

# WATER WALK LITURGY



## BEFORE THE WALK:

Leader 1:

*It's said that you can't really know a person until you've walked a mile in their shoes. And that, in a sense, is what we're doing today. In developing countries in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, many of our neighbours need to walk six kilometres or more every day to collect just enough water for their families' survival. Today, we will be walking several kilometres from here to our destination where we'll collect our water and carry it back.*

*But let's be clear. We're not pretending that we're experiencing what our neighbours experience every day. These neighbours, most of them women, walk longer distances carrying more water than we could manage. It is usually over rough terrain and completed in bare feet. Their daily journey is not a matter of choice, but one of survival. The water they collect often comes from contaminated sources that may lead to life threatening illnesses. So our water walk this morning is not quite a mile in our neighbours' shoes. It's an act of symbolic solidarity, and an opportunity for us to reflect together on the relationship Jesus calls us to have with our neighbours.*

Leader 2:

*For Cecilia in the Narus Region, South Sudan, the installation of water bores close to her village has meant that her day is not consumed with the 13km round trip to collect the water each day. Her daughters are now free to attend school and she has been able to build a storage area for their crops, stabilizing food supply.*

*On Misima Island –Milne Bay Area, PNG, Maurine's life is very different as a result of the clean water project in her village. Clean, safe water means that the whole community is healthier and the women have more time for food production and other income generating activities. This has positive flow-on effects for the whole community.*

Leader 1:

*We believe today is a chance to be part of God's response to poverty. The money we're raising today will make a real difference in our neighbours' lives and in the life of their communities. So as we set out let us join our hearts in prayer.*

*Gracious God, we give you thanks that in Christ, you are reconciling us to our neighbour and to you. We pray that this walk would be about far more than raising awareness and money.*

*Drench us with your Spirit.*

*Saturate us with your grace.*

*Enable us to see the world as you see it; to see all of your children as our own.*

*Raise up our discipleship, Lord.*

*Change our lives and the life of this church, O God.*

*Help us to walk in your way. Amen*

## DURING THE WALK:

**Conversation on the way:** Encourage participants to share in conversation with someone they do not know. Conversation starters can be helpful. Participants might share stories of when they've experienced real thirst in their lives.

**Conversation on the way back:** Encourage participants to share in conversation with someone they do not know. Encourage people to talk about how they might use the water they've collected today assuming it was all they had for their daily consumption.



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## AFTER THE WALK:

**Symbolic Action:** Participants bring water to the front of the church and set it down at the foot of the cross. During this opening procession a reader reads **Isaiah 41.17-18:**

*When the poor and needy seek water,  
I will open rivers on the bare heights,  
and fountains in the midst of the valleys;  
I will make the wilderness a pool of water,  
and the dry land springs of water.*

**Reflection:** After a brief period of quiet, discuss in groups of two or three what struck you about the experience of walking for water? Give time for people to express the needs and concerns that are on their hearts.

### Prayers for Partners:

Lord God, you have created us wonderfully.  
You have created us needing water.  
You know that we need water at a very basic level for drinking, cooking, washing to maintain health and grow food as well as for the many other things that our hands find to do.  
We thank you for how abundantly you have provided water in your creation to meet our need, in varying and sometimes spectacular ways.  
We acknowledge that we have not always used your gift of water responsibly, allowing water sources to be wasted or polluted.  
In our work we thank you for our partners in the United Church in PNG Development Unit who are running the rural water supply and sanitation project in Milne Bay Province.

*We ask that you would give them wisdom to engage well with the communities with whom they work and an energy and enthusiasm for that work so that it may proceed as efficiently and effectively as possible.*

*We also pray that the people in the communities who have the responsibility for getting water for their families will have a big influence over the design of the projects and that communities will value the water supply systems and maintain them accordingly. Amen.*

*God of abundant life and every good gift, we pray for our brothers and sisters in Muzurabani in Northern Zimbabwe. We pray for communities that have been forced to live on dry, sandy plains where what little ground water there is, is salty and unhealthy to drink.*

*We ask that you strengthen and uphold our partner, the Methodist Development and Relief Agency, as they provide rainwater tanks that help very poor families to collect and store enough clean, healthy water for them to drink and to survive.*

*In their many daily struggles to simply exist, feed their families and provide shelter, may this provision of water bring renewed hope, health and strength we pray. Amen*

### Leader 1:

***Gracious God, hear our prayers. Hear the cries of all who thirst this day — for safe water, for safe haven, for health, for justice, for peace. Give us the courage to respond to your call. Amen***

