

@home in a strange place



off the shelf
ready-to-use series for sacred conversation

‘walking with a stranger’

They didn't recognise the stranger
who walked the road with them....



walking with a stranger

short stories and reflections
to raise some important questions
and inspire sacred conversations...

'...until they offered him a place to stay
and something to eat...'

Stepping out - on walking with a stranger

In your eyes
 i saw more
 than words could tell
 and in your tears
 there was a story
 never heard before
 as we walked
 side by side
 on a dusty road.
 It was more
 than spoken words
 that taught me to love
 my neighbour
 and the stranger!
 It was in the walk
 that I saw you
 for who you are through smiles
 and tears
 and breaking bread
 with table talk....



This collection of stories and reflections is the work of Richard Becher. It take us beyond welcoming people into church buildings or community spaces: it is an invitation to walk into the unknown with the strangers we meet. The stories take us out of our safe sanctuaries and across boundaries of ethnicities and cultures to find Jesus in the strangers we meet on the road of life.

Welcomes and smiles at the doors of our churches are a good beginning. It in the walking of the extra mile that we discover questions about our faith and way of God in Christ we are seeking.

What follows is not another manual on how to welcome the stranger, but is encouragement to walk with the stranger. The walk might come after a welcome at our doors as we go an extra mile to get to know someone. And the most profound welcome will be for the stranger whom we encounter on the road: perhaps an angel sent by God to meet us where we are. Could we be the angel in their wilderness?

The power of stories is not so much in words, but in the telling. However well written a story it will not be remembered if badly told. So a story not so well written can come alive in the telling. So please, please draw on your imagination and passion to re-tell these stories bringing them alive through your telling and in our remembering.

The words written are just like seeds from a packet of imaginative ideas inspired by scripture. So we hope they can grow stronger as you tell them — and raise questions which challenge in our walking the way of Jesus.

Art credit	Elizabeth Gray-King
Logo credit	Mark Robinson
Photos	Michael Jagessar
Stories	Richard Becher

We would very much appreciate if you can kindly provide us with any feedback that would help us to improve this and any of other the resources we have put together. Please use the feedback form which can be found among the online resources [your feedback matters].

A walk with a stranger

We were walking on a long dusty road with our grief when we met a stranger. We invited him to walk with us. We didn't recognise him and he didn't seem to know the story of our grief. We walked and he soon talked, asking lots of questions about the things that troubled us and the sadness that we felt.

He didn't say, but we could see there was hunger in his eyes. His words revealed a thirst while behind a smile hid a pain which made him weep. The tears were not for himself, but for what he saw and the grief he knew we shared. This stranger had a lot of compassion. We didn't know why and we never asked. The way he talked you would think he came from a different world altogether! If he'd come from anywhere near here he would have known what had happened. So he must have come from far away.



He looked as though he was sleeping rough for a few nights. He didn't look as if he'd washed or shaved. There was blood on his feet, so we assumed from a lot of walking. As for his clothes! Well, he looked as though he had been stripped or been mugged at the roadside by random robbers. He didn't say any of that. But anyone with eyes could see there was a story in his eyes. But we never asked his story! He didn't ask for anything from us. Come to think of it: he gave us more than we gave him just by sharing stories he knew from scripture. His presence was an inspiration to us, though we didn't know him.

As night began to fall we couldn't leave him to spend another night on the streets. So we asked him to stay with us. We had a few spare clothes in our bags which we gave him and after a wash he joined us at table for food and drink. That was when he took some bread, gave thanks to God before breaking it and giving each of us a share.

It's amazing how our eyes can be opened to the presence of Jesus Christ in a stranger we meet on a dusty street and invite to walk with you. It was as if he had risen from the dead and wanted us to know that he would always be walking with us, especially when we dare to walk where others will not walk.

We didn't know the person we met on that dusty road. But as we walked, and talked, we found a friend behind the hunger and the thirst and dirty rags. Would we recognise him again? Would we be intimidated by the stranger and ignore him?

Read: Luke 24: 13-35

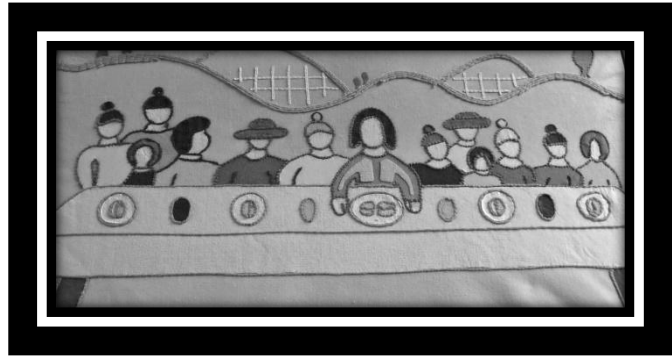
Conversation points

- Can you remember occasions when you have avoided a stranger because of their appearance?
- Have you missed opportunities to be inspired by a stranger because you have been intimidated by them?
- Is your first thought inspired by what you see? Or from what you hear about people?
- What happened when you take the opportunity to walk with them and hear their story?
- Why didn't the two disciples ask the stranger where he was from or what he needed?
- Would you ask a stranger's story or just assume what he wanted and where he was from?
- Would you walk with a stranger and help them find a place of rest? Or just point them in the right direction, or what you hope was the right direction?

I knew the voice, but not the face

I was travelling on a road when I stopped to take a rest. I heard a voice I knew so well speaking by my side saying: "whoever welcomes you welcomes me and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me!" It made me feel so special but no-one welcomed me. And as I looked around I could not see the face of the voice I knew so well. All I saw were faces of despair with tears of grief in a wilderness of poverty and conflict.

I didn't like what I saw so I closed my eyes. But then I heard a voice I recognised so I opened my eyes and saw a face I'd never seen before. "It's me," said the voice. All I saw was the face of a hungry widow. I didn't like what I saw so I closed my eyes. Then someone spoke with a voice I'd heard before saying: "do you remember me?" The voice I knew, but when I looked I saw a face I'd never seen before. It was the face of a thirsty child. I didn't like what I saw so I closed my eyes. Again I heard a voice I knew saying: "it's me!" I opened my eyes to see a face I did not know. It was the face of a homeless woman. I didn't like what I saw so I closed my eyes, but the familiar voice spoke again: "Can't you see me or don't you hear me?" I knew the voice but all I saw was the black face of a sick man I'd never met before. I didn't like what I saw so I closed my eyes. But the voice I knew insisted: "look, it's me" so I looked but all I saw was a man in prison clothes who I'd never seen before.



I didn't like what I saw at that place on the road so turned away. Yet, a stranger who I'd never met before walked beside me and a voice I knew so well said, "you're welcome to walk with me." I accepted his invitation and we walked and he talked, like a friend I knew so well. But his face I had never seen before. Then we met a gardener who called me by my name and said: 'I have good news of new life to share', in a voice I knew so well, but his face I had never seen before. I didn't understand how I could hear a voice I knew so well, but only see the face of a stranger.

The stranger who walked with me seemed to know my every thought and the voice I knew so well said: "when you didn't welcome the hungry widow, the thirsty child, the homeless woman, the sick man and the prisoner you didn't welcome me and when you didn't welcome me you rejected the one who sent me!"

Then he took bread, blessed it and as he broke it. I then remembered the voice belonged to the Lord, who asks me to follow him, not because I like what I see but because his is the voice of truth.

Read: Matthew 25: 31-46 and John 10: 1-6

Conversation Points

Jesus is the stranger with the face we don't recognise but a voice we know well...[reflect on this]

- Who are the strangers we walk by and miss the opportunity of hearing God speak?
- Today's stranger won't be a stranger tomorrow so what will we be doing next time we meet them?
- What makes the voice so recognisable when we can't see the face? Is it in the tone or in the words?



There was a girl from another country who could not speak as Isla spoke. They had, however, a silent language which helped them understand what each of them wanted to say. They were beautiful friends. Isla's face would shine like ivory in the darkness and the eyes of her friend will sparkle like dancing lights from the hollows of her ebony skin. "We can't understand what they say," said the adults able in the presence of the girl's family. "They should speak English before coming here," muttered others, as if they had time for language lessons in midst of a war. The family would have died they had not left their home and everything they owned. Yet some still who hurled hurtful words at them: "scroungers", "cheats" and other unkind words. Many, though, were filled with compassion. They may felt awkward with people they didn't understand and who didn't understand them. "What can we do?" they queried. The answer seemed simple to Isla: "we must learn how to make a smile!" The adults didn't know how to make a smile.

So the children simply started to draw and paint 'smiley faces' on pieces of paper. One child asked, "what colour is a smile?" "A smile doesn't have a colour," said Isla. "It's like a shape drawn on a piece of paper which can be any colour -- and a face is like the piece of paper!" The children thought they had made a smile with their 'smiley face' drawings and the adults laughed, but Isla shook her head. "Oh no!" she insisted. "That's only like the design of a smile on a piece of paper and now you have to make it real!" "So how do we make it real?" everyone asked the little girl with the beautiful ivory coloured face. "First, you must help wipe away the tears," explained Isla. This wasn't easy for people to do as that meant looking into the eyes of the strangers. "The tears keep coming back," someone observed trying to wipe a stranger's face with a tissue. "The more you see and the more you wipe away the bigger the smile will be," said Isla.

It was difficult for people to know how to make a smile when there were so many tears in the stranger's eyes. They couldn't understand why. "This is how you make a smile," said Isla. She reached out and took the hand of her friend with ebony skin and pulled her into the warm embrace of her arms. Silently she looked into the eyes of her friend, wiped away the tears as the shape of a smile appear on her face. "You can't make a smile until you understand the language of the tears. When you can cry with the stranger you will make a smiley friend," said Isla. So the people practiced making a smile, reaching out and embracing each other in their arms. Yet, the stranger didn't smile and everyone asked why? "That's easy!" said Isla. "You are trying to smile without crying. When you cry the stranger will know you feel their pain, and smile with you when they can wipe away your tears. Let them do for you what you do for them and then you will make a smile!" So you don't need words when a stranger doesn't understand what you say. You can make a difference in the silent language of a smile, made in a heart by hands reaching out to embrace and eyes that see a story in the tears. Now you can go make a smile....

Conversation points

- Do you feel as though you welcome the stranger as if they were Jesus?
- Do you welcome people differently depending on how different they are to you?
- Does your body speak the same language as your words?
- Do you read people's body language and how do you feel if it's different to what you hear?

Read: Matthew 10:40; Luke 9: 46-48

The clothes that changed the world

The Father loved all his children very much. He was sad, though, when he saw two of them all dressed up for a party. “What have you done?” he asked when he found them hiding in the garden. “We’ve been invited to a party and wanted to dress up,” they both replied. “So why are you hiding in the garden?” the Father queried. “We heard you coming and knew you wouldn’t like it”, they answered. “But, why the need to dress up?” continued the questioning. “We wanted to look different!” said the children. “Everyone looks the same and we thought a bit of colourful fashion would be more pleasing to the eye!” “Fashionable!” exclaimed the Father.



So he looked more closely at what the children had done. He noticed their new clothes were a bit baggy round the middle and in other places there were wrinkles and said: “they don’t fit very well do they?” “It is our first attempt at designing clothes,” said the children. “We’ll get wiser and better with experience”. Tears appeared in the Father’s eyes as he realised his children were unhappy. His children wanted more and didn’t want to look like him anymore.

“You all looked the same because I brought you up to be like me,” said the Father. “I made you as you are so that nothing would be hidden from anyone. “It made us feel a bit naked!” explained the children. “So you didn’t like everyone else knowing you inside out and wanted to cover yourself up?” quizzed the Father. “We thought it would be nice to keep some things hidden from everyone at the party,” said the children. “So, are you ashamed of who I made you to be?” continued the Father.

The children had found black skin and white skin to make their new clothes. They tried to assure their Father that fashion would get better. “We thought we could make clothes in the future which are different shades of tans and olives, dark and light!” It made the Father so, so sad to see what his children had done. “If you want these clothes I’ll have to make them for you so and they must be worn by everyone, all the time,” and then fashioned clothes in black and white and added a few different shades of light and dark. “There!” said the Father when he had finished. “Another day’s work done. Now you must keep these clothes for ever!”

That was how the skeleton was clothed. Instead of everyone being the same, people started fighting over which colour was best, forgetting that they are members of the one family of skeletons!

Read: Genesis 3:7; Romans 13:11-14; Colossians 3:11-17

Conversation points

- Are there people who are not expected to wear the clothes of Jesus Christ?
- Are there people who we do not accept as being members of our Christian family?
- Are there boundaries to how far our compassion and kindness should reach?
- Do we demand people meet certain conditions?
- What do we do if we don’t like the answers to our questions?
- How is our questioning as perceived by strangers different to that of police/immigration authorities?

The Mirror doesn't lie

Imagine a group of skeletons:

Which one is black? Which one is white? Which one is rich? Which one is poor? Who is the one I didn't want to dance with? Which is the one who turned me away?

The image that reflects back at him in the mirror is a mess. It makes him so sad he wants to weep.

It will need more than a brush of the hair, a quick shave or a bit of make-up to make us look better. Yet he is determined to restore the image in the mirror to its original beauty.

The mirror shows a changing face which is sometimes black, sometimes white, male and female, young and old with changing moods between sad and happy, calm and angry.

He doesn't recognise himself in the mirror as people of different faiths - Muslim, Jew, Christian, Sikh, Hindu and more — look back at him in prayer.

So many faces in one mirror, from one image, looking a mess but all with the potential to reflect his great beauty.

God is like a person looking at a mess in a mirror and trying to make what God sees as good as it was many years ago.

Humanity is God's mirror. Once God looked it was all so good, so very good, and he will make it good again.

Read: Genesis 1:27; 2 Corinthians 3: 18; John 3: 1-8



Conversation points

- God made the people who follow religions, but who made the religions?
- Does God see a little bit of himself in the strangers we walk by each day?
- Can we help that little bit of God grow stronger in ourselves and a stranger? What do we need to do?
- What prevents us from looking in the mirror and seeing ourselves in the likeness of God? What needs to be removed?
- How easy or challenging is it to see the goodness of God in other people before drawing conclusions about them?

Life had always been a troubling place for the elderly woman with wrinkled face and well-worn hands. Her back was hunched as if it had carried the weight of her troubles. Life for her was like a night with no end. Always dark. She could not see. She could only hear or smell or touch! There were voices that were heard but went silent. There were voices that came with the smell of loveless fear. And there were rough and careless voices with their touch. The old woman knew what was coming when she heard a voice in her endless night. She knew the name of every voice, but never saw a face.

There was one voice she knew she could always trust. With that voice came a gentle touch and a smell like the scent of love filling a room. This was the only face she risked touching, rubbing both hands around the ears, smoothly fingering the hollows of the eyes, and following the contour of the nose until she felt the source of the voice at her fingertips. The face was rough and stubbled: so different from the care of his words and gracious attitude. With time to spare, his was a voice of encouragement and hope.



It was on one of those days when he came again. Others had rushed around with not care, but his voice asked gently whether there was anything he could do. “A cup of tea would be lovely,” she said. Then she added with a laugh that “a nice cream cake would be a treat!” As if he knew her every thought, he said: “I don’t just mean tea or cake as a special treat but what would you most like? What miracle would you like?” There was a thoughtful smile on her face as she quietly said: “To see, oh how I dream to see!” She sighed and touched her eyes. “Yes, that would be the miracle I pray for. Then I would know the colour of a tear drop, see what a voice looked like, what people mean when they say something is beautiful, see how different colours are and discover what a smell looks like. That would be the miracle I pray for.”

He put his hands across her eyes and said: “I must go away, but before I go I want to give you a gift.” “What sort of gift?” she asked. As his hands had moved away from her eyes she saw things she had never experienced before. It took time for everything to settle. Then she saw what she had only ever heard, felt and smelt before - the shape of a smile, the colour of her own tear drops and she could give a face to a voice. She could see.

She looked, cried, laughed and danced without fear of falling over something. She hugged the man whose voice now had a face, looked intensely at him and then herself. “Why is your skin a different colour to mine?” she asked out of curiosity. “We are all different on the outside but on the inside God is building a temple God’s Spirit can live,” said the man. “Do let my love speak through you because now I must go away.” Then the voice she had known so well walked through the door as a face she would never forget. And the different colours of their skin would always remind her how love transcends all boundaries.

Read: John 9:35-41; I Corinthians 3:16; 6:19

Conversation Points

- Does the Spirit of God find a home in the hearts of people of all cultures?
- So do we believe the Spirit speaks through people of any race and culture?

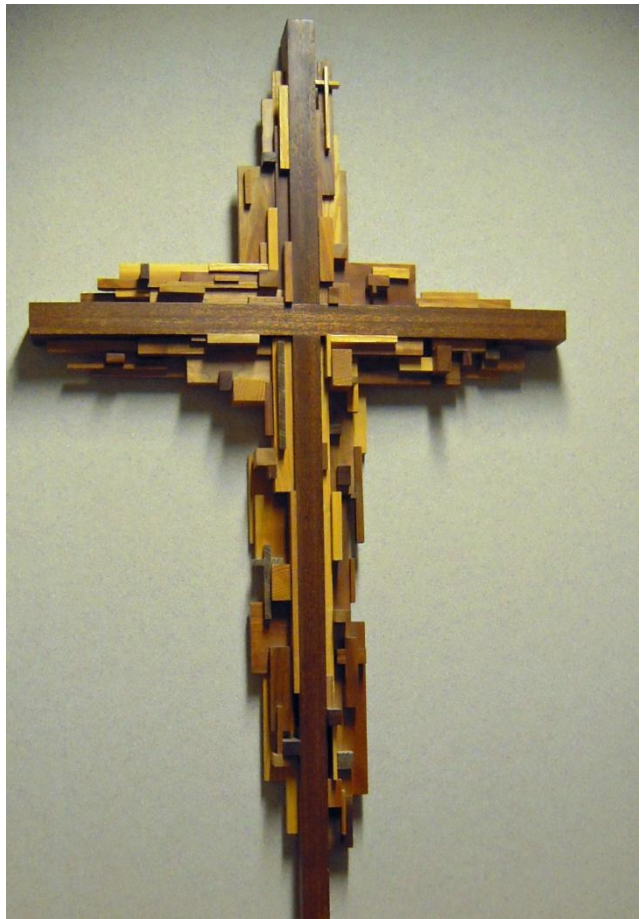
Blind justice!

I never saw
 the colour of your skin:
 Black or white
 it didn't seem to matter.
 I knew your voice
 and followed where you led.
 I never saw
 the clothes you wore:
 New or second hand
 it didn't seem to matter,
 I knew your voice
 and followed where you led
 I never saw
 how you looked:
 Rich or poor,
 strong or weak,
 big or small,
 fat or thin,
 It didn't seem to matter,
 I just knew your voice
 and followed where you led
 until one day
 someone turned to me and said
 "You'll never understand
 the pain of being different
 unless you notice the colour of the skin!"
 Then I knew:
 Justice is in the eyes of the blind
 because I could not see
 the colour of your skin
 the clothes you wore;
 whether you were fat or thin
 rich or poor;
 I just knew you by your voice
 and followed where you led,
 blind to any other choice
 because justice has no colour
 and I don't even know
 whether my stick is black or white!
 It's painful being different
 but justice is in the eyes of the blind!

Read and reflect on John 10: 1-6:

Would it make a difference if you had trusted a voice you heard for a long time and then discovered the person was black?

Do you listen to the voice of someone from another country or culture? Do you trust what they say as easily as someone from your own culture?



When my best friend died

Love is everyone's best friend. I could see her standing with arms open wide, beckoning from an open door. She is a welcome waiting for anyone who comes to her door.

She did not envy what others had or proudly boast of what she had. She had a gentle attitude which looked so patient, calm and kind, waiting with a welcome you always hoped to find.

From a distance Love watched what happened in my land and reached out with the words of assurance and gave us hope which we thought we could trust. Love looked the sort to persevere regardless of the cost to her, even if it meant the death of her. Love is everyone's best friend and will fight for us till the very end.

The words were like a song from a distant shore. There would be a welcome at the open door with eyes that would meet mine and know how I was feeling; with ears that would listen to my voice and hear my heart crying; with arms that would embrace me and would know I needed comforting. With it all there would be a welcoming smile worth more than a thousand words.



Most of us didn't know how to find the open door. As evil delighted in a victory, Love watched from a distant shore. We didn't know why she didn't come to find us, to protect us and celebrate with the truth! A few of us found their way to the open door far away on the distant shore, but when we got there the door was closed and there was no good news for the poor for someone had killed love before we got there!

My best friend died on that distant shore before I got to the open door. Love, though will rise again from the grave because Hope and Faith remain as angels by his side.

Read: 1 Corinthians 13: 1-13

Conversation Points

- Do we show the face of love in how we live our faith?
- Is there a boundary to how far our love should extend?
- Do we do enough to allow love to rejoice in the truth?
- Do we just trust in God to answer prayer and love the stranger?

The house God built

When God built a new home it had windows with a wonderful view of the world. There were open doors to let the stranger in and a warm welcome on the inside.

When people moved into the new home they closed the curtains, locked the doors, erected fences and made it very cold. The message was clear: stay away!

Even God was not welcome in the house that God built. Instead God walked the earth like a homeless stranger: knocking on doors, tapping on widows, and crying out for justice. No one listened and God was left in the cold with nowhere to live.

Yet, God kept on building, home after home, all with a wonderful view. Doors that were left open and a warm welcome on the inside. And guess what? When people moved in they hid behind curtains, with doors locked in fear of the outside. It felt cold on the inside.

One day someone decided to open a curtain. She discovered that the windows offered a wonderful view of the world. She then opened the door and a stranger came in bringing warmth and a glow to the home.



Your eyes are the windows through which you can see the world in which Jesus lives and moves
 Your ears are the doors through which The Word can walk and make a home in your human flesh
 Your heart is where the Spirit can find a home and with the warmth of love inspire new life
 Then, when God has been welcomed home our hands reach out with a light of hope for the world
 You are the house that God built, so open the curtains, unlock the doors and light the fire!

Read: 1 Corinthians 3:16; Hebrews 13: 1-3

Conversation points

- Reflect on the implications of 1 Corinthians 3:16 for us individuals and as Church.
- Are there people we close the door on?
- Can we justify not opening the door to a stranger?
- Does God turn a stranger away and, if not, how can we?

There was a big house on a hill. The door was never closed. People came daily to sit and pray there. And they never left the big house on the hill. So the owner of the big house on the hill made it even bigger, building more rooms, adding more space. Everyone could then find a place to live with goodness and love in the big house on the hill.

People came from every nation, every faith and even every generation to find a welcome at the big house on the hill. When the big house on the hill could not be built any bigger people then had to share a room. And still the people came and the people never left. Black and white shared a room in the big house on the hill. Rich and poor shared bread together. Still day by day people came from every nation to sit and pray.

So many people came and never left that three people had to share a room in the big house on the hill. Still they came and no-one ever left. So soon it was four to a room, then it was five and then....Well, the big house on the hill was big. Very big. Yet, still not big enough for all the people who came and wanted to live in the house.



The door has never been closed to the big house on the hill. And soon the owner was not there to welcome people anymore. There was no room for him. So people had to welcome each other. With every room full and everyone desiring their own space, things got challenging. People started complaining in the big house on the hill.

The owner who had left the big house on the hill, walked on earth like a homeless stranger. He is still walking it, desiring to build a home in people's hearts where he can live on earth and their lives can be like open doors through where love and goodness can overflow. If you meet him would you welcome him into your home and heart?

Read: Psalm 23 John 14: 1-4

Conversation points

- Reflect on Psalm 23 and imagine you are dwelling in the house of the Lord.
- Does it matter to God what country a person, who offers him a home, comes from?
- What does it mean to share room/space with a stranger?
- What needs to change for God to build a home in people's hearts? What would result?
- Can you imagine having to share a room in heaven with someone very different to you? How would you cope?

They crossed the road and walked by on the other side. They didn't hear my cry, or so they said. I would have died if someone had not stopped for me. I had been left for dead as the sun faded from the evening sky. I managed a groan of breathless pain and there he was: a stranger the answer to my silent prayer. I don't remember much. There was a gentle touch and the comforting voice from the stranger. Like the others he could have walked by on the other side.

The stranger did so much more than stopping to look. He lifted me from the dusty floor and paid the price to restore my life. It could have been a high price to pay. He didn't know who was hiding away that day, waiting for another victim to mug and leave for dead.

But who is the one who stopped and why, when the others walked on by? I am curious to know the difference between the one who heard my cry and stopped and those who left me there to die. I wanted to see the face of the one who lifted me from that place and carried me to safe space where more strangers welcomed me.

He'd come back and pay the bill if it is more, he said. I was too beaten up to argue with the stranger. Who would do such a thing? I couldn't just leave a thank you letter when a few weeks later I felt so much better. So I said I'd stay and work to repay. And then one day, there he was with another victim who'd been ignored and left to die. I watched in awe as he walked through the door. I was shocked by what I saw. He looked so different to how I looked, yet he had risked his life for me. His clothes were a different fashion. He spoke a different language. And his skin was of a different colour. Was this really the man who stopped for me? He was my image of an enemy, not a friend. "I'm not like you," I said, "so why save me?" He smiled and hugged me. I knew instantly what I needed to do. I must never walk by on the other side of anyone in need!

Read: Luke 10: 25-37

Conversation points

- Reflect on work of those who receive the wounded strangers the Samaritan brings to them.
- Consider the occasions when you walk on by those in desperate need? How did you feel afterwards.
- Who is today's unexpected stranger who sees the need and stops?
- Have you been like a Samaritan? Has someone been like a Samaritan for you?
- Have your experiences as victim or Samaritan changed you?

Prayer

Their feet are walking in a strange land
we walk with them
Their eyes are weeping in a strange land
we weep with them
Their voices are singing in a strange land
we sing with them
Their hearts are hurting in a strange land
we hurt with them
Their story is being told in a strange land
we listen with them
Their hands break bread in a strange land
we share with them
They are seeking hope in a strange land
we hope with them
They pray for peace in this strange land
we pray with them

You walk with us as a stranger, gracious God, so may we not fear faces we do not know. As we walk together may we hear their story! And, when we invite them to sit at table with us, we will recognise you in the breaking and sharing of our bread.

Fill the strangers with your Spirit so they can walk through doubt and fear to find new life. Give them wisdom to tell their stories so that eyes, hearts and minds will open receive the blessing that a stranger brings. Amen.

Home can be a strange place....

The care home

It can feel like a frightening place when you forget where you live and can't remember the door to your house, the neighbours you knew and the people you loved for so many years...

It's a home I just can't remember.....

It can be such a different place when after many years they take you home to a place you don't know with strangers in uniform who must give you the care no-one else can provide....

It's a home I never really wanted.....

It can be such a lonely place when your loved one has gone, the house is empty, the rooms have gone silent,

the bed is so cold and the pillow at night is wet with your tears.....

It doesn't feel like home anymore

It can be a most welcome place, when the door is locked and the cold stone floor is warmer than the street,

with windows and bars protecting your face from the wind and the porridge tastes great!

It's a home I can't escape from...

It feels like such a caring place but I can only go there if I make myself sick or cause myself pain

and a passing Samaritan sees I'm in distress and calls for some help.....

I'm sick every time I go home....



It can be such a dangerous place with the noise of the guns and the fear of the bombs; with no food in the shops or water in the taps and if you say the wrong thing they might be your last words....

It's dangerous living at home...

Home can be in a faraway place with no family and friends where language sounds strange, the culture has changed and the welcome is cold, with no loving embrace to help you feel warm.....

Home can be an unfriendly place....

Home is where the heart is and where love always lives, reaching out to a stranger, making them feel welcome; being beside the neighbour with comfort and compassion and a hope that never dies....

God's home is in the human heart....

So wherever we make our home, God is living with us: homeless on the streets; lonely in the care home;

lost in a different culture; threatened by the war. God is with us in strange places...

God lives in strange places....

Our heart is a very strange place for you to make your home, Lord. But when we invite you in that's where you live....at the centre of our lives, experiencing all our pain and despair. Thank you for dwelling in our midst. We are not alone

God is always at home with us...

Conversation points

Consider and reflect on each section of the above around the questions:

- Where is it (this place) for you? How would we feel? What can we do?
- Have you experienced living in a strange place?
- When home is a place of the past and care is a stranger how do you feel?
- Where is home for you?

We would very much appreciate if you can kindly provide us with any feedback that would help us to improve this and any of other the resources we have put together. Please use the feedback form which can be found among the online resources [titled your feedback matters].

United Reformed Church/ Mission
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