



Christmas
Bowl

Joel Pratley/Act for Peace



Your weekly 2020 Advent guide

Share God's love through the Christmas Bowl.

The Christmas Bowl is the Christmas appeal of Act for Peace, the international aid agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia. ABN 86 619 970 188

ACT FOR PEACE
CONFRONTING INJUSTICE TOGETHER
THROUGH THE **actalliance**



Thanks to your support, girls in Afghanistan like 10-year-old Jaleela*, are able to attend school and receive an education.

First Sunday of Advent - November 29

Bible readings:

- Isaiah 64:1-9
- Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
- 1 Corinthians 1:3-9
- Mark 13:24-37

Prayers:

- Please pray that girls can safely participate in education in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis.
- Please hope and pray for a peaceful settlement and end to the protracted crises in Afghanistan.
- Please pray for continued support and resources for Act for Peace's partner, Community World Service Asia (CWSA) and their important mission in the nation.

Keeping hope alive for girls in Afghanistan



My name is Jaleela* and I'm 10 years old. I'm in the third grade.

I'm happy to be finally back in school. I have only been back for a month because of the coronavirus.

I had forgotten most of what I had learnt in my classes before COVID-19. Thankfully, the teachers understood and were very helpful. They helped me revise and gradually guided me towards the new lessons.

My father is a barber and his shop was closed down for seven months due to COVID-19. It has reopened now but he is only earning a dollar a day. My father had to borrow money from our neighbours to buy me a uniform and I had to recycle my notebooks from last year.

I often think about leaving school to look for a domestic job so that I can help with earning some money. My mother does not encourage this and instead motivates me to focus on my education.

If children like me are supported it will be a great help and will keep us motivated towards learning.

**Jaleela's name has been changed to protect her identity as a minor.*



Dr Mehidi Hassan and his fellow doctors treat thousands of Rohingya refugees everyday.

Richard Wainwright/Act for Peace

Second Sunday of Advent - December 6

Bible readings:

- Isaiah 40:1-11
- Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13
- 2 Peter 3:8-15a
- Mark 1:1-8

Prayers:

- Please pray for the safety and dignity of Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar.
- Please pray for peaceful co-existence between Rohingya refugees and local communities.
- Please pray that women, youth and people living with disabilities get opportunities to learn new skills and increase their income.

Helping Rohingya refugees shape peaceful futures

I am Doctor Mehidi Hassan and I work as a Medical Officer for Rohingya refugees.

Many patients come here every day. 1,200-1,500 patients come to five satellite clinics and one main clinic.

I came here to this camp because I wanted to give humanitarian support. If we were not here, many people would die from a lack of food and treatment. If the service stopped, it would be devastating here.

A while ago I had a patient who was five years old. The child had a sore throat and was in pain. I looked carefully and realised it was tongue disease. I gave him medicines for seven days and he recovered well.

I am happy that I can serve the people. If a patient comes to me and I can cure them and see a smile on their face, I feel happy and I forget all pain and sufferings.

I think everyone should help the Rohingya people since they have rights to live as human beings.





Richard Wainwright/Act for Peace

Rashan* and his wife Pamodi* fled their home to a refugee camp in India. Thanks to your support, they returned to their farm in Sri Lanka and now grow their own food.

Third Sunday of Advent - December 13

Bible readings:

- Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11
- Psalm 126
- Luke 1:46b-55
- 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
- John 1:6-8, 19-28

Prayers:

- Please pray for the escalating spread of COVID-19 to stop in Sri Lanka.
- Please pray that refugees can safely return from South India to Sri Lanka.
- Please pray for continued support and resources for Act for Peace's partner, OfERR, in India and Sri Lanka so they can continue the important work.

Helping refugees rebuild with joy in Sri Lanka

My name is Rashan. In 1990, I fled to India with my family because of the civil war. We lived in a refugee camp for 27 years.

Act for Peace's partner OfERR has done a lot. In India they helped my daughter with books and schooling. They also helped us return to Sri Lanka when it was safe.

When we returned to our country I felt so happy.

The main problem in our village was water scarcity. I would have to fetch it carrying heavy pots. At night I suffered from severe feet and arm pain.

OfERR saw what was happening and helped me by installing a bore well. From the day they installed the well our lives changed. The assistance OfERR has given me is priceless; I can never forget this help.

Today, we have our farm and we sell and eat our crops. If we had stayed back in the refugee camp, we wouldn't have found this kind of life.

I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude. The assistance we got can truly not be expressed in words.

**Rashan and Pamodi's names have been changed to protect their identities as returned refugees.*



Fares and the team at DSPR deliver the tools, skills and resources needed to help Syrian families in Jordan. Today, they're helping them through the COVID-19 crisis.

Ben Littlejohn/Act for Peace

Fourth Sunday of Advent - December 20

Bible readings:

- 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16
- Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26
- Luke 1:46b-55
- Romans 16:25-27
- Luke 1:26-38

Prayers:

- Please pray that the efforts to limit the spread of COVID-19 in Jordan are effective.

- Please pray for an end to the Syrian crises, so that people can live in peace, and refugees who choose to, can return to their homes.
- Please pray for continued support and resources for Act for Peace's partner, DSPR Jordan, in their important work.

Sharing love with the most vulnerable in Jordan

My name is Fares. I'm the Executive Director of Act for Peace's local partner, DSPR Jordan. When you work with refugees, you feel their sufferings and you become anxious to help them any way you can. Many fled Syria because of the war in 2011.

We help in a number of ways including training workshops, support groups, and healthcare. We also distribute vouchers for food and hygiene kits.

In March, our country went into lockdown because of COVID-19. Life is slowly getting back to the routine that we know. We appreciate your support and solidarity. We felt your prayers and support during this difficult time. Our journey to help the poor and vulnerable is still not over.

We thank you for your help and continue to ask you for your prayers and support. As 1 Corinthians reminds us: And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love (1 Cor 13:13).

Thank you for helping us keep the faith, instilling hope in us and most of all, for your love!





Joel Pralley/Act for Peace

In Zimbabwe, Martha was struggling to feed her family and send her children to school. Thanks to your support, Martha is training in conservation farming and is now able to grow enough food for her entire family.

Christmas - December 25

Bible readings:

- Isaiah 9:2-7
- Psalm 96
- Titus 2:11-14
- Luke 2:1-14, (15-20)



Prayers:

- Please pray for unity and reconciliation in a country suffering from deep division and social fragmentation.
- Please pray that people have resilience and strength in the face of humanitarian crisis, being it man-made or natural disasters.
- Please pray for continued support and resources for Act for Peace's partners, the Zimbabwe Council of Churches and Christian Care and their important mission in the nation.

Lighting the way for shattered families in Zimbabwe



My name is Martha and I am a farmer in Zimbabwe.

In 2008 we had a severe drought. The whole community was without food. I also had to pull one of my children out of school because I couldn't pay for the fees. This made me very sad.

My crops were also affected by the most recent drought so I joined the conservation farming program. Being part of the program has changed my life so much. When we were using conventional farming we could not grow two crops at the same time. This time we managed to grow maize and groundnuts with the first rains.

This has helped me a lot. This year I will sell peanut butter from the groundnuts and pay the school fees for my daughter.

I say to the people of Australia, thank you very much. You have liberated me in a great way. I now live happily with my family and we have enough food in our home.





Christmas Bowl

**“Love your neighbour
as yourself.”**

Mark 12:31



National Council of
Churches in Australia

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Australian Government
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