



Prayer Diary

Prayers and reflections
for 16 Days of Activism
Against Gender-Based
Violence and Abuse

Calling for an end to violence and abuse
around the world

25 November to 10 December 2021

Welcome

Welcome to this special prayer diary, for use during the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence (GBV). In this, we come together to focus our prayers for those living with GBV and those making a stand for change, as well as improving our understanding of the impact of GBV across society. **For our global day on 27 November**, we are again reflecting on #nomorein3 – calling for an end to the violence and abuse suffered by 1 in 3 women across the world. Our global day has great potential to raise awareness of these heart-breaking issues worldwide, so let's use our amazing fellowship to do just that.

Domestic abuse and GBV affect people in different ways. By having this focus, we are not forgetting others; **Mothers' Union is against all forms of violence and abuse**. Our members show such passion and commitment in their work, as they make communities and individuals safer around the world.

Let us not be overcome, but through our prayers and actions be part of something that means women and girls can live to their full potential. Let's work to make our world a place where they can do this without fear, in the knowledge that they are precious, that they have rights, that they are wonderfully made.

'Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.'
(Romans 12:21)

Sheran Harper
Sheran Harper
Worldwide President
Mothers' Union



What is 16 Days of Activism?

The United Nations' 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence and abuse is an annual international campaign. It takes place from 25 November (International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women) until 10 December (International Human Rights Day).

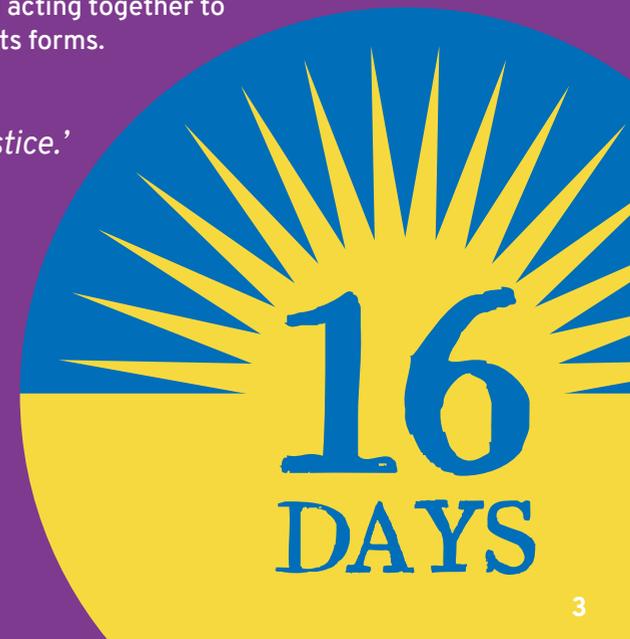
Started 30 years ago by activists at the inaugural Women's Global Leadership Institute, the 16 Days are used by individuals and organisations around the world to call for prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls.

Throughout the campaign, Mothers' Union joins with over 6,000 organisations from approximately 187 countries to raise awareness of, and call for an end to, gender-based violence and abuse in all forms and in all societies.

GBV can affect any person at any time, and statistics demonstrate that women and girls are particularly at risk. Every day of the year, Mothers' Union works alongside communities to help end domestic abuse and gender-based violence and to support those affected by it. For these 16 days, we focus on women and girls, recognising the value of women and men reflecting, praying, and acting together to call for an end to violence in all its forms.

'For the LORD is a God of justice.'
(Isaiah 30:18b)

'Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.'
(Hebrews 4:13)



Mothers' Union Global Day of Action

#NoMore1in3 Mothers' UNION
End abuse and violence now

Saturday 27 November 2021

On our Global Day of Action, tied into the 16 Days of Activism, we are building on last year's campaign, focusing on #nomore1in3 (no more 1 in 3). 1 in 3 women will be impacted by some form of violence in their life and we believe this is unacceptable.

What are we doing on this Global Day?



This year we are coming together on Saturday 27 November, marking it by wearing a purple scarf.



We will gather, where possible, for a three-minute silence at **1.03pm** (linking to the 1 in 3 theme).



We want to make this as big as we can, combining the voices of our four million members around the world – calling for action on an international scale and in the countries where we live.

There are 3 different ways you can be involved:



1. Big

We hope this event will be held at cathedrals in at least 15 dioceses across Britain and Ireland, with as many members as possible, plus clergy and other local high-profile individuals. Speak with your diocesan president (DP) to see what the plans are in your area or to maybe lead on this!



2. Local

Get together at a local level, perhaps in your branch or deanery, or ask other local groups to get involved.



3. Home

If you can't join an outside event, why not join in fellowship with those from your own home?



When holding a group event, try standing in a line or circle, with every third person placing the purple scarf over their mouth or eyes, as a symbol of 1 in 3 women affected by violence. You can also be creative and think of your own ideas.

Supporting resources

We will produce templates for you to use for events, including signs, information sheets, local newsletter articles and press releases.

These will be available on the MU website closer to the event date:

www.mothersunion.org/global-day-2021

Tell us what you are doing!

Together we want to get those who make the decisions on funding, support and services to sit up and listen. Let us know what you are planning – big or small! Complete this simple online form <https://bit.ly/GlobalDayEvents> or let your DP know, so that they can collate and share with Mary Sumner House and try and secure national press coverage.

Buy your purple scarves today

Special branded campaign scarves can be purchased here:

www.mueshop.org/collections/no-more-1-in-3

Why not wear your scarf to church or other events over the 16 days, to spark conversation? Use the information in this prayer diary to share why we are campaigning on this issue.



Thursday 25th November

International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

1 in 3 women experience physical or sexual violence in their lifetime, most frequently by an intimate partner. (UN)

'There is one universal truth ... violence against women is never acceptable, never excusable, never tolerable.'

(UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, 2008)

'As I have loved you, so you must love one another.'
(John 13:34)

Loving one another like Christ means caring and respecting each other.

In fullness of love, we seek to serve one another, to be uplifting, gracious, supporting and encouraging.

May God reveal violence, discrimination and abuse in our communities and help us to understand and speak out against all forms of violence.



Friday 26th November

Spotlight on FGM

Worldwide, 200 million women and girls have undergone Female Genital Mutilation. (UN)

So God created humankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.
(Genesis 1:27)

Our physical bodies are an important part of the body of Christ and the 'temple of the Holy Spirit' (1 Corinthians 6:19). We are each beautiful and precious in his sight.



We pray for women and girls living with health problems because of FGM, for effective education programmes and for those who accompany survivors on their journey of healing.

Saturday 27th November

The impact on children

'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you, I appointed you a prophet to the nation.'
(Jeremiah 1:5)

Before children are even formed in the womb, they are known and loved by God. Children are often the unseen and unheard victims of domestic violence. We can only imagine what it is like for a child to see a parent experiencing abuse from their spouse or partner and being unable to prevent it.



Today we pray for every child who is a survivor of violence in the home. May they find help and support. We pray for all those services offering a listening ear to children.



Sunday 28th November

The story of Tamar

Tamar's story is a powerful, uncomfortable example of perpetuated sexual violence and God's condemnation of it. It is a stark reminder that sexual violence is a violation of human rights.



Read 2 Samuel 13:1-22. Reflect on this biblical story and how it mirrors the experiences of many in the 21st century.

Consider: in what ways does our society make it hard for those who have experienced gender-based violence to speak out about their experiences?



We pray for the healing of pain caused by sexual violence and for caring men and women who will speak out against sexual violence and endeavour to support people who have experienced it.



Monday 29th November

The disabled community

'A vast crowd brought to him people who were lame, blind, crippled, those who couldn't speak, and many others. They laid them before Jesus, and he healed them all. The crowd was amazed! Those who hadn't been able to speak were talking, the crippled were made well, the lame were walking, and the blind could see again! And they praised the God of Israel.'
(Matthew 15:30-31)

We are all one in Christ, no matter how different we might look or how our bodies might move. The disabled community is also affected by domestic abuse. How terrifying it must be when your carer is your abuser.



We pray that the government will recognise that the disabled community is affected by domestic abuse and that laws will be changed accordingly.

Tuesday 30th November

Safe places

Where is your safe place? As Christians, we understand God to be our stronghold, our place of refuge – a God of solidarity in suffering. How can we join with God, by standing in solidarity with women and children who do not have a safe refuge from violence?

The Istanbul Convention the gold standard framework on violence against women, recommends one woman's refuge space per 10,000 population. A refuge is a safe haven, but every day, women and children are turned away because of lack of space.



We pray for the women who need to access the refuges, for women who are healing from trauma, for staff on the frontline and for the provision of adequate supplies of emergency refuge accommodation.



Wednesday 1st December

Elder abuse

'Remember the days of old; consider the years of many generations; ask your father, and he will show you, your elders, and they will tell you.'
(Deuteronomy 32:7)

Often within our rural communities, many generations still live together or close by to one another. The elderly can be subject to domestic abuse from a family member. There are many women who have been brought up to stay in a marriage no matter how badly they are treated.



We remember how our Lord ensured his mother would be cared for even after his death (John 19:26-27).

Today we think of the elderly women and men who are stuck with an abusive family member. We pray that they will seek and find help.

Tuesday 2nd December

The Samaritan woman at the well



Read John 4:1-30

Jesus challenged many social customs. Here, Jesus chooses to demonstrate to us that this woman is created and loved by God. He does not treat her as a social outcast, or condemn her, but meets her in her need and gives her life.

Reflect on this biblical story and how it mirrors the experiences of many in the 21st century. How do we respond to people who feel isolated, unworthy or excluded? Why do you think survivors of sexual violence don't always feel able to report their experience?



We pray that we can love as Christ did and be a faithful witness in representing God and sharing God's unconditional love.

Our work in action

Listen to their voices

'Nobody cares what happens... the neighbours know but they act like nothing is going on... how can they hear it and pretend like they don't... they're just as bad as him... they could do something, but they don't.' (A child's voice)

Hearing and sharing voices educates, motivates and moves us. Children's voices can be shared in a variety of settings. Print our voices resource which can be found on the Global day page under resources here www.mothersunion.org/global-day-2021 and use in a variety of ways. Put one in each pew or chair in your church, make posters for shop windows, read them out during a service, post them on social media.

Let their voices speak out.

The **'Souls of Our Shoes'** exhibition is available in Ireland (allireland.mothersunion@gmail.com) and the UK (hilary.moran@btinternet.com) with mainly women's voices, accompanying their shoes.



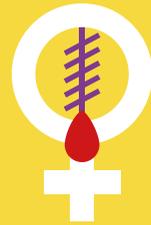
These shoes may be glamorous but my life is not...

Freedom from FGM

Female genital mutilation (FGM) has long been practised in the Diocese of Sebei, Uganda. Mothers' Union has been campaigning against it, with great success in urban areas. Women have been empowered; men in the community are supportive. Women who have been mutilated can now talk openly about the disadvantages of FGM.

Reports from schools and churches are encouraging. Girls study without fear of mutilation. Marital conflict and separation due to FGM issues have reduced. Through the efforts of MU leaders, girls have a right to pursue their education without disruption and women have a right to sexual pleasure during marriage.

We thank God for all that has been achieved, but the struggle against FGM in rural areas of the diocese is ongoing. The campaign to prevent women and girls from experiencing this continues.



Wednesday 3rd December

Coercive control

Coercive control is the most pervasive form of domestic abuse. Not necessarily physical, it is a persistent and deliberate pattern of behaviour by an abuser over a prolonged period, designed to achieve obedience and create fear. It may include coercion, threats, stalking, intimidation, isolation, degradation and control. It may also include physical and/or sexual violence.

'...as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people.'
(Galatians 6:10)

How can we act to change a culture that accepts coercive behaviour in a relationship?



We thank God for legislation on this issue, and we pray for effective resourcing and implementation to enable victims and families to regain their lives.

Thursday 4th December

Breaking the cycle of trafficking

Speaking of her rape as a seven-year-old child, and her subsequent five-year mutism, Maya Angelou said that cynicism in a young person is one of the worst things, because they move from knowing nothing to believing nothing.

Worldwide, almost 20% of all trafficking victims are children. Children traumatised by abuse carry that trauma into adulthood. Many enter abusive relationships, either as victims or perpetrators.

How can we contribute to breaking that cycle?



We pray for children living in desperate situations, whose families are coaxed into trafficking them to orphanages or to other countries for work, believing they can have a better life.

Friday 5th December

Healthy relationships matter

Behind beautiful homes can lie a predator that no one else sees.

A woman may be experiencing physical, financial and emotional abuse, yet feel it is important, despite her private misery, to submit to her husband, no matter the cost. All because of how she understands Ephesians 5:22 ('wives, submit to your husbands'). It is a tragic irony when this verse is used to justify violence and abuse against women.



We pray that we may faithfully teach God's Word and that it may not be used as a tool to damage and abuse. May church communities work towards being safe places where survivors will be listened to and signposted to places of support.

Saturday 6th December

Love matters

Our love for God motivates and challenges us to keep this command: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind; and, Love your neighbour as yourself.' (Luke 10:27)

Survivors and perpetrators of violence may find it hard to love both God and themselves. Reflect on how or whether they can be helped to do this. How might this benefit them in the long term?

We give thanks that we can show our love for God and God's people through our actions; and that these actions will have eternal as well as earthly significance.



Sunday 7th December

Women in conflict zones

In conflict zones, rape is being used as a weapon of war. Targeted violence does not come from nowhere; there was a pre-existing inequality and social norm from which it stemmed. Violence against women is a symptom of a deeper-rooted societal ailment.

Stigma and silence are the bedfellows of violence and inequality. Education and empathy are the breakers of chains.

We pray for MU Literacy and Financial Projects in communities and refugee camps, where women are fleeing war and conflict.



We pray for the women who lead and who attend these projects, that they may gain confidence and invaluable training to enhance their opportunities.



**Why not wear
you scarf to your
Church service
today?**

Monday 8th December

The impact of child marriage

Each year, 12 million girls marry before the age of 18. That's 23 girls every minute. (UN)

Child brides face huge challenges because they are married as children. Girls tend to be poor, under-educated and live in rural areas, where birth and death rates are high, and conflict is common. Isolated and with limited freedom, they lose their childhood.

Child brides are neither physically nor emotionally ready to become wives and mothers, risking dangerous complications in pregnancy and childbirth, and often suffering domestic violence.

'For he will deliver the needy who cry out, the afflicted who have no one to help.' (Psalm 72:12)



We pray for a change in religious and cultural norms and that governments will outlaw this appalling practice.

Tuesday 9th December

Transforming power

God's power is transformative. Mary meekly gave her 'yes' to the angel who told her she was to be the mother of Jesus. She sat helpless at the foot of the cross as she watched her son die. Yet this same Mary sang the radical song – the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55).

What does the song of Mary say to the use and abuse of power in our society?

Lord, in our lives there are times to accept what life brings and trust in your guidance and love. May power be used for the good of all, and may those who abuse power, remember that, in the end, all power comes from God.

Wednesday 10th December

International Human Rights Day

'There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.'
(Galatians 3:28)

Today we rejoice and reflect on ways we can share God's compassion and love.

'Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home – so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world.'

(Eleanor Roosevelt, UN)

We are all created equal and are together one with Christ. Respect for women and girls is the responsibility of everyone.



Pray that we may bring love and respect into the small and hidden places, to those who feel unvalued and unseen.



Actions

- 1. Everyone has a story.** Make eye contact with those whom you meet today, greet each one with a welcoming smile. Listen to a woman today. You do not know her life behind closed doors. Believe in her, invest time in her.
- 2. Across Britain and Ireland, over 210 requests for refuge are turned away every day.** Find out what shortages there are in your local area and write to your local politician, asking them to prioritise funding and resources for these.
- 3. The Safe Place initiative** is a simple way for organisations to provide information and signposting for anyone affected by domestic abuse. Sign up for your church to be part of raising awareness in your community: www.onustraining.co.uk/play-your-part
- 4. Thursdays in Black** – towards a world without rape and violence. Join with a growing number of people who are committed to wearing black on Thursdays, with a Thursdays in Black badge. Print the logo and make your own badge from the World Council of Churches. Take a picture and put it on social media.
Find out more: www.oikoumene.org/what-we-do/thursdays-in-black
- 5. Plan to become better informed of the wider picture.**
Here are some resources that might help:

MU 16 Days of Activism resources

Mothers' Union www.mothersunion.org/global-day-2021

UN Women www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/facts-and-figures

Restored <https://www.restored-uk.org/resources/>

Add links to your local organisations here:

Signposting

Add links to your local organisations here:

Speaking out makes an impact



'I was invited to speak at a church service about the 16 Days of Activism campaign and afterwards two people came and spoke to me about the impact my words had had on them.'

'Some months later one of the people contacted me to tell me that she had left an abusive relationship after many years. She had, at last, found the courage to leave and she told me how she was re-building her life. She thanked me for my words. She now wants to help others in a similar situation and is in contact with a women's domestic abuse organisation.' (Diocese in Britain and Ireland)

Raising awareness of God-given rights

Gender-based violence (GBV) is accepted by some cultures, encouraging men to beat their wives as a sign of manhood. Among the Turkana and Samburu tribes in North Kenya, wife beating is accepted as a form of discipline. It is a cause of many broken marriages, resulting in single mothers raising children after running away from domestic violence.

The Church and Mothers' Union in Kenya assist women with prayers, encouragement, food and clothing. Together with Alice, an MU Community Development Coordinator, MU members give space to schoolchildren during the evenings, as they don't have an environment in their homes in which they can study.

One cause of GBV is lack of understanding of human rights, which are God-given. As Mothers' Union, we are working hard to change this.



A prayer for those working to end sexual and gender-based violence

God bless you with insight to recognise violence in all its forms, and courage to name it, speaking out for justice.

The Lord Jesus bless you with compassion for the vulnerable, and grace to stand with them, sharing his strength.

The Holy Spirit bless you with a prayerful heart, and power to breathe peace, transforming the world.

The blessing of the holy and glorious Trinity, eternal Wisdom, living Word,

abiding Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

Amen.

(With thanks to the Anglican Church of Australia)

The hands and feet of Christ

Christ has no body now but yours.

No hands, no feet on earth but yours.

Yours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on this world.

Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good.

Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world.

Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,

yours are the eyes, you are his body.

Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

(St Teresa of Avila)

Mothers' Union, Mary Sumner House, 24 Tufton Street, London, SW1P 3RB

The Mothers' Union, Incorporated by Royal Charter 1926, is a charity registered in England and Wales (Registration No: 240531)

Please detach these book marks to use yourself and share with others to make more people aware of the work MU does around the world to combat abuse and violence



Lord, today we make a commitment to take a stand: to say 'no more 1 in 3', to use our eyes to see where change needs to be made, to use our voices to challenge injustice in our world. May we support people experiencing abuse, enabling them to reach their full potential and may we call for change. Amen

For more information and resources go to www.mothersunion.org/global-day-2021



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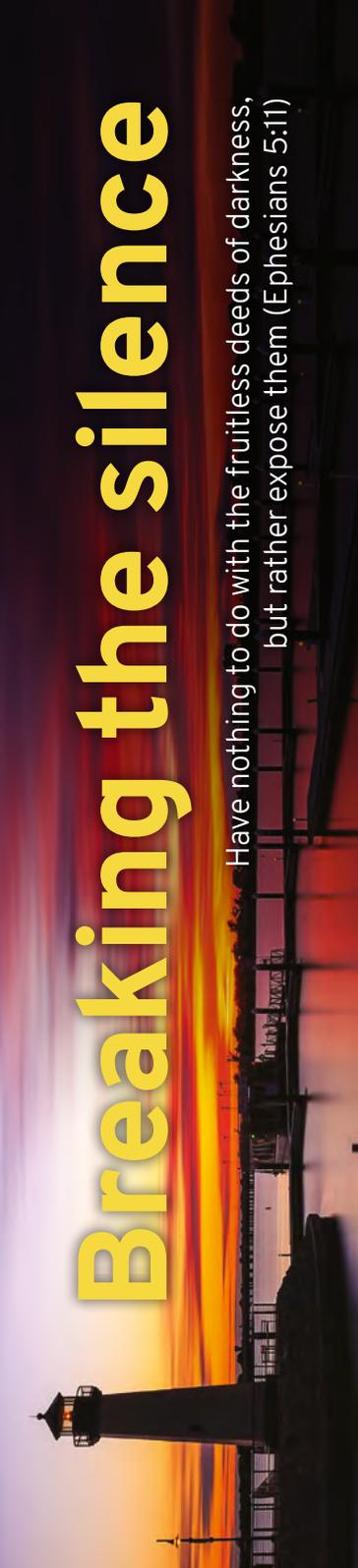


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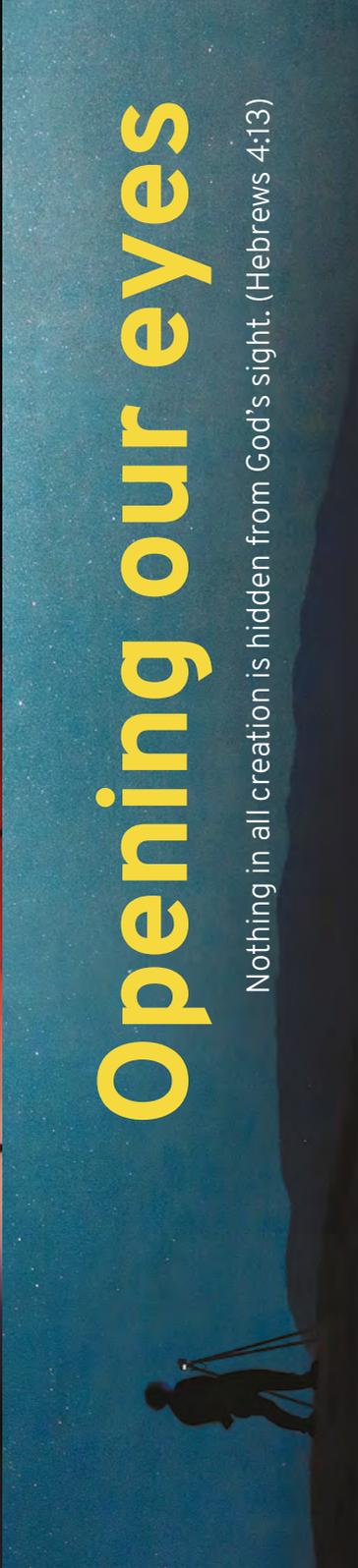


Breaking the silence

A lighthouse stands on a pier extending into the sea at sunset. The sky is a vibrant mix of orange, yellow, and red, reflecting on the water. The lighthouse is dark against the bright background.

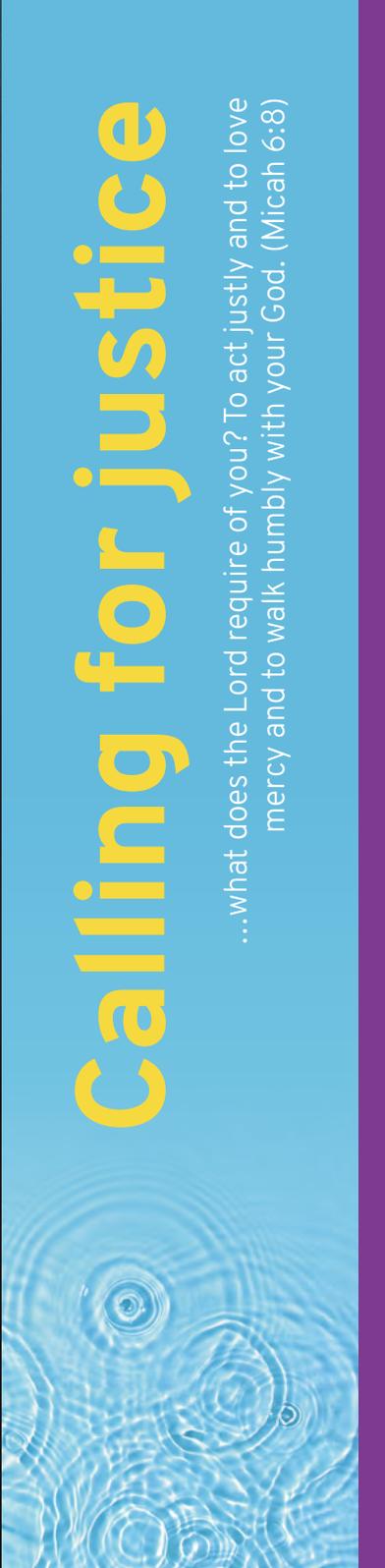
Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness,
but rather expose them (Ephesians 5:11)

Opening our eyes

A silhouette of a person stands on a dark shore, holding a camera on a tripod. The background is a deep blue and purple sky at sunset, with a dark silhouette of a lighthouse on the left.

Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. (Hebrews 4:13)

Calling for justice

A close-up of water ripples on a light blue background. The ripples are concentric circles of varying sizes, creating a textured, shimmering effect.

...what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love
mercy and to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8)