

(Week beginning 9th March)

Lent prayers

‘The Earth is the Lord’s and everything in it, the world and all who live in it.’ Psalm 24:1

As we did last year during Lent, we are inviting you to pray for projects overseas that are helping people to improve the environment, help wildlife or to avoid the effects of climate change. Each week we will tell you a bit about the projects and ask that you pray for their success.

This week we invite you to pray for the work of the Leprosy Mission charity as well as all the other medical and charity organisations working to treat people with diseases that are increasing in prevalence because of the climate emergency

You might have heard of the climate crisis affecting diseases such as malaria. However, you may be surprised to hear that the spread of leprosy can also be increased with weather changes caused by climate change

Chief Executive of the Leprosy Mission Peter Waddup explains that, "While climate change has a negative impact on all our lives, for those living in the world's poorest communities it is a matter of life or death. Each year my colleagues in Asia and Africa have to halt their planned leprosy work. There is always an urgent need to respond with emergency aid to a climate-exacerbated disaster. It is a real injustice as the lives most impacted by these climatic disasters are those with the smallest carbon footprints."

Peter said he is hearing from project staff how climate change is directly fuelling the spread of leprosy. "Just last month my colleague returned from visiting one of our projects in Northern Sri Lanka," he said. "He was visiting a community on the island of Vellanai where the fishermen are now struggling to make a living. This is due to the



monsoon winds weakening because of climate change. As a result, there is less plankton offshore and, therefore, less fish. This has caused real hardship for the fishermen and their families. As a result, eight of the women from the community travelled to the capital Colombo to work in a garment factory.

Now it appears these women contracted leprosy during their time in Colombo and brought it back to the island. The government previously said that leprosy had been eliminated on Vellanai. Yet when my colleague visited last month, 13 women had been diagnosed with leprosy in the very small community.

This example hit home to me just how vulnerable the people we serve are to climate change. There is a clear link between economic migration due to climate change and the spread of disease. “