The Bishop of Southwark's LENT CALL 2022

Lenten Reflections

Introduction

"My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest." — Isaiah 32:18

Each year as we head into Lent, the Bishop of Southwark issues a Lent Call to help those in the Diocese of Southwark consider how they will keep a holy and prayerful Lent. This year's theme is homelessness and what it means to feel at home. The verse from Isaiah 32 which we have used as the biblical anchor for the material this year speaks of people living in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, and in undisturbed places of rest.

While many of us living here in Southwark are safe and at home, many others are not; just as many of our brothers and sisters in Zimbabwe and Jerusalem also lack security and a place to call home. Some of you who are reading this may not feel very secure or at rest where you live. Alternatively, you may have a good, secure place to be but, for whatever reason, you do not feel "at home" there. It might be that during Lent we can reflect upon the contrast between feeling secure and at home and how it is for those who do not feel this way. Perhaps we could consider what we might be able to do in response to the differences in our situations.



It might be that you have chosen a Lent book to follow either alone or as part as a group from your church. Whether or not this is the case, in the following pages are some reflections on the material which has been published as part of the Bishop

of Southwark's Lent Call. Starting on Ash

Wednesday there are reflections on homelessness in this Diocese and in our Link Dioceses of Zimbabwe and Jerusalem. Take some time each week to read the project sheets and (if you work with or have children and young people) to look also at the worship sheets and then consider how you can each respond to the Lenten call to prayer and the biblical call to generosity and give to the Lent Call to help others who are not secure in their home or feelings of home.

Each reflection in these pages lists the passages for the Eucharist on the Sundays in Lent and offers some ideas for reflection focusing particularly on the Gospel reading. It closes with a reflection for Palm Sunday.

Use them for individual reflection, in your family or as part of a group from church.



Ash Wednesday Isaiah 58:1-12, 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10, John 8:1-11

Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him and he sat down and began to teach them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery; and making her stand before all of them, they said to him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." And once again he bent down and wrote on the ground. When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders; and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus straightened up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one, sir." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again."

- John 8:1-111

Read through the three passages, focusing especially on the Gospel reading printed above.

Take a moment to reflect upon what the passages say to you. What most speaks to you? How do they make you feel?

Think about how the woman who had been caught in adultery felt.

- What do you think she might have felt when she had been caught and was made to stand before them all?
- How do you think she felt when Jesus forgave her and told her to go on her way?

Think about the verse from Isaiah: "My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest."

As we enter Lent, we are entering a time of penitence and reflection. In these days as we reflect upon Jesus' life, death and resurrection, we learn about finding our home in heaven with God. During this period it is good to spend time in prayer, thanking God for all that God has done.

 In what ways do you feel safe and secure at home and in what ways do you feel less than secure? • Does your faith help you to feel more secure? In what ways?

As you enter Lent you might like to keep a journal of what God says to you during this time. Keep a notebook of your reflections on these passages and what your times of prayer bring to your mind about your faith and feeling at home here on Earth and with God.

Try to think about what might make you feel more at home and what you might be able to do to help those feeling insecure to feel safe.

Here is a prayer that you might like to use each day:

Loving and saving God, we thank you that you have given us a home with you in heaven, help us work to enable others to feel at home in our communities. Give us your generosity of spirit that we might work with our neighbours to bring hope and peace to those around us. Amen.



Week 1: Projects in Zimbabwe Deuteronomy 26:1-11, Romans 10.8b-13, Luke 4:1-13

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for 40 days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread." Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone'."

Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And the devil said to him, "To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him'."

Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you', and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone'." Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test'." When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

– Luke 4:1-13

Read through the three passages, focusing especially on the Gospel reading printed above.

Take a moment to reflect upon what the passages say to you. What most speaks to you? How do they make you feel?

- Jesus was tempted many times by the Devil when he was in the wilderness. Think back to a time when you have felt tempted to do something that you knew you would later regret. You might like to try to write something in your Lenten journal that describes how you felt. It could be a poem or a piece of prose or a drawing if that works better for you.
- Think about how you resolved what to do. What did you learn from the way in which you made the decision? How did it all work out? How do you feel about it now?

Now read the project sheet for Week 1 on the projects which we are supporting in Zimbabwe. It can be found at: <u>bit.ly/LentCallProjects</u>

In our Link Dioceses of Central Zimbabwe, Manicaland, Masvingo and Matabeleland, our brothers and sisters in Zimbabwe are working hard to help people feel at home. They are running food kitchens for those who are homeless or do not have enough food and they seek to grow crops to help feed those in need around the Dioceses. They are also working hard to train people in local communities to grow crops and raise livestock to feed their communities. But the economic and political situations do not make this easy and neither do the droughts.

Think again about the verse from Isaiah: "My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest."

We have read in the project sheet that it is hard for people to feel "at home" in Zimbabwe at the moment because of all that is happening there.



Week 1: Projects in Zimbabwe Deuteronomy 26:1-11, Romans 10.8b-13, Luke 4:1-13



From left: a new building in Central Zimbabwe; feeding the hungry in Masvingo; temporary shelter in Manicaland.

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Some people have found it hard to feel at home here too as so much has changed and even as we seem to be emerging from the pandemic people are finding it difficult. Some can't wait to be able to go out and others are scared to do so.

- Think about what you might be able to do to help those who, for whatever reason, do not feel at home in our society at the moment. This might be because they are afraid to go out or because they are refugees or simply don't feel as if they fit.
 - How can you recognise those who feel like this around you who feel insecure or displaced?
 - What might you or your local church community be able to do to help them to feel more at home? Will you do it?

The peoples of Zimbabwe are very committed to family and to looking after each other in the community. Yet, many are finding it hard to feed their families and look after those around them. Life is often very hard for them. Take a few moments to pray for them and to think about what you might be able to do to help them. Can you give something to the Lent Call to help support the work that they are doing in the Dioceses in Zimbabwe to make sure that people are able to feed their families and to be at home.

Here is the Lent Call prayer for you to use again:

Loving and saving God,

we thank you that you have given us a home with you in heaven,

help us work to enable others to feel at home in our communities.

Give us your generosity of spirit that we might work with our neighbours to bring hope and peace to those around us. Amen.



Week 2: Projects in Croydon Genesis 15:1-12,17-18, Philippians 3:17-4:1, Luke 13:31-end

At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, "Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you." He said to them, "Go and tell that fox for me, 'Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed away from Jerusalem.' Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord'."

- Luke 13:31-end

Read through the three passages, focusing especially on the Gospel reading printed above.

Take a moment to reflect upon what the passages say to you. What most speaks to you? How do they make you feel?

- How do you think Jesus was feeling as he was confronted by the way in which the Pharisees were reacting to him?
- Sometimes we don't react well to what we think Jesus is telling us to do. Have you ever felt that you are being asked to do something that you didn't feel able to? What was it and what happened?

Jesus laments over the situation in Jerusalem and although he knows that the Pharisees are coming to kill him he knew he had to finish his work. He reflects on how the Israelites have reacted to the prophets that have been sent to them and those who have been sent to warn them. He tells them that their home – Jerusalem – will be laid waste because of the way that they have behaved.

Now read the project sheet for Week 2 on the projects which we are supporting in Croydon. It can be found at <u>bit.ly/LentCallProjects</u>

For the Jews, Jerusalem was their home and even today their home is still a place of dispute. For so many around the world and even here in Britain home is a difficult and painful concept. We don't always know why people in the Diocese are homeless or sofa-surfing but we do know that there are many in our communities today who are in difficulties and need our help.

You will be familiar with the verse from Isaiah which has been our theme this year, but nonetheless read it again: "My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest."

- Do you feel that your home is peaceful and a place of rest? If so, think about what makes you feel safe and secure in your home. If not, then what might help you to feel more secure and peaceful? What might help this to happen?
- Do you have neighbours in need of assistance to feel safe and secure? How might you be able to help?
- In the Croydon Area, as in other Areas of the Diocese, there are many who are living in this country as refugees. What might you be able to do to help those who are feeling displaced in your local area to feel more at home?



Week 2: Projects in Croydon Genesis 15:1-12,17-18, Philippians 3:17-4:1, Luke 13:31-end



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Take a few moments to read the verse from Isaiah again and then spend some time praying for yourself if you need to feel more at home or for others who are feeling insecure.

Use the prayer below:

Loving and saving God,

we thank you that you have given us a home with you in heaven,

help us work to enable others to feel at home in our communities.

Give us your generosity of spirit that we might work with our neighbours to bring hope and peace to those around us. Amen.



Volunteers prepare for a night shift at Croydon Nightwatch (top) and for a day helping at Renewed Hope, Redhill (above).



Week 3: Projects in Kingston Isaiah 55:1-9, 1 Corinthians 10:1-13, Luke 13:1-9

At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. He asked them, "Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did. Or those 18 who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them — do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did."

Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. So he said to the gardener, 'See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?' He replied, 'Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig round it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down'."

- Luke 13:1-9

Read through the three passages, focusing especially on the Gospel reading printed above.

Take a moment to reflect upon what the passages say to you. What most speaks to you? How do they make you feel?

The Gospel passage encourages Jesus' hearers to repent and to bear good fruit just like the fig tree. The gardener knows that sometimes a tree needs some help to bear fruit and so he asks for a year to feed the tree and see if it responds.

- Can you think of a time when you feel that your faith has been a bit like the fig tree and in need of more time to grow? What was it that made you feel like this? Did it get resolved and, if so, how?
- Sometimes needing to say sorry can make us feel less comfortable and rooted. Are there things in your life that you think you need to say sorry for? What kinds of things are they? Is it God that you want to say sorry to or is there a particular person that you need to say sorry to? Can you do it?
- Have you been able to say sorry in the past for things that you have done wrong or that have gone wrong? How did it make you feel? Did you feel more comfortable and peaceful as a result?

Now read the project sheet for Week 3 on the project we are supporting in Kingston. It can be found at <u>bit.ly/LentCallProjects</u>

Now read this verse again: "My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest."

Many of the churches in the Kingston Area are involved in helping with the Glass Door project. It helps to ensure that those who do not have homes or enough to eat find new possibilities of feeling at home.

Sometimes people need time to get their lives in order, a bit like the fig tree needed time to grow properly.

- What might you be able to do to help those around you to have the time to find themselves and to grow new lives?
- If you have ever been involved in helping to work with those who need help to feel at home write about it in your Lenten journal and, if you can, tell someone about it and how it felt to be doing it.



Week 3: Project in Kingston Isaiah 55:1-9, 1 Corinthians 10:1-13, Luke 13:1-9



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 If you have not been involved in that kind of work, think about other things that you have done to help others feel at home and write about that and once again tell others if you can.

As you bring to a close your reflections this week, spend some time in quiet contemplation with God. Listen to what God has to say to you. Write what occurs to you down in your Lenten journal and then pray this prayer:

Loving and saving God,

we thank you that you have given us a home with you in heaven, help us work to enable others to feel at home in our communities. Give us your generosity of spirit that we might work with our neighbours to bring hope and peace to those around us. Amen.



Week 4: Projects in Woolwich Joshua 5:9-12, 2 Corinthians 5:16-end, Luke 15:1-3, 11b-end*

Now all the tax-collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them." So he told them this parable...

Then Jesus said, "There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' So he divided his property between them. A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and travelled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands".' So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe – the best one – and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate.

Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.' Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!' Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found'."

- Luke 15:1-3, 11b-end

* These readings are the ones for the fourth Sunday of Lent and not for Mothering Sunday.

Read through the three passages, focusing especially on the Gospel reading printed above.

Take a moment to reflect upon what the passages say to you. What most speaks to you? How do they make you feel? The reading from Joshua tells of when the Israelites arrived in the land of Canaan and on that day when they came "home" the manna which had kept them fed in the wilderness stopped. They had reached the promised land and were "at home".



Week 4: Projects in Woolwich Joshua 5:9-12, 2 Corinthians 5:16-end, Luke 15:1-3, 11b-end*

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This was the peaceful dwelling place for which the Israelites were waiting: the Promised Land.

The story of the Prodigal Son is a familiar one. We often think about this passage but this time let's think about it as a story about home as well as about forgiveness.

- How do you think that you might have reacted if you were the elder son who stayed dutifully at home? Do you think that you might have reacted like the elder son did and be resentful or might you have been like the father who was simply pleased to see his younger son?
- Have you ever felt like home is somewhere that you want to get away from? What made you feel like that? What happened?
- What do you think the younger son felt when things did not go as he had planned and he returned home to his father? What kind of welcome might he have expected? How do you imagine things might have happened after the story ends?

The verse that we have been reading from Isaiah is part of the hope that the prophet was sharing with God's people that they would have "peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest".

The work with those who need help to be at home in the Woolwich Area is co-ordinated by Robes and the Greenwich Night Shelter amongst other groups. Read the project sheet for Week 4 on the projects which we are supporting in Woolwich. It can be found at <u>bit.ly/LentCallProjects</u>

 What do you think that we can each try to do to help to ensure that Night Shelters and other projects which work with the homeless are no longer necessary. Is there something that we can do to campaign for better facilities for those who are in need? Might you be able to do this? Could you encourage others to be involved with you?

 Might you be able to think of ways of raising awareness of the need in our Diocese so that, whilst projects such as these are necessary, they have enough to give to those who need help to find a new life?

In our Diocese there are many people who need help and many who offer of themselves to serve them. The Bishop's Lent Call for 2022 hopes that your prayers and generosity will ensure that more are helped in this way.

Write in your journal what you have thought and felt over the last few weeks as we have considered home and homelessness in our Diocese. What new things have you learned and what does this motivate you to do? Write yourself some notes about this in your journal. Can you share this with others?

Spend some time in prayer and commit to God those amongst whom you live in the Diocese. Commit yourselves to God also, and ask for help in trying to achieve those things you thought you might be able to do to help your communities. Use the Lent Call prayer:

Loving and saving God,

we thank you that you have given us a home with you in heaven,

help us work to enable others to feel at home in our communities.

Give us your generosity of spirit that we might work with our neighbours to bring hope and peace to those around us. Amen.

* These readings are the ones for the fourth Sunday of Lent and not for Mothering Sunday.



Week 5: Projects in Jerusalem Isaiah 43:16-21, Philippians 3:4b-14, John 12:1-8

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."

- John 12:1-8

Read through the three passages, focusing especially on the Gospel reading printed above.

Take a moment to reflect upon what the passages say to you. What most speaks to you? How do they make you feel?

- Jesus told those who complained about Mary using the nard to wash his feet that the poor were always with them but he was not. There are still many poor in our world today. What do Jesus' words make you think about how we should use our wealth today? How can we find a balance between having enough for ourselves and being generous towards those who have less than we do?
- What do you think Jesus means when he says that the poor will always be with us? How do you feel about that idea? Do you think Jesus was talking about those who are materially poor or those who are spiritually poor or both?
- Are there times when you feel spiritually poor? Try to write down or draw or make a model of how this feels. What have you done to help alleviate this? What might you do in the future?

In the Holy Land there are many people who are materially poor and who do not have shelter or enough to eat or feel secure. This is especially true for those whom we are thinking about in Beirut following the explosion. There are so many complicated elements to what is happening in the Diocese of Jerusalem and the Middle East that it is hard to see what can be done.

Read the project sheet for Week 5 on the project we are supporting in Beirut. It can be found at <u>bit.ly/LentCallProjects</u>

Re-read the passage from Isaiah: "My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest."

- What do you think you might be able to do to help bring about a change of situation in the Holy Land? What might anyone do?
- What might it mean for those who live in Beirut and other parts of the Holy Land, especially those which are contested, to feel safe and at home?
- What might it mean for the people of the Holy Land each to feel as if they were living in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes and in undisturbed places of rest? Can you commit yourself to praying for that?

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem as you close your reflection and then spend some time in prayer commending all the projects to God.



Week 5: Project in Jerusalem Isaiah 43:16-21, Philippians 3:4b-14, John 12:1-8



Clockwise from left: the Most Revd Dr Hosam Naoum, Archbishop in Jerusalem, lays flowers at the site of the deadly 2020 explosion in the Port of Beirut; the port of Beirut; Archbishop Hosam on a parish visit to All Saints, Beirut.

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Close by using the Lent Call prayer:

Loving and saving God, we thank you that you have given us a home with you in heaven, help us work to enable others to feel at home in our communities. Give us your generosity of spirit that we might work with our neighbours to bring hope and peace to those around us. Amen.



Palm Sunday The Liturgy of the Palms

When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, saying, "Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' just say this: 'The Lord needs it'." So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them. As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?" They said, "The Lord needs it." Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, saying, "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!" Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, order your disciples to stop." He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out."

Luke 19:29-40

The passage above for Palm Sunday is very familiar. Read it through. Take a moment to reflect upon what the passage says to you. What most speaks to you? How does it make you feel?

Picture the scene. Jesus sends two of the disciples ahead of him and they untie a colt and bring it to Jesus and he rides down the Mount of Olives and the crowds praise him and call him "king". But Jesus is not at home on earth for he is on his way to great suffering and to prepare our home for us in heaven with his Father. How do you think Jesus felt as he headed down the Mount of Olives? Imagine that you were one of the disciples; how do you think that you might have felt? And what about the other disciples?

Think back to all that you have read in the weeks of Lent and think once more of the verse from Isaiah: "My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest."

• Reflecting on all that you have read and thought about during Lent using the Bishop of Southwark's Lent Call, what will you do to make sure that more people are able to feel at home and secure where they are living?

- Who can you think about talking to and beginning to work with to make sure that things happen?
- Will you commit yourself to praying for the situations you have read about and reflected on?
- Can you give to the Bishop's Lent Call to help to support the work of the projects and to respond with generosity for all that God has done for us?

Pray for all the projects in turn, spending particular time on those closest to your heart. You can find all the project sheets at <u>bit.ly/LentCallProjects</u>

Use the Lent Call prayer:

Loving and saving God, we thank you that you have given us a home with you in heaven, help us work to enable others to feel at home in our communities. Give us your generosity of spirit that we might work with our neighbours to bring hope and peace to those around us. Amen.

Commit all that you have read about and learned to God in the words of the Lord's Prayer.

Then plan how you can share what you have learned with others and work together to bring about change.