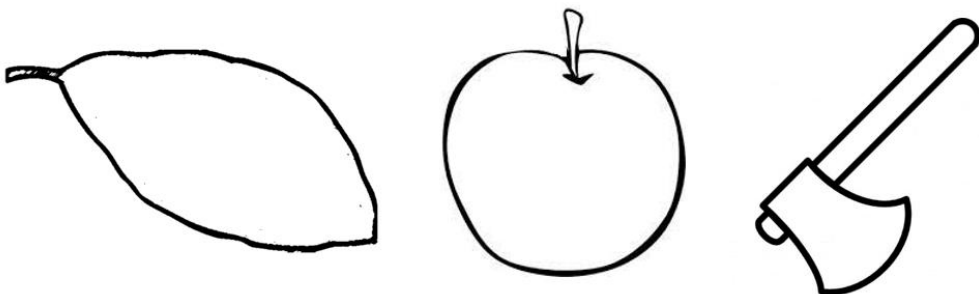


An order of service

for Christian Aid Week

and climate justice



Preparation

If you are at home, before you start, you might wish to draw and cut out a leaf, a fruit and an axe!

And also see if you can find a large sheet of paper which you can draw a tree on. You might like to use these in the prayers later on.

If you'd like to make an online donation for Christian Aid Week, there is a phone number at the end of the service that you can call, and also a link to their website donations page.

Introduction

We have all seen the news of the devastating war in Ukraine. We've heard heart-breaking stories of people fleeing violence, not knowing when they'll see their loved ones again.

In Zimbabwe, another crisis – the climate crisis – is causing aching hunger for families like Jessica's.

Even though it's 7,000 miles away, the war in Ukraine will drive up food prices in Zimbabwe and around the globe. Ukraine and Russia produce large amounts of the world's fertiliser and food, like wheat and cooking oil. Without them, vulnerable families will be pushed even deeper into hunger.

But hope does not disappoint. Hope lives in you.

Every prayer, every gift, every action brings hope to people facing disaster, from conflict to climate chaos. Join us this Christian Aid Week as we celebrate and share hope with our sisters and brothers facing crisis around the world, from Ukraine to Zimbabwe.

In our service today we are going to consider what it means to live fruitful lives. This is a phrase used throughout the Bible. Bearing fruit that is good and that will last is something we are called to do as followers of Jesus.

What does this mean, to bear fruit, in today's world? In a world where 44 million people face the challenge of daily food shortages and chronic hunger, what does 'fruit that will last' mean to all our lives?

As fruit is a source of sweet sustenance and life, we cannot just consider the challenge of hunger. We must also consider the solutions and change that we can participate in bringing about.

We will root these ideas in the stories of Jessica and Janet from Zimbabwe. We will reflect on these big questions through the lived experience of hunger caused by drought.



Jessica Mwedzi, a loving mum in Zimbabwe, fears her family won't eat tonight. When food is scarce, she can only give her children one bowl of porridge a day. She shares her heartbreak: 'My children crave a decent meal, but I can't provide. It pains me to send them to bed hungry.' For Jessica, drought means every day is a struggle for survival. Like many women in Zimbabwe, she toils on her farm, but no food can grow on her ashen dry land. 'One year, we had no rain. The scorching sun burnt my crops just as they were about to bloom. It was so painful and disheartening.'

You can help this loving mum turn hunger into hope. Your gift this Christian Aid Week could help Jessica grow seeds that thrive in the drought. In the months to come, she'll grow these seeds into fresh food like tomatoes, beans and cucumbers to sell and to feed her family. She'll have the joy of seeing her children grow up happy and healthy. 'I pray they have a better future.' This Christian Aid Week, as you sit down to eat your favourite meal at the table, please pray for Jessica and her family. Your gifts and prayers could fill families like hers with hope.



Janet Zirugo, 70, loves seeing her grandchildren's faces light up as she hugs them tight. Janet has a big heart. Many of the children in her family are orphans, and she is their sole provider. 'In my family, children look up to me and I must give them food. In her village in Zimbabwe, Janet has seen how drought pushed her family into desperate hunger. 'One year, there was so little food. Rains had not fallen. We ate things which we wouldn't eat in normal times. My heart was so painful thinking that my family would die. By God's grace we did not die. We soldiered on.'

With faith, hope and love, Janet brought her family through this painful time. Thanks to kind people like you, she was given drought-resistant seeds that can grow in this harsh climate. You'll be happy to know her farm is now bursting with life. She proudly shows us the food she has grown – bowls full of groundnuts, wild fruit, golden corn; a rainbow of colour. Now, she is strong and resilient. With all her strength, she works on her farm so her family never again go hungry. As she reflects on how her life has changed, Janet sings with joy. We rejoice with her.

¶ The Gathering

‘On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.’ (Revelation 22:2)

Let us come to the river
and be like trees planted by streams of water,
putting our roots down deep into God’s word,
bearing good fruit that will last
not withering from fatigue,
stretching out to receive
and be a source of healing.

Amen.

Creator, Son and Spirit,
we gather together,
to seek Your presence
in our time of worship.

We are hungry for you.

Meet us at our point of deepest need.
Connect us with the needs of others.
Equip us to join in your creative work.
Transform us more into your likeness.

We are hungry for your righteousness.

We gather with Jessica and Janet
and their communities in Zimbabwe this Christian Aid Week.
May their stories make us hungry for justice
and even more impatient for change.

We are hungry for your justice.

We gather with all of creation;
with the mountains and the hills.
We shall burst into song,
with the trees of the field
we will clap our hands.

We are hungry to praise you.

Amen.

Hymn – The kingdom come O God

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oe-Vy5LkYEs>

Thy Kingdom come O God,
thy rule, O Christ, begin;
break with thine iron rod
the tyrannies of sin.

Where is thy reign of peace,
and purity, and love?
When shall all hatred cease,
as in the realms above?

When comes the promised time
that war shall be no more—
and lust, oppression, crime,
shall flee thy face before?

We pray thee, Lord, arise,
and come in thy great might;
revive our longing eyes,
which languish for Thy sight.

O'er lands both near and far
thick darkness broodeth yet:
arise, O Morning Star,
arise, and never set!

Lewis Hensley
1824 - 1905

Confession

Good God of creation, we sing praise to you.
But even as we raise our voices
we know we have faltered and failed.
Walking on paths that turned our hearts inward,
sitting with those who scoffed at the cries of people in poverty,
mocking those on the margins, denying the earth in her distress.
Too often our leaves have withered, our branches are barren.

We have failed to be pruned and the axe is now poised.
Poised to cut down the excesses that damage all creation,
the systems that impoverish all people, the privileges that diminish
our faith.

But even now it is not too late.
For in the face of judgement
comes the offer of grace
and the hope that dead wood can spring to life.

**Where we have failed to bear good fruit
and share your abundance for the earth,
God have mercy.**

**When our actions and intentions
have been as chaff for the winds of heaven,
God have mercy.**

**Forgive us.
Restore us.
Inspire us now
to delight in your purposes,
to embrace your possibilities,
to inhabit your promises,
to flourish as fruit for the world you so love
and bring healing for all the nations.**

Amen.

Collect

Almighty God, who through your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ,
have overcome death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life:
grant that, as by your grace going before us
you put into our minds good desires,
so by your continual help
we may bring them to good effect;
through Jesus Christ our risen Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

¶ The Liturgy of the Word

Reading

Revelation 21.1-6

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

‘See, the home of God is among mortals.
He will dwell with them;
they will be his peoples,
and God himself will be with them;
he will wipe every tear from their eyes.
Death will be no more;
mourning and crying and pain will be no more,
for the first things have passed away.’

And the one who was seated on the throne said, ‘See, I am making all things new.’ Also he said, ‘Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.’ Then he said to me, ‘It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn – For the healing of the nations

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MDyHS_9S_6Y

For the healing of the nations,
Lord, we pray with one accord,
for a just and equal sharing
of the things that earth affords.
To a life of love in action
help us rise and pledge our word.

Lead us forward into freedom,
from despair your world release,
that, redeemed from war and hatred,
all may come and go in peace.
Show us how through care and goodness
fear will die and hope increase.

All that kills abundant living,
let it from the earth be banned:
pride of status, race or schooling,
dogmas that obscure your plan.
In our common quest for justice
may we hallow brief life's span.

You, creator God, have written
your great name of human kind;
for our growing in your likeness
bring the life of Christ to mind;
that by our response and service
earth its destiny may find.

Fred Kaan
b.1929 © 1968 Stainer & Bell Ltd

Gospel Reading

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

John 13.31-35

When he had gone out, Jesus said, 'Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, "Where I am going, you cannot come." I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

The Sermon

Our reading from the book of Revelation is a vision not only of hope for the future, but also a vision of how God wants the world to be now.

John was writing at a time when the Roman Empire was advancing. The Empire seeking more and more political and economic power. And to get it, the Romans demanded that their own emperors and traditional gods are worshipped. But John is providing another way, the way of worshipping God.

The scenes he describes, provide encouragement to the early churches to directly challenge the powers that would suppress the Kingdom of God.

John's vision challenges us today to not settle into this contemporary global empire but to seek to understand a 'new heaven and new earth.'

God comes to dwell with mortals in a new earth, to live in the home that earth was intended to be. The earth, as God's home, gives us inspiration to participate in that work of re-creation now. A work that challenges the loss and damage caused by climate injustice.

In his vision of seeing the new heaven and new earth, John draws our attention to God wiping away every tear from the eyes of those who have suffered. The anticipation of such comfort and tender compassion serves as a catalyst to us today to ensure the tears of frustration and desperation of those hungry to provide can be wiped away.

We can stand with people like Jessica and Janet who are living at the sharp end of the climate crisis. Drought is making Jessica's community hungry and impoverished, denying them the fullness of life and dignity God intended.

We have an opportunity to participate in creating a glimpse of the earth as God's home when we work together to help women like Jessica to grow fresh food to feed their families and to work to recover the loss and damage caused by climate injustice.

However, mourning and crying and pain will be no more, says John, giving us comfort and hope that the life-denying effects of the climate crisis, and the death and heartache of the global pandemic, will be no more. This and every Christian Aid Week, we work towards the day when all such injustices, death and suffering have ended.

And in stories about drought and hunger from Zimbabwe, may the anticipation and invitation of verse 6: 'To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life,' come as refreshment to all our world-weary souls.

In John's Gospel, Jesus' giving of the commandment to 'love one another' was new to the disciples – 'I give you a new commandment, that you love one another'. They were used to being asked to devote themselves to God, but this commandment – love one another – was new in its scope and inspiration, spurred by the love that Jesus had for them.

'By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.' Jesus entreats us to demonstrate our love for him by loving one another. It is out of the fullness of the love poured into us by God that we in turn pour out love to our sisters and brothers.

Love acts, as demonstrated so powerfully by Jesus enduring the cross and overcoming death. Each action we take this Christian Aid Week demonstrates our love in action:

- give to help women grow crops that survive in the drought
- raise your voice for justice by joining our Loss and Damage campaign
- pray that families will stay strong and be provided for during times of drought.

Amen.

The Nicene Creed

**I / We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**I / We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God, begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and was made man.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**I / We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

The Peace

The risen Christ came and stood among his disciples
and said, 'Peace be with you.'
Then were they glad when they saw the Lord. Alleluia.
The peace of the Lord be always with us.

Hymn – When I needed a neighbour

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fExR7eOhJO0>

When I needed a neighbour
Were you there, were you there?
When I needed a neighbour, were you there?
And the creed and the colour
And the name won't matter
Were you there?

I was hungry and thirsty
Were you there, were you there?
I was hungry and thirsty, were you there?
And the creed and the colour
And the name won't matter
Were you there?

When I needed a shelter
Were you there, were you there?
When I needed a shelter were you there?
And the creed and the colour
And the name won't matter
Were you there?

Wherever you travel
I'll be there, I'll be there
Wherever you travel, I'll be there
And the creed and the colour
And the name won't matter
I'll be there.

Sydney Carter

1915 – 2004

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Prayers of Intercession

Introduction:

We have reflected on the injustice in this world which leaves women like Jessica struggling and seeking alternative solutions to provide their families with the most basic necessities of life.

We offer these gifts of money to the ongoing work of Christian Aid in Zimbabwe and across the globe.

We are thankful for all that we have and pledge to share our resources to enable those who are hungry to provide.

But we recognise that this is not enough.

We invite you to reflect for a moment, then write or draw a response on each – or one of – the cut out fruit, leaf and/or axe in response to the following:

Leaf – a prayer and a hope for healing for a situation in your heart and for all who hunger in Zimbabwe and around the world.

Fruit – a good act or service we promise to do in the world to make a lasting difference.

Axe – an injustice that needs to be cut down or cut back so all of creation can flourish.

When you are ready, please come and fix your leaf and fruit to the branches and lay the axe at the foot of the tree.

We lay the axe at the base of the tree – not to cut it down but to make clear that there is still time for repentance.

When everyone who wishes to do so has stuck their templates on the tree, we say this short prayer:

**God of all the earth,
we offer with our gifts
these leaves of our compassion
this fruit of our promises
and the axe of our aspirations
for the healing of the nations
and the transformation of the world.
Amen.**

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.**

Hymn – You shall go out with joy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gJeTbPoiNm0>

You shall go out with joy
and be led forth with peace,
and the mountains and the hills
shall break forth before you.
There'll be shouts of joy
and the trees of the fields
Shall clap, shall clap their hands.
And the trees of the fields shall clap their hands,
and the trees of the fields shall clap their hands,
and the trees of the fields shall clap their hands,
and you'll go out with joy. *Sing three times, getting faster!*

¶ Ending

Steffi Geiser Rubin & Stuart Dauermann
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Merciful Father,
you gave your Son Jesus Christ to be the good shepherd,
and in his love for us to lay down his life and rise again:
keep us always under his protection,
and give us grace to follow in his steps;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

The Blessing

In the name of God who plants the seed of justice:

Be hungry.

In the name of Christ who hangs on the tree of love:

Be fruitful.

And in the name of the Spirit who inspires

God's will in our hearts and our lives:

Be celebrated.

You are Christ's people,

here and throughout the world

now and forever.

Amen

If you wish to make a donation to Christian Aid, you can call them on 020 8038 6993 or go online to caweek.org/payin