

St Andrews with Castlegate URC
Christian Aid Week Order of Service

10 May 2020

Worship is led by Rev Chris Ford and Nicola Royan

Introduction

Welcome to our worship. Today is the beginning of Christian Aid Week. Like many church activities at the moment, Christian Aid Week is being done differently and digitally this year. During this time together, we'll have space to read and listen, sing and pray, and remember and acknowledge that we are part of a global community. We are neighbours near and far who are going through this coronavirus pandemic together. May our shared experience unite us in praise and prayer as one human family, separate but together in the home that is God's world.

Gathering prayer

**God of all the Earth,
Be present with us now,
In each of our homes
As we connect together.
Build us into a spiritual house,
A holy priesthood,
Offering spiritual sacrifices
Acceptable to you
Through Jesus Christ,
Our risen redeemer and healer.**

Opening hymn: *Let us build a house where all can dwell.* CH4, 198, vv. 1, 4 and 5

Let us build a house where love can dwell
and all can safely live,
A place where saints and children tell
how hearts learn to forgive;
Built of hopes and dreams and visions,
Rock of faith and vault of grace;
Here the love of Christ shall end divisions:
*All are welcome, all are welcome,
All are welcome in this place.*

Let us build a house where hands will reach
Beyond the wood or stone
To heal and strengthen, serve and teach,
And live the Word they've known.
Here the outcast and the stranger
Bear the image of God's face:

Let us bring an end to fear and danger:
*All are welcome, all are welcome,
 All are welcome in this place.*

Let us build a house where all are named,
 Their songs and visions heard
 And loved and treasured, taught and claimed
 As words within the Word.
 Built of tears and cries and laughter,
 Prayers of faith and songs of grace,
 Let this house proclaim from floor to rafter:
*All are welcome, all are welcome,
 All are welcome in this place.*

Prayer of approach

Come and celebrate our common home
We gather with the family of humanity

With the mountains, islands and deserts
We honour the glory of God in creation

With the lakes, rivers and seas,
We come to the source of living water

With the land, its soil, seeds and sustenance
We give thanks for God's generous provision

With the forests of great trees, the lungs of the planet
We will sing with joy and clap our hands

We will join with the whole of creation, inspired by those who have gone before and the prophetic voices of today.
We will dare to praise and pray for another possible world.

To the glory of God. **Amen**

Prayer of confession

For the beauty of the earth, desecrated by pollution, extinguished by forest fires, choked by plastic waste,
Christ, our God, to you we plead, forgive us for systemic greed.

For the urgency of this hour, ignored by apathy or procrastination, wasted by ineffective decisions, denied by economic interests,
Christ, our God and Saviour, forgive us for selfish short-term behaviour.

For the joy of human love, fractured by forced migration, crushed by bereavement, lost to disease, floods, starvation,
Christ, our God, bringer of justice, forgive us for the climate crisis.

Absolution

God you know us. You know that we can be loving and kind; and you know that sometimes we get things wrong. We're sorry for the times we hurt other people, forget to listen to you, and don't bother to take care of your world.

God forgive us, Jesus bless us, God's Spirit help us to grow in love.
Amen

Because we are God's people
We will care for each other.

Because we are part of God's creation
We will care for the earth.

Because we are loved by God
We will share God's love with everyone.

Christian Aid video

Seniors and Youth Group sketch

Prayer for Young People

Heavenly Father it is a great privilege and joy to watch our children and young people grow up. We have been with many of them since they were baptised as babies, seen them move through various stages of junior Church to adulthood. We see in them such energy and promise.

We pray that they will fulfil the life that you have given them and that they will come to love you with all their hearts and minds and strength. Make them ever mindful of their neighbours, those who are close and known to them and also those who are far away and live in constant danger, hunger and poverty.

We remember we are all your children and come in confidence to ask for your blessing on us all.
Amen

Hymn: *I am the church, you are the church* CH4, 204, omit v.4

*I am the Church! You are the Church!
 We are the Church together!
 All who follow Jesus, all around the world,
 Yes, we're the Church together.*

The Church is not a building, the Church is not a steeple,
 The Church is not a resting-place, the Church is a people!
I am the Church! You are the Church!
We are the Church together!
All who follow Jesus, all around the world,
Yes, we're the Church together.

We're many kinds of people with many kinds of faces:
 All colours and all ages too, from all times and places.
I am the Church! You are the Church!
We are the Church together!
All who follow Jesus, all around the world,
Yes, we're the Church together.

And when the people gather there's singing and there's praying,
 There's laughing and there's crying sometimes, all of it saying:
I am the Church! You are the Church!
We are the Church together!
All who follow Jesus, all around the world,
Yes, we're the Church together.

I count if I'm ninety, or nine, or just a baby:
 There's one thing I am sure about and I don't mean maybe:
I am the Church! You are the Church!
We are the Church together!
All who follow Jesus, all around the world,
Yes, we're the Church together.

Readings

Psalm 31: 1-5, 19-24

John 14: 1-14

Hymn *Be still for the presence of the Lord* CH4 189

Be still, for the presence of the Lord,
 The Holy One, is here;
 Come bow before him now,
 With reverence and fear:
 In him no sin is found –
 We stand on holy ground.
 Be still, for the presence of the Lord,
 The Holy One, is here.

Be still, for the glory of the Lord
 Is shining all around;
 He burns with holy fire,
 With splendour he is crowned:

How awesome is the sight –
 Our radiant king of light!
 Be still for the glory of the Lord
 Is shining all around.
 Be still, for the power of the Lord
 Is moving in this place:
 He comes to cleanse and heal,
 To minister his grace:
 No work too hard from him –
 In faith receive from him.
 Be still, for the power of the Lord
 Is moving in this place.

Response to Readings

Look at your hands. Have a good look.

However your hands look to you, they are most certainly clean in these days of regular hand-washing to prevent spreading coronavirus.

Our hands really are the most remarkable and useful tools, involved in so much of what we do and how we do things, even in these days of social distancing.

The psalmist writes of committing his spirit into God's hands, and at times of being in God's hands. He also describes his desire to be delivered from the hands of his oppressors and from a hidden invisible net that threatens to entangle him.

Our hands have become even more significant in these days of physical distance. We might long to hold the hand of a person we can no longer touch. We pray for the hands of medics to bring healing and comfort. We are grateful for the hands stacking shelves and delivering groceries and post. And we are extra wary of everything our hands touch that comes from outside our own home.

This Christian Aid Week we also think of how our hands can be far from idle. Though not handing out envelopes or covering the CA symbol with coins or the many things we usually busy ourselves with this week, our hands can still reach out virtually to our neighbours around the world. Neighbours in refugee camps and cramped living conditions, neighbours without adequate hand-washing facilities, neighbours who face the devastating impact of coronavirus with even less of the medical resources we have struggled to access here.

We reach out by clasping our hands together in prayer for our neighbours, and holding our hands open before God as we declare our own needs and concerns for their wellbeing and our own.

We also reach out by participating in this digital Christian Aid Week, through making our online donations and sharing the stories from Christian Aid partners, working on the ground to be the hands and the feet of love in action.

Prayer of lament and intercession

Let us pray together using our open hands.

God our refuge, we come to you with open hands,
 some of us with hearts full of questions,
 some of us bruised by bereavement,
 some of us fearful of what the future holds,
 all of us stunned by the events of this year.
 Draw close to us now in each of our homes
 As we place our honest questions and hopes
 Into your open, resurrected, yet scarred hands.

God in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

With the honesty of the psalmist
 The wrestling questions of Job,
 And the lament of the prophets,
 We bring to you our questions or our silence.

(Hold your index finger and, in silence, ask the question that most burdens your heart or simply sit in silence before God. Hold the silence together.)

God in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Hear the cry of our hearts, Lord, silent and aloud
 For bereaved neighbours, near and far.
 Comfort those pained by being absent
 And hold close those who are hurting alone.

(Hold your ring finger and pray for comfort for those you know who are bereaved or simply sit in silence before God. Hold the silence together.)

God in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

In this season of Easter,
 Renew us with resurrection hope
 That while weeping lingers in this night,
 Joy will come with the morning.

(Hold your middle finger and in the silence tell God what you are most looking forward to in the future, or simply sit in silence before God. Hold the silence together.)

God in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

On this Christian Aid Week Sunday,
We pray for and with communities across the world who are most vulnerable to coronavirus.

We pray for people living in refugee camps and city slums, with limited sanitation facilities, who are unable to wash their hands regularly and have little opportunity to isolate from others.

We pray for Christian Aid partners working to provide soap and buckets, communicating clear, accurate information, raising the voices of the most vulnerable and ensuring they are kept as safe as possible.

(Hold your thumb as you pray for the most vulnerable, those closest to God's heart, or simply sit in silence before God. Hold the silence together.)

God in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

For those of us who are self-isolating, which can sometimes feel like we aren't doing anything, remind us that we are all doing our part, and saving lives by staying at home.

(Hold your little finger, and ask God for what you need, or simply sit in silence before God. Hold the silence together.)

God in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**

We pray for much wisdom and resources
for those in local and national authority
for all frontline and key workers
here in Britain, Ireland and across the world.

(Put your hands together and pray for the many frontline workers and volunteers and for Christian Aid partners working to help others across the world, or simply sit in silence before God. Hold the silence together.)

God in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**

As we have clapped to honour them,
We clap our hands now in praise
Of your glorious creation
And with the hope that the first shoots
Of another possible world are coming into view.

(Clap your hands in praise of God's glorious creation and with the hope of new possibilities for the world.)

God in your mercy, **Hear all our prayers.**

Amen.

Hymn *The Church is wherever God's people are praising* **R&S 583**

The Church is wherever God's people are praising,
Singing their thanks for his goodness this day.
The Church is wherever disciples of Jesus
remember his story and walk in his way.

The Church is wherever God's people are helping,
Caring for neighbours in sickness and need.
The Church is wherever God's people are sharing
The words of the Bible in gift and in deed.

Final prayers

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name;
Thy kingdom come;
Thy will be done;
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
But deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory,
For ever and ever, Amen.

Closing blessing

As we go offline and wash our hands again, we say our blessing together:

**May the presence of the Creator refresh us,
May the comfort of the Son renew us,
May the inspiration of the Spirit restore us
To be love in action, even from a distance,
In our neighbourhoods, near and far
This day and for evermore
Amen**

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The link for donations to Christian Aid is: <https://www.justgiving.com/team/sawcg>