

A Call to Pray: June 2018

***'Pray in the spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.
With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.'***
Ephesians 6:18

*Loving God, we give you thanks and praise for your faithfulness to us your people.
We bring before you those for whom we have a concern.
We ask for your guidance as we seek to serve you, often in difficult circumstances.
We pray for healing for those who are sick, your protection for those who are vulnerable,
your comfort for those who are grieving.
In the name of Jesus, Amen*

Thank God that we have confirmed our reservation with the Gothia Towers Hotel and Conference Centre in Gothenburg, Sweden for our 14th World Assembly, 10th–15th August 2021.

More than 5,000 women attended the United Methodist Women's Assembly in Columbus, Ohio last month. We pray for God's blessing upon their work to address issues of economic inequality, maternal and child health, climate change and mass criminalisation on the basis of race.

The Joint European Areas Seminar is taking place in Belfast, Northern Ireland, 7th–10th June. Pray for safety for those travelling, and for the speakers and leaders of that event. Following the recent vote in Eire, pray for understanding and respect for those with differing views regarding abortion. Pray too for the many tough issues arising from Brexit.

We have been asked to pray about a big concern of the Bulgarian Methodist Church and the Bulgarian Methodist women. On 4th May the three major parties in the Bulgarian Parliament introduced changes to the Law on Religion. The proposed changes include banning any funding and any financial support from abroad to the religious organizations. The state will provide financial support only to the Orthodox Church and to the Muslims. Only the Orthodox Church and the Muslims will have the right to open theological training schools and Universities. No training from abroad will be acknowledged without a special recognition of the state. Only people with a theological training approved by the state will be allowed to serve in a priestly position. If this proposal passes (which is highly likely) the Methodist Church will be badly hit – pastors' salaries, the running costs of the churches, various church projects, the women's Annual Seminars, the translation and distribution of materials are heavily dependent on funding from abroad. Rev Margarita Todorova writes, 'We will appreciate the prayer support of our sisters around the world. Please pray for us and for a miracle to happen so that these proposed changes will fail.'

Myanmar continues with the plight of the Stateless Rohingya, sufferings of the Christian minorities in Northern State of Kachin, and the Karen groups near the Thai border. Prayers are also needed for peaceful young demonstrators and activists representing Civil Society Organisations who have been held under police arrests.

Dr Olav Tveit of WCC asks for prayers for the Holy Land. 'Even as the threat of an increasing spiral of violence looms large, we join our member churches in hope and prayer that efforts toward peace will overcome the present tragic violence and lead to a time when "swords shall be beaten to ploughshares and spears into pruning hooks".'

We pray too for wisdom for those planning to hold talks between North and South Korea and the USA leadership. May the outcome be lasting peace and unity.

10th June is the Global Day of Prayer to End Famine. Pray for church-related and other humanitarian organizations that are currently working to bring immediate relief to those experiencing hunger.

We remember those struggling with health issues. Pray for Edith Loane and Liljana Sjanta, regrettably unable to attend the Belfast seminar; for Matthew Connan, recovering well from a road race accident; for Ligia, Stanley, Les and others receiving treatment, giving thanks for signs of improvement and healing. Pray too for the people of the Democratic Republic of Congo, worried about a new outbreak of Ebola. Pray for those affected by storms in North India that brought devastation especially to the homes of the poorest people.