

Get Involved: Pray



EMBRACE Prayer Group December 2012

In this season of Advent, a time of preparation for the coming of Christ, I have been thinking about John the Baptist's role in preparing the way. One thing that strikes me most about John's ministry was that it took place in the wilderness, outside the political and power structures of the time. John went about with a message of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, baptising those who would heed his call, so that when Jesus entered the picture people recognized him as Lord.

For me, John's mission in the wilderness is an example of God at work on the margins of society. And it has me wondering: Where is God at work in our lives, communities, country and world today? Might it be that God is moving among God's people on the margins of society, just like John the Baptist worked outside the cities and on the margins?

One of the places I have witnessed God's activity is on the Lisburn Road in Belfast. Every week, over one hundred people per day gather together at the International Meeting Point, a ministry of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. People from all walks of life, from PhD students to people seeking Asylum, from those born here to migrants who recently arrived, come together at the Meeting Point. Everyone who comes has a different story, but there is something that unites us all: We all are looking for community and connection.

What strikes me most about the Meeting Point is that it is a place where everyone, regardless of background, race or religion, is truly welcome and invited to eat a meal, drink tea and share in open and friendly conversation. It's a simple idea, but has profound and meaningful consequences. The Meeting Point doesn't make the evening news and isn't well known outside of South Belfast, but its ministry has deep and powerful implications.

Like John the Baptist, the Meeting Point heralds good news and has been preparing the way for the welcome and embrace of Jesus; may this Advent season prepare us to respond to the people on the margins and to hear their voice.

Contributed by Jenna Liechty Martin, EMBRACE Volunteer

This month we pray for...

- Awareness for us, our churches and our communities of where God is at work among and beyond us.
- Any person who might find the season of Christmas to be an especially lonely or painful time of year, especially if they are away from their 'home' country

And we give thanks for...

- The ministry of the International Meeting Point and similar ministries that seek to reach people who might otherwise be lonely and without community.
- The ministry of John the Baptist which reminds us to keep our eyes and ears open to the margins of society.
- The gift of the Advent season and the opportunity to prepare for the coming of Christ among us.