

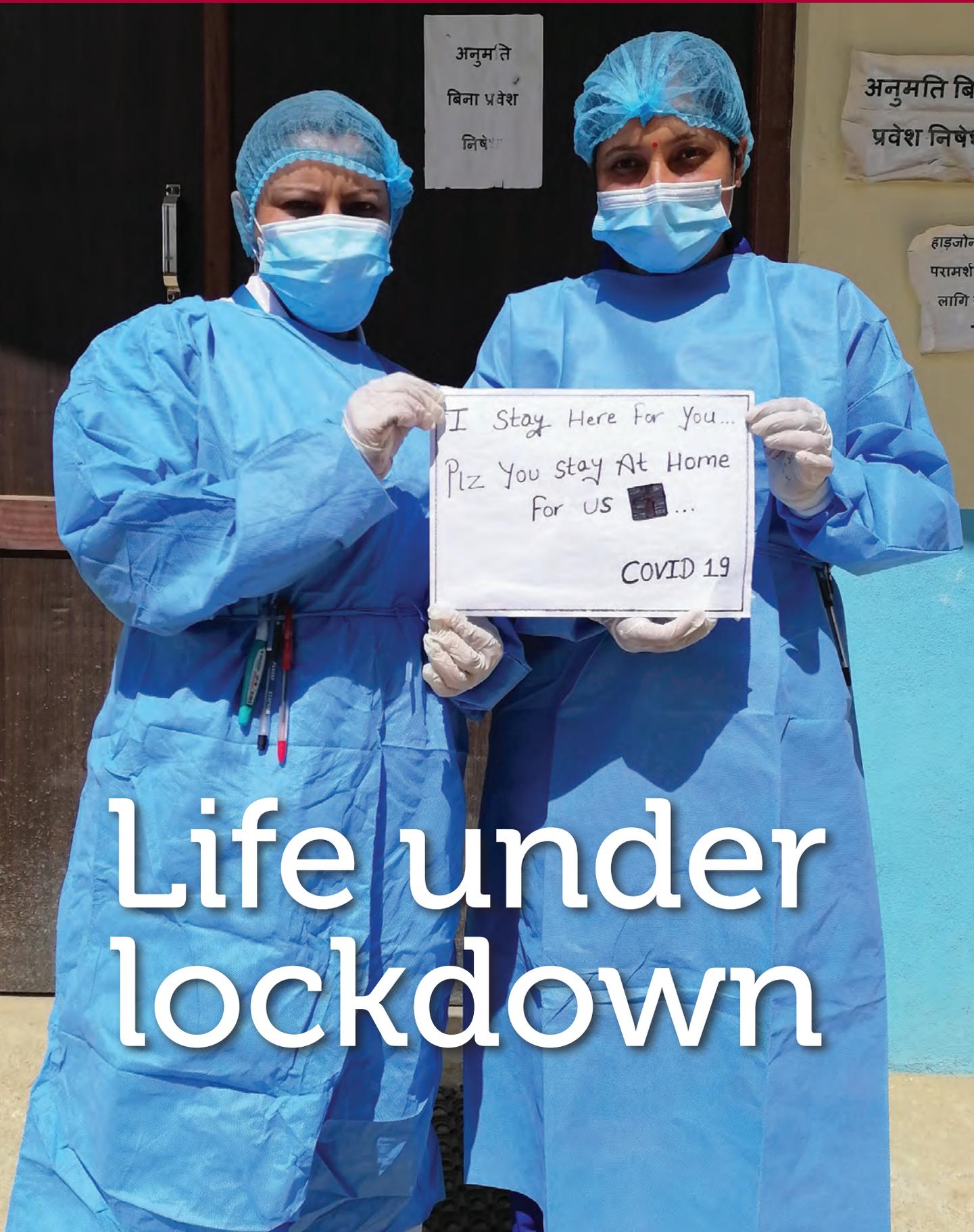


The Leprosy
Mission

England, Wales, the Channel
Islands and the Isle of Man

New Day

SUMMER 2020



Life under lockdown

Your love reaching 'locked down' families when they need it the very most – see pages 4–5

Dear friend

I would normally start my welcome to this edition of New Day with a thank you. But this does not seem adequate after the honour and privilege of being able to speak and pray with so many of you recently.

I continue to be amazed by the care that you've shown to people affected by leprosy, and for the incredible sacrificial giving that I have learnt of in our many conversations. We know that God blesses this. I am deeply appreciative of your loyalty; during the COVID-19 crisis you are as determined as ever not to let people affected by leprosy be forgotten.

The current global crisis means that we all need to adapt, and we are no different at The Leprosy Mission. Together we are rescuing the most vulnerable people from a life of disease, disability and poverty. Together we are showing the people we serve that they are loved unconditionally by you, our supporters, and that you continue to uphold them financially and in prayer.

We had planned to focus at this time on the need to provide medical equipment for the new Outpatients' Department in Purulia Hospital, but our brothers and sisters across the world are telling us that now, the very urgent need is much more basic. At a time when our hospitals have the added burden for treatment of the COVID-19 virus, we need help financially to provide food for patients.

Together we must meet this urgent need for our patients. There has probably never been a more important time to reach out to the poorest parts of the world.

May God bless you, your prayers, and your giving to people affected by leprosy in a way that will astound people as they see God's love shining into this broken world. We will ensure that your support reaches those in desperate need, bringing loving care to the people who, without you, are lost and forgotten.

God bless you



Peter Waddup
National Director



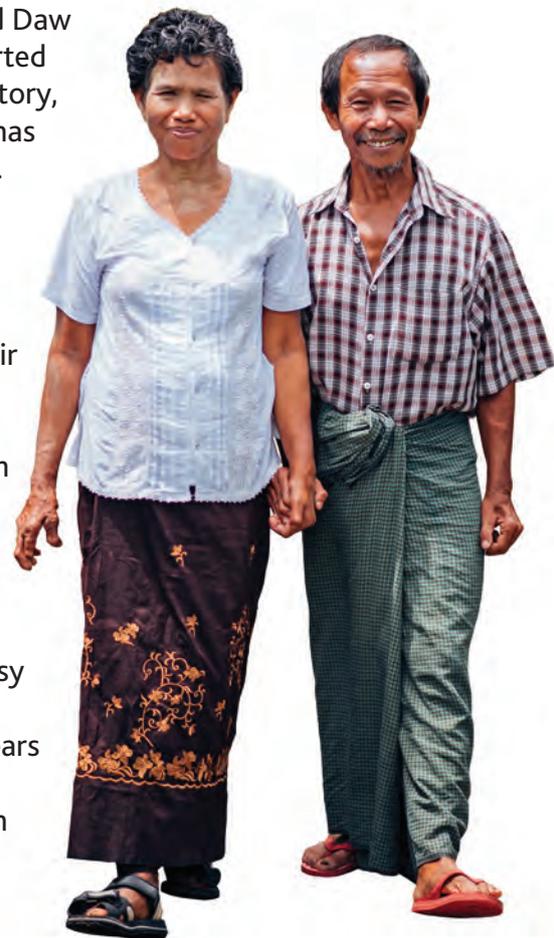
Hospital Heroes

Your generosity to the Hospital Heroes campaign will see our hospitals continue as oases of love and care for those needing it the very most. You have provided caring and skilled medics to reach and change the lives of people with leprosy. On behalf of patients across the globe, thank you so very much for following Jesus' ministry to people with leprosy.

Can you imagine becoming disabled simply because you cannot afford healthcare? You cannot work. There is no welfare system to catch you. And just when you thought it couldn't possibly get any worse, people shun you just because you caught leprosy. You cannot see where you will go and how you will survive.

This is Than and Daw Khin, a big-hearted couple whose story, thanks to you, has a happy ending. Despite facing some of the toughest circumstances imaginable, their warm smiles reflect the love you have shown them.

The couple met as patients at Mawlamyine Christian Leprosy Hospital in Myanmar 25 years ago. They now have two grown up children and are also proud grandparents!



Than first showed signs of leprosy more than 50 years ago. His leprosy was left untreated for so long that it caused his fingers to claw and his foot to drag behind him. He was filled with dread, utter despair and shame, so much so, he couldn't look anyone in the eye. It was only the love of his beautiful wife Daw Khin and the compassion of hospital staff that restored his self-worth.

Healing

Daw Khin came to Mawlamyine Christian Leprosy Hospital when she was 22. Like Than, leprosy had also caused her fingers to claw. It also saw her lose all feeling in her foot. She didn't realise she had injured it so badly that the bone was damaged. Amazingly the clinical team managed to avoid amputating Daw Khin's foot. After years of care and healing she can walk again, something she praises God for each day.

Than shared that although they had the love of each other, the prejudice surrounding their leprosy made them feel hopeless. Where could they go? They would somehow always be outcasts. They feared they wouldn't even survive. It was comforting to be near the people who were there for them when they reached their lowest ebb. For this reason, they made their home in the community surrounding the hospital.

Hope

Than said: "We have been given everything by this hospital. Without it we would be destroyed."

You not only enabled Than and Daw Khin's bodies, worn down and scarred by leprosy, to be treated. You did something even more life-giving. Because of you, hospital staff were able to listen to them and give them a home



You have brought joy to Than and his family

near the hospital as well as food and medicines. You gave them hope and a future.

Sadly, there are still so many more people like Than and Daw Khin desperately needing medical care, love and acceptance.

'So do not fear, for I am with you, do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.' *Isaiah 41:10 (NIV)*

Love grows under loc

COVID-19 knows no borders, race, status or class. It has changed daily life beyond recognition across the globe, cruelly robbing too many of life itself. We pray that we may continue to love one another through this most extraordinary time in our history.

Since the last edition of New Day in January, life as we know it in the UK has been turned upside down. We desperately miss seeing our friends and families. There has been unprecedented demand on frontline workers. We hear heartbreaking stories of people unable to say goodbye to loved ones. Or of those grieving alone in order to prevent this indiscriminate virus from wreaking further havoc. At the time when we need it the very most, we are told that a hug could cost others, or us, our lives.

So what do we do? Even here in the UK, we love from afar. Love knows no distance, barriers or borders. It says we just need you

to get through this. That we need you to stay well and to make sure you are getting supplies and the medical help you need. It says we are with you even when, in reality, we must remain at a distance.

God our refuge

We lift the situation to our heavenly Father who is bigger and more powerful than the grip of this cruel virus. We can take refuge in Him when the news becomes overwhelming and the loneliness overbearing. Our Lord loves us more than we could ever imagine. At a time when governments are valuing human life over economic stability, caring for our brothers and sisters across

the globe demonstrates our sense of humanity.

While COVID-19 is a highly-contagious virus, leprosy is a mildly-infectious bacterial disease. Yet both are surrounded by superstition, ignorance and misunderstanding. They both see people facing stigma as well as painful isolation.

Vital messaging

Thanks to your amazing compassion, Leprosy Mission teams have been able to reach out to marginalised communities. They have been delivering vital messaging on the symptoms of COVID-19, the need for self-isolation and social distancing.



Masks are distributed and social distancing taught to communities like this one in the Mehurpur district of Bangladesh

ckdown

Messages are communicated either by phone or in person, depending on whether lockdown has been imposed.

Because of you, dedicated teams in Asia and Africa are fighting for the rights of leprosy-affected people. They are ensuring they are not refused hospital treatment for COVID-19 symptoms because they bear the physical scars of leprosy.

Steps have been made to ensure Multidrug therapy, the treatment for leprosy, remains available and that patients have enough medication to last a few months.

Above and beyond

Rest assured that because of your love, our teams can go above and beyond at this most desperate time. They are reaching out and doing everything in their power to serve the people you care so much about. Please continue to remember them in your prayers. Of all times, this is when they need your help, love and support the very most.



Leprosy Mission teams are taking lifesaving messaging on COVID-19 to leprosy-affected communities like this one in Mumbai, India. The people here have nowhere to go and have made their home under a flyover. There is no chance of social distancing here. Every effort is being made to stop movement between communities in order to protect them.

Communities like these are among the most vulnerable. Individuals are more likely to be disabled and have weakened immune systems as well as underlying health conditions. And just like leprosy; malnutrition, overcrowding and poor sanitation create an ideal environment for the spread of the virus.

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." John 13:34-35 (NIV)

Peter Waddup writes...

You will have read in my welcome that we are temporarily called to take a life-saving, as opposed to life-changing approach to our work. You may have seen in the news the millions of people in India who rely on daily labour to feed their families. The lockdown imposed on the country has meant no work and people affected by leprosy can no longer go out to beg on the streets. Their only means of survival has been taken from them.

Our colleagues across Asia and Africa all report that, at the time of writing, severe hunger is a more immediate threat than COVID-19. Typically, the very people we serve are the first to suffer.

Emergency food supplies have been delivered to some leprosy-affected communities so residents can survive the crisis. But tragically our hospital teams across the Leprosy Mission world are struggling to feed patients the most basic meals.

Their already stretched budgets are at breaking point because of COVID-19.

Knowing that a food shortage is added to the suffering that I have witnessed on my visits to Leprosy Mission hospitals breaks my heart. The work carried out by medics and entire teams is awe-inspiring. It would be so wrong to see their efforts wasted because they don't have the precious resources needed to save lives. Right now it can only be about saving lives.

Stamping out leprosy

It is hard to believe that something as seemingly insignificant as a used stamp can help transform the life of someone affected by leprosy. But the fact is, it can! Every stamp has value to a collector somewhere in the world.

In 2019, £43,683 was raised for The Leprosy Mission from the sale of donated stamps and collectables. In fact, over the past 30 years more than £1 million has been raised to help people affected by leprosy. Thank you so much for taking the time to send us your stamps and collectables.

It takes seconds to rescue a used stamp from an envelope destined for the recycling bin. But, by doing so, healthcare and opportunities can be given to those who need them the very most. We would be so grateful if you could collect any of the following items:

- Stamps of all descriptions; UK and overseas
- Postcards
- Coins and bank notes from any country
- Cigarette cards



You could encourage your friends, family and even church community to save the stamps on the letters and parcels they receive. When you have enough to fill a small parcel please send to: The Leprosy Mission, Goldhay Way, Orton Goldhay, Peterborough, PE2 5GZ

Josie's labour of love

Mother Teresa once said 'we ourselves feel that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean. But the ocean would be less because of that missing drop.'

Sitting in her chair in a London nursing home, 95-year-old Josie Riddiough is surrounded by used envelopes and piles of stamps. These simple postage stamps form her ministry to people affected by leprosy.



Over the past 35 years, Josie has sent thousands upon thousands of stamps to The Leprosy Mission. She has earned the title 'the stamp lady' with friends, family and members of the community handing Josie their used stamps. People have even tracked her down to donate valuable collections!

Because of Josie's diligence, countless people have been reached and cured of leprosy. Saving a Second Class stamp may seem like a drop in the ocean. But the difference made collectively is immeasurable!



Mandy Vergalen began volunteering in our Peterborough office in 2015, preparing donated stamps to be sold to collectors.

'Follow Jesus' example of healing leprosy', Bishop tells church leaders



The Bishop of Peterborough has rallied church leaders in Bangladesh to join the mission to end leprosy. Having been made Vice-President of The Leprosy Mission in 2017, Bishop Donald visited slum areas of Dhaka, the Bangladeshi capital. He witnessed overcrowding, poor sanitation and malnutrition which create an ideal breeding ground for leprosy to thrive.

Our project in Bangladesh teaches churches to reach out to communities of all faiths to tell people about leprosy. The role of clergy and volunteers is to dispel the myths surrounding leprosy. They also direct those showing early symptoms to clinics for treatment, and even host pop-up clinics in their church grounds.

Q: Clearly the clergy and volunteers' role is to befriend those who have this deeply-feared disease. Do you feel they are following Jesus' example of healing those with leprosy?

Bishop Donald: Absolutely! Jesus walked alongside 'prostitutes and sinners', those who were most looked down on and shunned.

Christians must step out of the comfort of their churches, into the community and work with the most marginalised. There are some things Jesus did that we simply can't do. However, reaching out to people affected by leprosy is something we can and should do.

Q: Leprosy has been entirely curable since the early 1980s. How do you feel, almost 40 years on, to know there are millions of people living with untreated leprosy?

Bishop Donald: It's totally unacceptable. The cure is available and effective, but it is still a major business to make that known. It's also a major problem to find the people who need treatment. Working at grassroots is the only way to tackle the stigma that prevents people coming forward for treatment. I'm encouraged by the receptiveness of church leaders in Bangladesh to taking on board the mission to end leprosy. I pray that the church at home and in countries where leprosy is endemic will unite to end this ancient disease.

Q: What is your prayer for people affected by leprosy?

Bishop Donald: I have seen what happens when someone touches or puts their arms around a leprosy patient. For many, it is a long time since they have been treated as a real human being, made and loved by God. Each of these folk needs most of all to be loved. My prayer is for every person with leprosy to receive this love.

Q: How did your visit to Bangladesh strengthen your personal faith?

Bishop Donald: It really was a forceful reminder that God chooses to use His church, His people, you and me, to meet the needs of the most needy. We are His hands and His feet. We can make a difference, one person at a time. Leprosy can be defeated but it needs our involvement, action, prayer and donations.

Bishop Donald at a pop-up skin clinic held in the courtyard of a church in Dhaka. The clinic is called a 'skin camp' to encourage those afraid of leprosy to attend.



Feed the hungry

At a time when the very lives of our leprosy patients are at risk, you can provide lifesaving meals so that they survive the COVID-19 crisis. These are people created and so loved by God. This is the very group of people Jesus reached out to and that you have taken to your heart.

These people are hungry. There has probably never been a more urgent time to show our Lord's love to these most precious people in our hospitals.

It costs just £30 to feed a hospital patient for a month. Will you reach out and show people affected by leprosy that they are loved? Please give today.



£30
will feed
a hospital patient
for a month

£90
provides food and
nourishment to a
leprosy patient for
three months

£180
feeds a
hospital patient
for six months

Will you feed a hospital patient?

First name

Surname

Address

Postcode

Telephone

We love keeping in touch with you, but if you would like to change how you hear from us, or request our privacy policy, simply call us on 01733 370505 or email post@TLMEW.org.uk

Please send me information on how to leave a legacy of love to The Leprosy Mission.



We will use your gifts to bring help to people affected by leprosy around the world.



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I'm sending my one-off gift of:

£30 £90 £180

If you are sending your own amount please complete the box below. Thank you.

My own amount of: £

I enclose a cheque/postal order payable to 'The Leprosy Mission'

Or please debit my: Visa MasterCard CAF Card Maestro

Card no.: (Maestro only)

Start Date (if available): / Expiry Date: /

Issue No.: (Maestro only) Security code:

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