

# Transmission

The magazine of Us (the new name for USPG). Founded 1701.

Winter 2015

Meet the  
first woman  
bishop in Asia

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**Us.**

every person  
every community  
a full life

**Cover:** Bishop Pushpa Lalitha, of Nandyal Diocese, Church of South India. See page 12. (Stephan Metzler)

**We are Us.** We are an Anglican mission agency working in partnership with churches around the world. Together, we work alongside local communities to improve health, put children in school, tackle discrimination, nurture leaders, give a voice to women, and much more. Founded 1701.

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# Finding hope

There is so much pain and tragedy in the world that it sometimes seems difficult not to feel overwhelmed and it can be easier to look away.

In this edition of *Transmission* we read about the hardships facing refugees in Europe and in Ethiopia. We read about communities devastated by large-scale mining in the Philippines. And we hear directly from children and teenagers about the pain they feel as they face an uncertain future.

Thankfully, there is always hope in Christ. As Bishop Pushpa explains on page 12: 'Jesus came to make us strong and give hope to the hopeless.'

Without this hope in Christ, all of our work, however commendable, is in vain.

It is because of this hope that our church partners around the world dare to reach out with a belief that lives can change for the better.

God needs our hearts and hands to do his work, and we need to live in the Spirit of God if we are to make sense of a suffering world.

## **Janette O'Neill**

Chief Executive, Us

You can subscribe to receive *Transmission* by post or email. You can also order copies for your church. Call Eunice Kasirye on 020 7921 2211 or email eunicek@weareUs.org.uk, letting us know your full name, title and postal address.



# Supporting Europe's refugees

**The Diocese in Europe has appointed Us to receive donations to support its work among refugees.**

Over 500,000 migrants are estimated to have arrived in Europe this year. Many are Syrians who have fled fighting in their country. Large numbers have been living in over-populated and under-funded UN refugee camps in Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon.

With conditions in the camps deteriorating – and hopes for peace in Syria fading – desperate families have been travelling overland to the coast of Turkey, then taking boats to Greece, hoping eventually to find refuge and a home in Europe.

Families arrive in Greece feeling exhausted. Many are in urgent need of medical care. Children and young people are vulnerable to human trafficking.

The Diocese in Europe is working ecumenically with local churches and agencies, with a particular focus on Greece, while also working through Anglican chaplaincies across the continent.

Your donations will help to

meet the immediate needs of refugees, which is especially critical as winter sets in.

The diocese is also developing a longer-term strategy because the situation is unlikely to settle for a long time.

At the moment, the diocese has committed to the following initiatives in partnership with the Greek Orthodox Church:

- On the Island of Leros, a church centre is housing refugees and providing food, clothing, toiletries and medicine.
- On the Island of Samos, a church hostel is caring for 600 refugees, many of whom have medical needs. The hostel is mostly supporting Iraqi and Afghan refugees.
- In Athens, the church is working with the Salvation Army to provide food, water and medicine to refugees who congregate in local parks. ■

↑ **Refugees at Gevgelija on the Macedonia/ Greece border. (Dragan Tatic)**

**Read more and make a donation at [www.weareUs.org.uk/europe](http://www.weareUs.org.uk/europe)**

# Church is caring for war refugees

**Us has sent emergency funds to support the Anglican Church in Ethiopia as it reaches out to refugees fleeing war in South Sudan.**

A civil war between political factions in South Sudan saw 350,000 refugees fleeing the country for Gambella and Asosa in Ethiopia during 2014.

Fighting intensified in July and a further 150,000 refugees arrived in Ethiopia, putting immense pressure on relief efforts. Most of the refugee families arrive with only what they can carry, usually a few clothes.

The needs are enormous. But, with support from our Rapid Response Fund, the Anglican Church is doing what it can to provide food aid. In addition, churches in the refugee camps provide education and serve as community centres.

The Rt Rev Dr Grant LeMarquand, Area Bishop of Ethiopia, often visits the refugee camps.

Amid the drabness and scarcity of life in the camps, he was able to report the following highlight:



‘There is a camp near the town of Dima which is ethnically mixed, with Nuer, Dinka, Anuak and Murle – all traditional enemies. However, when I went there, they told me they didn’t want separate churches. They wanted to show their people it was possible to live together.

‘We named their church Holy Family, both because Mary, Joseph and Jesus were refugees and because this church was demonstrating what true holiness means.’ ■

↑ **Children sleeping under mosquito nets supplied by the Anglican Church for a refugee camp in Gambella. (Bishop Grant LeMarquand)**

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## Mission accomplished in Malaysia and Singapore

Two mission associations – The Borneo Mission Association (BMA) and the Singapore and West Malaysia Diocesan Association (SWMDA) – have been formally closed, with BMA’s trust funds transferred to Us to use for the benefit of the church in Malaysia.

Us is an ideal home for the funds because we sent the first Anglican missionaries to Borneo over 150 years ago.

Rachel Parry, Us Global Relations Director, said: ‘The two associations accomplished their task having helped to establish churches that are now fully indigenous, vibrant and self-supporting.’

She added: ‘The dedication of the BMA and SWMDA missionaries and their families was incredible, with many early missionaries losing their lives to tropical diseases.’ ■



# Activist killed in the Philippines

**Opposing destructive large-scale mining operations in the Philippines, and around the world, is literally a matter of life and death.**

Just one month after attending the International People's Conference on Mining, held in the Philippines, human rights activist Emerito Samarca was tortured and killed by armed forces on 1 September.

He is one of hundreds of activists – including journalists, lawyers and church leaders – who have been murdered after speaking out against human rights abuses in the Philippines.

Fr Herbert Fadriquela, the Anglican Chaplain to the Filipino Community in Leicester, represented Us at the conference, which looked at how lucrative mining operations are destroying communities and poisoning the environment.

He said: 'In the Philippines and around the world, the stories of how communities have been affected by mining operations are innumerable.

'Family members have been killed, people have lost homes and farms, communities have lost access to drinking water, children have lost schools and playgrounds, communities have lost churches and graveyards.

'Community leaders that oppose mining are intimidated and harassed and, worse, they become the victims of so-called

"extra-judicial killings", perpetrated by armed groups allegedly organised, funded and maintained by government security forces.'

Since 2010, under the current Philippine president Benigno S Aquino III, there have been 11 massacres in indigenous Philippine communities, accounting for 49 lives, including seven children.

Fr Herbert said: 'Those affected by mining need people around the world to hear their cry and their longing for justice and peace. Let us listen to them and become their voice.'

Us is supporting initiatives to combat destructive mining in the Philippines.

- For a full report from the mining conference, see [www.weareUs.org.uk/mining](http://www.weareUs.org.uk/mining) ■

↓ Fr Herbert (right) and fellow activists at the conference. (Fr Herbert)



# Priests explore Christianity in Asia

**Church leaders are full of praise for a new training academy that is providing fresh insight into what it means to be a Christian in Asia today.**

Organised by the newly-founded Asian Theological Academy, the first in a series of monthly training events took place in Sri Lanka this summer. In attendance were 15 young church leaders – men and women – from Bangladesh, India, Mauritius, Pakistan, the Philippines and Sri Lanka.

Future seminars and workshops will be held in different countries in Asia.

Here are the thoughts of two participants: Britto Santharaj, a graphic designer who supports children's and youth ministry in Arakkonam, Tamil Nadu, India, and Eric Luximon, a priest in the Anglican Diocese of Mauritius.

Britto writes: 'I was really excited to take part in the academy because I met people from all over the world and learned so much.

'I was particularly impacted by the teaching that God lived and died for the vulnerable. This teaching contrasts with the prosperity gospel, which is so common among churches in India. I will certainly be sharing these things with our youth.'

Eric writes: 'I was really excited to attend the academy and learn more about the word of God and how to be more effective in my ministry. In fact, the training has changed my perspective and attitude towards my ministry.

'I knew that God was opening doors for me. We shared a lot about the joys and sorrows in our ministries. The sessions on social justice and liberation theology and on inter faith and ecological issues were very helpful. The overall lesson was that God is not just open to the Christians but to everybody, especially those who are suffering.

↓ **Britto Santharaj and fellow participants at the Asian Theological Academy. (Britto Santharaj)**



'As the co-ordinator of the family department in my diocese, I am sure the course will help me to develop projects which will help and encourage those who are suffering.' ■

## Us Conference 2016

The Us conference for 2016 will be held on Monday 6 to Wednesday 8 June at The Hayes Conference Centre in Swanwick, Derbyshire. This is a change from our more usual London venue. We hope this will give our supporters in the north a special opportunity to engage more fully with Us.



# Us welcomes new Global Goals

**The new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were formally adopted by the UN on 27 September to replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which expire this year.**

Through our global partners, we are actively engaged in supporting the SDGs (aka Global Goals).

Us International Programmes Manager Davidson Solanki said: 'The SDGs provide a framework as we seek to eradicate poverty.'

The examples here show how we are addressing the SDGs.

*Goal 2: Zero hunger; Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth:*

In India, Lesotho, Malawi, the Philippines, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Zululand, we are supporting church-led community development, which helps communities to set up income-generation projects.

*Goal 3: Good health:* Our partners in Bangladesh, India, Ghana, Lesotho, Malawi, Myanmar, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe are working in health programmes.

In Myanmar, we are supporting a team of volunteer health workers who are providing primary healthcare to remote villages.

In Bangladesh, Bollobhpur and Rajshahi Hospitals are providing healthcare in rural communities and training health professionals.

*Goal 5: Gender equality:* Us partners in India, South Africa and Zambia are working with communities to promote women's empowerment.

In India, the Delhi Brotherhood Society is providing counselling, legal protection and economic empowerment to women. In South Africa, we are supporting the survivors of gender-based violence.

*Goal 11: Sustainable cities and communities; Goal 13: Climate action:* This year, our church partners have responded to environmental and human-made disasters, including Cyclone Komen in Myanmar, the earthquakes in Nepal, the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, flooding in Malawi, and the refugee crisis in Europe. ■

↑ **Esther bathes her baby at a church-funded well in Senama, Zambia. (Us/Leah Gordon)**

See all the SDGs at [www.globalgoals.org](http://www.globalgoals.org)

# ‘I no longer go to school. I don't know how I will survive.’

This Advent we are encouraging churches in Britain and Ireland to pray for children around the world.

Children live in a world created by adults and look to adults for nourishment, protection and guidance.

Sadly, being so vulnerable, children are often on the receiving end of all the hardships and conflicts adults create in the world.

In this article, we hear from children in four countries and learn how the church is trying to help with support from Us.

Children urgently need our prayers, love and support.



## **Agnes, 17, Zambia:**

Both my father and mother died of HIV/AIDS in 2013.

Since they died, I have been taking care of my brother and sister. My brother's name is Michael Chushi, who is five years old, and my sister Grace Kunda is seven years old.

We live in the house left by my parents, and life has become very difficult because I have to provide for my brother and sister. For me to buy food, I have started selling kapenta [small fish] and tomatoes on the streets.

I no longer go to school. It pains me a lot to see my friends going to school knowing that I am not. I don't know how I will survive in the future.

- Agnes is receiving help from the Zambia Anglican Council Early Childhood Development Programme, which is providing her

young siblings with healthcare and education.

## **Fatima, 8, Bangladesh:**

I study at a centre run by the Church of Bangladesh.

I live with mother in a slum. I do not have a father. I collect useful things from rubbish dumps and sell them to earn money.

There are many dangers. I am afraid that I might be trafficked. I pray that I will get regular meals three times a day. I wish we could live in a better place that is safe.

In the future I want to be a social worker.

- Fatima was interviewed by the Church of Bangladesh, which is helping to provide urban street children with shelter, protection and education.



## **Kayise, 9, Swaziland:**

I live in Mvutjini, a poor place, with my grandparents

and cousins. My parents are not alive. I help my grandmother with chores; I like washing dishes.

I love school and everything about it, especially the food. When I'm older I hope to go to secondary school. But I don't like the long walk to school; once I was hit by a car on the way to school.

I spend a lot of my time at the local NCP [Neighbourhood Care Point, set up by the Anglican Church].

A child → searches among rubbish in the streets looking for something of value, Bangladesh. (Church of Bangladesh)





I like to play mabhacelwane [a hiding game] and mkoko [hopscotch]. When I grow up I want to be a nurse.

I love going to St Matthias Church and Sunday school. I like learning bible verses and singing hymns.

- Kayise is one of thousands of children in Swaziland who have lost both parents, often to HIV. The Anglican Church is supporting feeding programmes and schools.



**Andrew, 17, Sierra Leone:**

Before the outbreak of the Ebola virus, I was staying with

my mother and father in Bonde village and attending secondary school.

In August 2014, one of my uncles, who was staying with us, fell sick. They took him to hospital and he was tested positive for Ebola. A few days later he died.

We were put into quarantine for 21 days. We were given food, soap, and cloths for washing.

During this time, my mother also got sick and was taken to hospital. Two days later, she died of the Ebola virus and was buried. I miss my mother and uncle.

During the outbreak, we did not attend school for nine months.

My hope for the future is to be educated and to become a doctor so I can help my family and country.

- The Anglican Church in Sierra Leone is reaching out to communities left reeling by the Ebola outbreak, the worst of which has now passed. ■

**Pray with Us for children**

The current edition of **Pray with Us** contains more stories of children around the world.

Order copies for your congregation at [www.weareUs.org.uk/order](http://www.weareUs.org.uk/order)

# ‘We have started a savings programme so we can save for our futures.’

An Us-supported development programme has changed the lives of a group of teenage girls in Bangladesh.

A new self-help group is helping to transform the lives of a group of teenage girls and their community in the rural parish of Paitapukur in the western district of Rajshahi, Bangladesh.

Set up with the support of Us and the Church of Bangladesh, a group of 14 girls has adopted the principles of the Umoja self-help programme, which encourages communities to identify and pool their skills and resources then set up development projects.

To date, the Paitapukur Umoja group has raised awareness of gender discrimination, organised an inter faith Bengali New Year festival, planted trees in their village, and started a savings scheme to give them opportunities for living a fuller life.

Here, three members of the Umoja group tell their stories.

## Ashatota, 14, writes:

I am fortunate in that I have not been affected by violence against women, though it is a major problem in Bangladesh. We are very aware of it. My Santali community is good at networking with other Bengali people to resist violence in home and society.

In our village, we all celebrate Pohela Baishakh [Bengali New Year]. It is a day of national observance for all citizens, so it is a chance for Santal people to be in harmony with the local majority

Muslim population.

I am very happy to have received training in the Umoja programme, which is a bible-based development process. It has broadened my knowledge about the Bible and inspired me to do good things for the church and the community

The adolescent girls’ self-help group has decided to save money to help the poor. Some of us donate ten taka [about 90p] each month for the needy.

May the loving Lord bless us all to do something good for the helpless.

## Ratna, 17, writes:

Since high school, I have not faced any sexual violence or ‘eve teasing’ [harassment of women in the street]. My parents told me

Left to right: Uzzala, Ashatota and Ratna. (Church of Bangladesh)

↓ Uzzala studies outside her house in Paitapukur (Church of Bangladesh)





that violence against women was severe in the past, but now the situation is better.

At home, I help my parents with cleaning, cooking, rearing our goats, and collecting water.

My parents encouraged me to take higher education. This is a male-dominated society, but I have been trying my best to pursue my goals by continuing with my studies at college.

The aim of the Umoja process is self-transformation. This concept has changed our attitudes. It has inspired us to accept responsibility for the benefit of our church and community.

With the other young women, we have started a savings programme so we can save for our futures and invest in alternative sources of income for resisting poverty.

### **Uzzala, 14, writes:**

Training and orientation given by the Umoja programme has raised our sense of living together in mutual care so we can build a better society. We have seen more girls in school and more kitchen gardens in the village.

The Bangali New Year is a national day related to the main harvest that begins with the monsoon, and is a common day of celebration irrespective of caste, creed and religion. Observing this day gives Santal people an opportunity to connect with different caste and ethnic groups.

The Umoja self-help group is growing. We want to start income-generating activities, such as goat rearing, fish culture and small-scale agriculture. We also want to raise money so the poor can have education and health support. ■

# A message of hope from the first woman bishop in Asia

The following is an edited version of a talk given by Bishop Pushpa Lalitha, of Nandyal Diocese in the Church of South India, at this year's Greenbelt Festival. As a child, Bishop Pushpa was taught by USPG missionaries.

Jesus came to make us strong and give hope to the hopeless.

This radical mission and ministry of Jesus demands us to be the church of the marginalised. Jesus reached out to the Samaritan woman, the Leper, the Syrophenician woman, the woman in the house of Simon, the Shepherds, to everyone. Jesus brought them to the centre of society to be his witnesses.

In John 4, we read about a Samaritan woman who had been rejected by her community because of caste, class, gender and tradition. As a consequence, she was not permitted to participate in public life. But Jesus did not ignore her. Though her life was full of challenges, the love of Christ changed her. She became a shining lamp that gave light to her village. She became the first Evangelist, and she was a woman!

## First woman bishop

I want to explain how I became the first woman bishop in the Church of South India. Actually, the first woman bishop in Asia.

I come from a small village. My family were farmers. I never expected to join the church. But I attended a school that was founded by USPG [now Us] and I was inspired by the women missionaries who worked in the school and boarding hostels, in the orphanages, and in our village.

These women are forgotten by many, but I will always remember them.

It was not easy to be ordained as a woman in India. But my bishop (LV Azariah) was very forward-thinking and, in 1983, he took the initiative and ordained three women. I was one of them.

I worked in many towns and villages. I was treasurer for my diocese for a time. And God gave me opportunities to undertake mission training in England and Jamaica. So when there was a vacancy for the role of bishop in my diocese, I found that I was well qualified.

**Bishop →  
Pushpa Lalitha  
pictured in the  
Us office. (Us/  
Leah Gordon)**

‘Let us wait on Christ who can transform us so that we become a channel of hope for the people on the margins.’

Eleven candidates were put forward: me and ten men!

In the first round, I got the highest number of votes. But in the next round the men organised themselves – so the voting went against me, and I finished in fifth place.

When I lost the vote, many people called me and consoled me.





One woman in my congregation told me she had received a bible verse for me from the Lord, Jeremiah 29:11: 'For I know the plans I have for you... plans to give you hope and a future.'

I then heard that irregularities in the voting procedure meant the election needed to be re-taken. And so, the council voted again and it happened that I was elected. I became the first woman bishop in the Church of South India.

### **Miracle**

This is the Lord's doing and it is a miracle. It is a miracle because I am from the margins. I come from an agricultural family in a remote rural village. I am from the untouchable caste. And I am

a woman. And yet the Lord has brought me from the margins to the centre. By 'the centre', I mean the place where we meet the rich and the powerful.

Being a leader from the margins is challenging, but it is not an impossible task. He empowers us to speak about our experience on the margins. He gives us a voice.

And, because of this, the people in the centre – the rich and the powerful – and, indeed, the whole of society must take notice of us. They can be enriched by us.

So let us continue to pray for God's intervention in our lives. Let us wait on Christ who can transform us so that we become a channel of hope for the people on the margins. ■

# It's not paradise: Outreach on the streets of the Seychelles

Retired occupational psychologist Vicky Howard spent nine months in the Seychelles with our *Journey with Us* church placement programme. She helped to set up an outreach scheme for people who live on the streets.

The Seychelles is known for its beaches, wildlife and coral reefs, and might sound like paradise, but it also has a very dark side.

It has the highest incidence of heroin addiction in the world, with 1 per cent of the population affected. There are many cases of HIV and Hepatitis C, but no medicines available. There are sex workers, many of whom are also heroin addicts. Many people are homeless, and an estimated 1 per cent of the population is in prison.

At the same time, the Seychelles is a very God-centred society; Christianity is a part of the culture, so while doing outreach it was not unusual for people on the streets to ask for prayer.

I was born in the Seychelles – and named after the capital city, Victoria – and I had always wanted to go back. So when I retired from my job as an occupational psychologist, I finally got the opportunity through *Journey with Us*.

The bishop in the Seychelles, the Rt Revd James Wong, knew I had helped to set up a street outreach scheme when I was living in Penzance, so he asked me to do something similar on the island.

## Volunteers

We called our scheme Night Pastors. We had 30 volunteers, including the bishop's wife.

Each Saturday, from 9.30pm until 2 in the morning, four volunteers would walk the streets, while two volunteers remained at our base in prayer; we kept in touch with mobile phones.

We were mostly speaking in Creole, of which I speak little, so my part was largely to accompany the volunteers to provide training.

↓ Vicky Howard and volunteer Doreen Wong. (Vicky Howard)

‘The whole experience has been a real boost for my faith. It has put things into perspective.’

One man had been brought up in a children's home. When we first met him he was completely out of it on drugs or alcohol. But we met him each week, and prayed





with him, and he started to get better. Now he is more sober and comes over to shake hands. It was fantastic when he said he had found a job as a casual labourer. We felt it was an answer to prayer.

Of course, not every story is a success. Another man, an ex-heroin addict, also managed to sober up and find a job as a labourer. But when his colleagues found out he was HIV-positive he got fired.

### Sex workers

We had a lot of conversations with sex workers. One worker was desperate to come off heroin. We accompanied her to a clinic where she attempted to go cold turkey, but this proved too much for her. She wanted to try another route – making use of Methadone and counselling – but sadly she disappeared. Hopefully we will run into her again sometime.

Many of the people we met

have no-one to listen to them, so what we are offering isn't a small thing. However, it is a sad reality that many people who really need help don't necessarily have the capacity to receive it. It can be heart-breaking. All we can do is be there and trust that the love we offer will stay with them, perhaps planting a seed for the future.

I'm very grateful to Us for being the catalyst and allowing this to happen. The whole experience has been a real boost for my faith. It has put things into perspective.

I hope and pray the work in the Seychelles continues and grows. It has been a privilege making a contribution. ■

↑ **Night Pastors volunteers after completing their training.** (Vicky Howard)

**Journey with Us** is open to anyone aged 18 to 80 from Britain or Ireland. More information at [www.weareUs.org.uk/journey](http://www.weareUs.org.uk/journey)

# Programme is reaching out to HIV-positive mothers

Us International Programmes Manager Fran Mate reports on Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV in Tanzania.

This story is about Furaha ya Mama Agnes, whose name means 'The joy of mother Agnes'.

Furaha is a widow. Her husband died of HIV in December 2014.

In February this year, I met Agnes in Mzula village, Tanzania, while visiting a programme set up by the Anglican Church of Tanzania for the Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT) of HIV. This programme is supported by Us.

The prevention team met Agnes in Mzula during an outreach visit. Agnes was seven months pregnant but had never attended a mother and child clinic because she was HIV-positive and feared she would be ill-treated or stigmatised.

The prevention team counselled Agnes, and Agnes agreed to take another HIV test, which confirmed her HIV-status. Agnes was given antiretroviral drugs, which combat the effects of HIV, and given an appointment at a prevention clinic at Mvumi Anglican Hospital.

In April, Agnes delivered a baby girl and called her Agnes.

At six weeks, baby Agnes was tested for HIV. A blood sample was sent to Muhimbili National Hospital, in Dar es Salaam, and in July the results showed that baby Agnes was HIV-negative.

Mama Agnes is feeling very happy.

She has helped to found a new community group in Mzula which is helping pregnant women living

with HIV, giving them hope and healthcare.

Us is working in partnership with the Anglican Church of Tanzania in Dodoma to provide community health services to pregnant mothers with HIV, helping them and their babies.

↓ Agnes and her baby. (Church of Tanzania)



As a result of this work, the attendance of mothers and their spouses at PMTCT clinics has increased by over 25 per cent. More people are now aware of their HIV-positive status, which means they can be treated, which means fewer babies born with HIV.

Thanks to the success of this programme, the initiative is to be rolled out nationwide. ■

Prayers and resources for World AIDS Day at [www.weareUs.org.uk/hiv](http://www.weareUs.org.uk/hiv)



# Us Pilgrimages



An Us Pilgrimage is a chance to journey with the world church.

We are inviting churches to organise an Us Pilgrimage as a creative way for exploring what it means to journey in faith with the world church.

Holding an Us Pilgrimage is a chance to:

- Raise awareness about the world church;
- Pray for mission initiatives around the world;
- Raise funds to support the world church;
- Bring together your local church and community.

On our website you will find our step by step guide to organising a pilgrimage, including ideas for prayers and worship.

For more information, visit  
[www.weareUs.org.uk/pilgrimage](http://www.weareUs.org.uk/pilgrimage)

Alternatively, call Us Community Fundraising Manager David Brand on 020 7921 2210 or email [davidb@weareUs.org.uk](mailto:davidb@weareUs.org.uk)

# Equip your congregation seven days a week, not just Sundays

Article by the Revd Canon Anthony Eiwuley, Provincial Secretary of the Church of the Province of West Africa.

What I call ‘equipping churches’ are churches that support their congregations throughout the week, not just on Sundays.

These churches ask themselves: ‘What are our people doing during the week?’ These churches have devised ways for acknowledging the busy daily lives of the people: where they are and what they do.

This information can be shared and displayed in many ways: as pins and labels on a map of the local town; on a photo board; via a PowerPoint presentation showing photos of congregation members at work; or in a booklet listing people’s jobs and interests.

‘Equipping churches’ give their congregations a sense that each person has been strategically placed by God to make a difference in their workplace.

One church showed photos on a big screen of people in their workplaces during a time set aside for meditation and prayer, while a song about the meaning of work was played through the sound system. Some people laughed with delight to see members of their church dressed differently in their work clothes, for example, wearing suits and ties when they would normally wear a T-shirt to church.

There is no single model or simple formula for being an ‘equipping church’. The aim is to find creative ways to equip Christians so they feel more

encouraged to serve God in their daily work and daily lives.

This is not about putting extra expectations and obligations on people who are already struggling to fulfil church commitments. It is about affirming the fact that being a school teacher is godly work; that excellence in bed-making brings glory to Christ; that managing a company budget is good stewardship of God’s Creation.

‘The aim is to find creative ways to equip Christians so they feel more encouraged to serve God.’

‘Equipping churches’ offer encouragement and a new sense of purpose to people during their daily lives, seven days a week.

It is about supporting people in their pressured lives and helping them to better integrate faith, work, family and all of life. ■

Chat to Us about how your church can engage more deeply with mission. Call Carrie or Emma, in our Mission Engagement Team, on 020 7921 2200.



# Migration and movement

## Us Lent study course 2016

**This five-week course is an opportunity to explore the complex issues of migration and the global movement of people.**

It features stories from the Anglican Churches in Brazil, Malawi, Myanmar and Zimbabwe, and a look at the lives of Filipino migrants living in London.

Topics covered include: economic migration, the plight of refugees, human trafficking, and the displacement of people due to natural disasters.

The course also has prayers and challenges for us to consider as both a local and a global church.

**Order FREE copies of the study booklet or find it on our website:**

- [www.weareUs.org.uk/lent](http://www.weareUs.org.uk/lent)
- 020 7921 2200
- [info@weareUs.org.uk](mailto:info@weareUs.org.uk)



## Us Advent Appeal 2015

### Help Us to support Europe's refugees

We are the official agency for Anglican churches to channel donations to support the Diocese in Europe as it provides food, shelter and healthcare to refugees, with a particular focus on Greece.

Your donations will help to meet the emergency needs of refugees as winter sets in, as well as supporting a longer-term strategy being developed by Us and the Diocese in Europe.

**Plus, order FREE copies of our Advent prayer card for your church:**

Light Advent candles and remember the refugees in Europe.

Read more and make a donation at  
[www.weareUs.org.uk/europe](http://www.weareUs.org.uk/europe)

**Us.** The new name for USPG

**Us.**  
every person  
every community  
a full life