

Order of Service for Christian Aid Week 2020

Christian Aid Week reminds us that while our physical horizons are necessarily limited, we remain one human family sharing God's world. Though separated, through worship and prayer we are connected across the globe.

Gathering Prayer

**God of all the earth, be present with us now,
in each of our homes,
as we connect together in prayer.
Build us into a spiritual house,
a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices
acceptable to you, through Jesus Christ,
our risen redeemer and healer. Amen.**

Prayer of Confession and Absolution

Washing our hands is something we do every day, but it is particularly important in trying to curb infection. In the Bible, rituals of handwashing are important symbols of confession and forgiveness. You might want to go to a wash basin and literally wash your hands as you say this prayer, or you might prefer to do so in your imagination:

**As we turn on the tap
we turn our hearts
towards you, O God.**

**As we wet our hands
renew our thoughts,
so we might be transformed.**

**As we lather soap
between fingers
and over all our hands,
purge from us
all that brings us harm
and might harm others.**

**Remove the invisible
guilt and shame
that so often keeps us from you.**

**As we rinse our hands,
we trust in your
overflowing grace,
making all things new.
Amen.**

READINGS:

Psalm 31: 1-5, 15-16

John 14: 1-14

SERMON

Prayer of Lament and Intercession

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.

Lord, 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.)

Lord, 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.)

Lord, 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..)

Lord, 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.)*

Lord, 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.)*

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.)*

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.)*

Merciful Father,
**accept these prayers, for the sake of your
Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power
and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

Blessing

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.