

The Christian faith offers hope in the face of the tragedy and pain experienced worldwide in recent months, the Church of England's online service will hear this weekend in a service led by people training for ministry.

Students from Eastern Region Ministry Course (ERMC) and Ridley Hall in Cambridge and St Hild College in Mirfield, West Yorkshire, will explore what it means to minister through the Covid-19 pandemic, in the service to be broadcast on Sunday.

The service will be broadcast from 9am on [the Church of England's website](#), [Facebook page](#) and [YouTube channel](#).

'Dora Jeje, who is training for ordained ministry at Ridley Hall, will preach on Christian hope, saying that it does not deny the reality of the pain caused by evil and calamity – but teaches that suffering is not the final word.

"As it looks and moves forward, in quiet confidence, it declares trust in a God who has proven to be steadfast," she will say.

She will reflect on the Covid-19 pandemic and the images of the killing of George Floyd, in the light of the Gospel reading from St Matthew, where the Parable of the Weeds is recounted by Jesus.

"To date, we have lost approximately 500,000 souls and counting to Covid-19 worldwide. This is also the year that we were unable to avert our gaze from an act of murder," she will tell the service.

"We watched, helplessly, as a precious life created by God was extinguished from the face of this earth. For a lot of us, the aftermath of witnessing such violence and the continued and mounting cost of the loss we are withstanding has left an indelible mark on our weary souls. This is the reality.

"I believe that the parable holds within it, an invitation by God, for hope. In this kingdom, there is a mixture of present reality and a future hope."

The service will hear intercession prayers read by students at the colleges and music from the Choral Scholars of St Martin-in-the-Fields in London. The final blessing will be given by Revd Charles Read from the ERMC.

Charlie Houlder-Moat, a former Forest Ranger, who has completed Reader – or lay minister – studies with the ERMC and the Diocese of Norwich, will contribute a reflection on her work with a fresh expression of church – or new form of Christian gathering.

The church, called 'wild church' and held outdoors, encourages an appreciation of the natural environment. Through this work, she explains that she hopes to inspire people to 'look after the planet we call home.'

'We are not to sit idly by and let the damage of the planet continue,' she will say.

"I believe we are all called to be stewards of the planet and look after our common home," she will add.

"We certainly catch glimpses of the Kingdom of God here in our midst. I feel we are all called to look out beyond ourselves to the world and people around us on the patch of earth God has placed us. We aren't doing this on our own. This is the Holy Spirit's work which roots us all

together. We are all connected."

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