

# One World, One Faith, Many Nations

Bishop Jane Alexander

*Fourth Week of Lent  
Monday March 28*

## Scripture

### **Jeremiah 12:11**

They have made it a desolation;  
desolate, it mourns me.  
The whole land is made desolate,  
But no one lays it to heart.

## Reflection

As with the COVID-19 pandemic, everyone in the world is facing the storm of climate change and is being (or will be) affected. But, as with COVID, people are not affected equally, with the already disadvantaged facing the worst impacts and lacking the financial resources to weather the storm. The World Bank Group in the Shock Waves report said that due to climate change there could be more than 100 million additional people living in poverty by 2030. So this is a pressing issue of our time, but we have hope and we do not give up.

There are certain population groups throughout the world who, due to entrenched stigmatization and discrimination, are the most likely to be living in extreme poverty. It includes women; racial, ethnic, and linguistic minorities; members of castes; migrants (especially irregular migrants); refugees and asylum seekers; stateless persons; Indigenous populations; persons with disabilities; and persons living with HIV and AIDS. In addition, people who live in extreme poverty are often looked down upon simply because they are poor. This is not the world as it should be.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us possibilities, not least that when the world genuinely recognizes it is facing an emergency, it takes action... and whether that action is protective and effective is deeply dependent on the calibre of the leadership. We have seen how this new crisis of the pandemic has reshaped our world; the climate and ecological crises are just as real and require a response that matches the best of the responses we have seen to the pandemic. It is time for the church to lead and not the institutions we call church, but the real church the people, you and me. This is a time for us to lead. Have you noticed in PWRDF's partner stories the grassroots nature of many of the stories? Ordinary folk just like us have stepped up and said 'what can I do?' What does your heart burn to do?, I believe we are diminished as human beings when we know the causes of extreme poverty and don't do anything. It diminishes our humanity if we don't speak out, pray and act to end poverty. We need to speak about our common humanity found in Christ.

The Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby said: "Climate Change is the greatest challenge that we and future generations face. When we look at Jesus, we see one who instinctively stood alongside the most

vulnerable in society. It is absolutely clear that following Jesus must include standing alongside those that are on the frontline of this unfolding catastrophe.” (Anglican Alliance)

### Prayer

*Creator of the land, the water, and the sky,  
come and renew the face of the whole earth:  
Giver of life, we are the sons and daughters of your holy breath;  
give us new purpose to care in love for the world of your making:  
Saviour of the world, touch our lips in the power of your new creation,  
that we may proclaim your word of life:  
God of steadfast love, turn our hearts and the hearts of the whole human family  
to care in thanksgiving and reverence for the world you have given:  
God of sparrows and wild flowers,  
teach us to see and preserve the simple beauty of the gifts of your hands:  
Friend of the helpless and the poor, strengthen the will of people everywhere  
to use your creation to the benefit of all:  
Creator of the fruitful earth,  
you made us stewards of all things.  
Give us grateful hearts for all your goodness,  
and steadfast wills to use your bounty well,  
that the whole human family,  
today and in generations to come,  
may with us give thanks for the riches of your creation.  
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord. Amen.  
Book of Occasional Celebrations*

### PWRDF directs \$200,000 to COVID-19

The Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund today announces a plan to allocate \$200,000 to respond to COVID-19 around the world and in Canada. The money will be spread across four partners: Village Health Works (Burundi), Partners in Health (global response), ACT Alliance’s Global Appeal and HelpAge Canada, supporting vulnerable seniors here.

To address the needs of underserved communities in developing countries, PWRDF has granted \$60,000 each to Partners in Health and Village Health Works. Both are long-time partners of PWRDF and are well placed to support people dealing with COVID-19. PIH Rwanda and VHW have been key partners in PWRDF’s All Mothers and Children Count program, supported by tens of thousands of Canadians and with funding from the Government of Canada.

“As always, we are heartened by your solidarity, support, compassion, and tenacity,” writes Cathryn Christensen, Clinical Partnerships Director at VHW. When VHW first reported back to PWRDF on March 19, there were no identified cases of COVID-19 in Burundi, and 11 cases in Rwanda. Since then, Christensen notes two cases of COVID-19 have been diagnosed in Bujumbura, Burundi. There are now 75 cases in Rwanda. These numbers can be partly attributed to low rates of testing and access to tests. Health care professionals at VHW are concerned they don’t have sufficient equipment or staff if

COVID-19 infections follow a trajectory similar to that of Italy, Spain or the United States. “There are fewer than 10 ventilators in all of Burundi (with a population of more than 11 million people) and, as we know, the health system’s capacity is challenged even without the additional threat of a pandemic,” says Christensen. “Our sewing co-op face masks, made from local kitenge fabric, have since been improved.”

Given the lack of ICU beds, personnel and treatment options, VHW’s strategy is in line with Burundi’s Ministry of Health and will focus heavily on containment efforts. Initial measures will be education, prevention and protection, with the goals “to protect patients, health workers, the population (including workers who are building our urgently needed hospital), and to treat what we can treat,” says Christensen.

A further allocation of \$40,000 will contribute to the ACT Alliance Global Appeal to support organizations building awareness about COVID-19 and working closely with health officials to prevent fatalities and intense pressure on already fragile public health systems. The global budget for this appeal is \$12 million US.

**Read the whole story on our website at**

<https://pwrdf.org/pwrdf-directs-200000-to-covid-19/>