind us that we are dust and shall return to dust. May they also remind us of the cross of Christ by which we are given everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C: Amen.

(Those who wish to receive ashes may come forward one at a time.)

The minister imposes ashes on the forehead with the sign of the cross — a reminder of the cross placed on the forehead at the time of Baptism — with the words, “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” The congregation remains silent.

Prayer (after the imposition of the ashes)

L: Gracious God, out of your love and mercy you breathed into dust the breath of life, creating us to serve you and our neighbours. In this season of repentance, restore to us all the joy of our salvation and strengthen us to face our mortality, that we may reach with confidence for your mercy, in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Inspired by your Spirit, empower us to strive for justice and peace, birthing life in fullness for all.

C: Amen.

Affirmation of commitment

L: Lent is a journey of deepening reflection and renewal, an opportunity to make new commitments in faith. Let us now affirm our commitment to act justly, improving the lives of many people who do not have clean water.

We express by singing “O God of life, your waters flow,” a hymn that was written in support of the Standing Rock community.

♪ O God of life, your waters flow
Launching of the Lenten Campaign “Seven Weeks for Water 2019”

By the following leaders:

1. Dr Agnes Abuom, Moderator, World Council of Churches (WCC)
2. Prof. Dr Isabel Apawo Phiri, Deputy General Secretary, World Council of Churches (WCC)
3. Prof. Dr Fernando Enns, Co-Moderator, WCC PJP Reference Group
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O God of life, your waters flow

Carolyn Winfrey Gillette

William Bradbury

1. O God of life, your waters flow and make all life on earth to grow. Your springs rise up and rains fall down on fertile field and sandy ground. May we be wise to know the worth of clean, clear rivers, sky and earth. May all your children take a stand, protecting water, tending land.

2. Yet greed can rise up to destroy the things you give us to enjoy. This world too often won’t respect the things you call us to protect.

Refrain

3. May justice roll like waters down and streams of righteousness abound. May we push on and never cease to stand for justice, truth and peace.

Refrain

Melody: 1861 William Bradbury. Words © 2017 Carolyn Winfrey Gillette. All rights reserved.
Introduction

By Mr Dinesh Suna, Coordinator, World Council of Churches Ecumenical Water Network.

Action

L1: May the Seven Weeks for Water be an instrument to raise awareness on issues related to water so that there is universal access to safe drinking water and safe and dignified sanitation facilities.

Pour water into the bowl from the jug

L2: Through the Seven Weeks for Water, may this Lenten campaign be an opportunity for us to highlight the water crisis in the Asian context, particularly that of South Asia.

Pour water into the bowl from the jug

L3: May the Seven Weeks for Water contribute to a “Pilgrimage of Water Justice” in all the affected regions around the world, particularly in south Asia, which lags behind in water and sanitation related targets.

Pour water into the bowl from the jug

L4: May all those deprived of access to water, the life giving resource, get access to safe drinking water and also to a dignified access to adequate sanitation facilities.

Pour water into the bowl from the jug

L5: May the forthcoming Lenten campaign engage our churches meaningfully to make that goal a reality.

Pour water into the bowl from the jug

L6: May the work of the Ecumenical Water Network of the World Council of Churches continue to bring the prophetic voice of the churches into the discourse of the human right to water.

Pour water into the bowl from the jug

L7: May the churches in Asia use the Lenten season to bring water issues into the center of the church’s discourse.

Pour water into the bowl from the jug
L8: (while speaking making the sign of a cross over the bowl of water)
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, on behalf of the World Council of Churches, I declare the Lenten Campaign, Seven Weeks for Water 2019, open!

C: Amen

Lord’s Prayer (in our many languages)

For everyone born

♫ For everyone born

Christopher Wren

Alice DeLaney, S.J.

For everyone born

♫ For everyone born

Shirley Fenner Murray

Brian Mann, USA

1. For every-one born, a place at the table,
2. For woman and man, a place at the table,
3. For young and for old, a place at the table,
4. For just and unjust, a place at the table,
5. For every-one born, a place at the table,

for every-one born, clean water and bread;
revising the roles, deciding the share;
a voice to be heard, a part in the song,
to live with-out fear, and simply to be,

1. A shelter, a space a safe place for growing
2. With wisdom and grace, dividing the power,
3. The hands of a child in hands that are wrinkled
4. In an agent, in hurt, a mind-set of mercy,

for every-one born a star over head.
for woman and man, a system that’s fair.
for young and for old, a right to be long.
for just and unjust, a new way to live.

And God will delight when we are creators of justice, and joy coming passion and peace: yes, God will delight when we are creators of justice, just-ice and joy.
Sending and Blessing

L: God says:

I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground;

I will pour my spirit upon your descendants, and my blessing on your offspring.

They shall spring up like a green tamarisk, like willows by flowing streams.

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

C: Amen

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Sharing God's peace

Announcements

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(This order of worship is prepared by the Ecumenical Water Network of World Council of Churches.)

Source: LWF 12th Assembly, Worship Resources