

Day 1

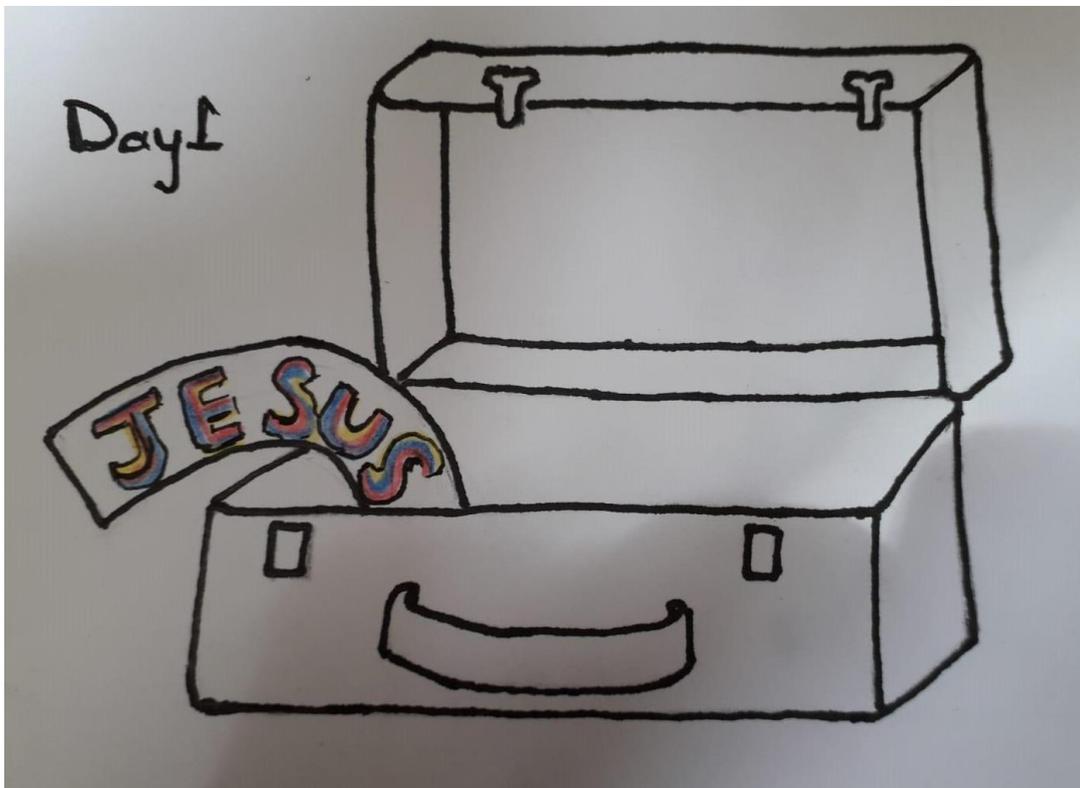
Welcome to our journey and I hope you're in packing mood!

It's day one, and today we are packing JESUS in our case. I hope that Jesus doesn't mind being packed into a case but he is essential for our journey; in any case he is so used to travelling around with me shoved in a handbag, a coat pocket, my rucksack, thrown onto the passenger seat with my housekeys, slithering into my purse and even my shoes as he travels with me wherever I go.

But, before we put Jesus into the case we've been asked to spend some time thinking about what Jesus is to us.

I think of Jesus as being a pair of enfolding arms in love, a hand that holds me in its palm, feet that walk beside me as well as being a challenge to my thinking and doing. During the day he guides me from the front, like a shepherd leading his flock and is my night watchman covering my back at night as he guards the gate of the fold.

Before we pray take a while to think what part he plays in your life and how you would like him to touch the life of your friends.



Prayer

As the days lengthen

Alpha and Omega, you were there at our beginning
and you will be there at our end.

Coasts and islands wait for the dawn,
the dark sea surrounds us like waters in the womb,
like the last river we have to cross.

We wait, trusting, seeing the sky lightening, horizons opening up,
colours of dawn dancing across restless waves.

Spirit of God, in Jesus, you shared our birth and our mortality,
and you are present with us now. We wait.

The clouds become bright, the rocks glow,
our hearts catch fire with sudden joy – the sun rises.

Rise in our hearts, we pray today and every day.

God of creation, you greet us every new day,
and, as the days lengthen, we see green shoots of spring;
snowdrops, faithful in their presence year by year;
lengthening days and sunlit moments,
all these speak to us of your love.

We praise you for these signs of your life-giving Spirit
and for Jesus, who embodied that love,
who came to share our human lives,
calling men and women to follow him,
and to be salt and light in their communities;

Jesus who listened and shared meals, taught and healed,
walked country tracks and city streets in the land that we call Holy;
who kept the faith and challenged apathy and abuse of power;
who was rejected and reviled, tortured and nailed to a cross.

Who died.

And who rose again, like the sun in the morning,
so all the world can see that your love is stronger than death.

We praise you now in the power of the Spirit,
enlivening, encouraging – and present with us now. Amen

Jan Sutch Pickard

We pray Lord Jesus that you will be with us in the excitement of worshipping once
more in our church. Ten days to go! Amen