

Winchester, Eastleigh and Romsey Circuit

**Worship at home: Sunday 14 May 2023,
A Service For Christian Aid Week.**

Call to worship (based on Psalm 47)

Clap your hands, all you peoples.
Shout to God with songs of joy.

God has gone up with a shout.
Sing praises to the most high.

God is ruler over all the Earth.
We worship God with all our heart.

Listen, read, pray or sing along

We begin with the hymn 'We lay our broken world
In sorrow at your feet,' (StF 718),
<https://youtube.com/watch?v=kvmXNG6VXJU>

We lay our broken world
In sorrow at your feet,
Haunted by hunger, war and fear,
Oppressed by power and hate.

Here human life seems less
That profit, might and pride,
Though to unite us all in you
You lived and loved and died.

We bring our broken towns,
Our neighbours hurt and bruised;
You show us how old pain and wounds
For new life can be used

We bring our broken loves,
Friends parted, families torn;
Then in your life and death we see
That love must be reborn.

We bring our broken selves,
Confused and closed and tired;
Then through your gift of healing grace
New purpose is inspired.

O Spirit, on us breathe,
With life and strength anew;
Find in us love, and hope and trust,
And lift us up to you.

Anna Briggs (b 1947)

Our prayers today are taken from the 2023 Christian Aid service sheet.

Prayers of approach and confession

Creator God, you have planted the seed of love
in our hearts, in our souls, in our lives.
We long for the brightness of your presence
drawing ever closer to you
and to one another,
as we join with your people
at all times
in all places
to worship and to serve.

We confess
those frequent times
when we have been stony ground,
too hard to value the tiny seed,
the generous smile,
the heartfelt word.

[Women] You grow us into community.

[Men] You grow us into community.

[All] You grow us into community.

We confess
those frequent times
when we have been stony ground,
too hard to see beyond our selfish desires
and for tacitly accepting
a world that smothers the dreams of those with
less power and wealth.

Creator God, once again, you have planted the
seed of love
in our hearts, in our souls, in our lives.
We draw near today
in the knowledge that your forgiveness
waters the seed
and nurtures us with the power of your Spirit
to grow, to flourish

and to bear the fruit of your justice now and for evermore.

Amen

The Lord's Prayer.

Bible Readings

Isaiah 41 verses 17-20 'The Helper of Israel'

The poor and needy search for water, but there is none; their tongues are parched with thirst. But I the Lord will answer them; I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them.

I will make rivers flow on barren heights, and springs within the valleys. I will turn the desert into pools of water, and the parched ground into springs.

I will put in the desert the cedar and the acacia, the myrtle and the olive. I will set junipers in the wasteland, the fir and the cypress together, so that people may see and know, may consider and understand, that the hand of the Lord has done this, that the Holy One of Israel has created it.

Luke 21 verses 1-4, 'The widow's offering'

As Jesus looked up, he saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. "Truly I tell you," he said, "this poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on."

Reflection

Last weekend, the focus in the Christian churches, and the nation, was rightly on the Royal Family and the Coronation of King Charles III. A family who represent the epitome of extreme wealth, privilege and status. (A factual statement, not to be viewed as a criticism.) Now, this week, the thoughts of the Christian churches turn to those people at the other end of the wealth, privilege and status spectrum, who are reliant on Christian Aid for help, even their very existence.

The Old Testament is very strong on our responsibility to see and respond to poverty around us. For those in Old Testament times, that meant those in their own community, whereas for us we are able to see the needs on doorsteps thousands of miles away too, and to do something to help people both at home and abroad.

In our reading from Isaiah chapter 41 verses 17-20, we are reminded that the poor and needy search for water, but there is none. This is the plight of so many as rains fail, as they face drought due to war or other human activity, or governments, businesses or other agencies acting for other motives than the best interest of the ordinary people in that location.

We are given a vision of God answering the calls for help of the poor and needy, with rivers flowing and springs of water bubbling up, enabling growth of the trees for shelter and food. In the desert, God will provide water and that will produce plant life which will enable human and animal life to be supported.

God says that he will provide, but we know that he needs us to respond and work through agencies like Christian Aid to enable this prophecy to come true today.

In the New Testament lesson, we read the well known story of the widow's offering. For us today, the message is that our small amounts add up to a greater whole, enabling those who receive the offering to do more good than we are able to achieve on our own.

What I put in an offering envelope will be multiplied greatly by other envelopes across my town, my county, my country.

What charities such as Christian Aid can do with those resources are multiplied when governments add to their appeals or support their work through overseas aid from richer countries to poorer, and give a sensible proportion of the country's wealth to achieve that aim.

Most of all, we are reminded that, if they have the will to do so, governments have the resources to do in a day what it takes charities like Christian Aid a year to do, and which we could not achieve in our whole lifetime on our own. That is also a reminder of our responsibility, not just with our own financial resources but also with our votes and lobbying in support of the campaigns which Christian Aid encourage us to support.

Christian Aid Week offers us a moment to come together. To give what we can, Like the widow, knowing that it will be used wisely and will grow through other people responding in the same way. So that, through our giving and the work of Christian Aid, the vision of God enabling the water to flow in the desert regions will come to pass in many places in the world.

Whatever action you and your church are taking this Christian Aid Week;

- whether it's running a local fundraising event that will inspire your community to become a part of our mission for justice for the poor,
 - being a collector in your neighbourhood,
 - showing those how the church can step out in love for the world,
 - giving what you can afford in your time or money,
 - supporting Christian Aid campaigns, for climate justice or other just causes
- all of these actions will have an immediate impact on the lives of our sisters and brothers. This Christian Aid Week, let's work together so that others can share a more just world.

Listen, read, pray or sing along

Our next hymn is 'For Everyone Born, A Place At The Table,' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-C3PXPg0zCw>

For everyone born, a place at the table,
For everyone born, clean water and bread,
A shelter, a space, a safe place for growing,
For everyone born, a star overhead.

Chorus:

*And God will delight
When we are creators of justice and joy,
Yes, God will delight
When we are creators of justice,
Justice and joy.*

For woman and man, a place at the table,
Revising the roles, deciding the share,
With wisdom and grace dividing the power,
For woman and man, a system that's fair.

(chorus)

For young and for old, a place at the table,
A voice to be heard, a part in the song,
The hands of a child in hands that are wrinkled,
For young and for old, the right to belong.

(chorus)

For just and unjust, a place at the table,
Abuser, abused, with need to forgive,
In anger, in hurt, a mindset of mercy,
For just and unjust, a new way to live.

(chorus)

For everyone born, a place at the table,
To live without fear, and simply to be,
To work, to speak out, to witness and worship,
For everyone born, the right to be free.

(chorus)

*Words; Shirley Erena Murray, 1931, ©1998 Hope
Publishing Company*

*Tune; For Everyone Born, Music, Brian Mann,
1979. ©2006 Brian Mann(admin . General Board of
Global Ministries, GBGMusik*

Intercessory prayer

We pray for people throughout the world suffering from poverty and injustice

- The response to cyclone Freddy in Malawi, those displaced, those who have lost loved family members and breadwinners in their homes.

- The challenge of soaring inflation making it difficult to afford everyday essentials.
- People affected by natural disasters such as earthquake, drought, famine and flood.
- The impact of climate change, particularly when it destroys essential crops.
- Farmers who provide essential food for their communities.
- Cooperatives which give people more power over their own lives.
- For all who have been and continue to be allowed to stand on their own and support their families and communities through the work of Christian Aid.
- We pray for all Christian Aid's current campaigns, disaster appeals and ongoing work around the world.

Offering and Prayer of Dedication

If you give your weekly offering through an envelope scheme or in cash, please set it aside, and pray with those who give using Standing orders.

Gracious God, accept these gifts, our money, and all our offerings, and with them our lives, to be used in mission and service through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

If you wish to donate to the work of Christian Aid, donations can be made online to

<https://give.christianaid.org.uk/donate/CAM-004499>

or by post to Christian Aid, 35-41 Lower Marsh, London SE1 7RL

Listen, read, pray or sing along

Our final hymn is 'Jesus shall reign where'er the sun,(StF 328)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rchXOnKZ3ME>

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Does his successive journeys run;
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane no more

For Him shall endless prayer be made,
And praises throng to crown His head;
His name like sweet perfume shall rise
With every morning sacrifice.

People and realms of every tongue
Dwell on His love with sweetest song,
And infant voices shall proclaim
Their early blessings on His name.

Blessings abound where'er He reigns:
The prisoner leaps to lose their chains,
The weary find eternal rest,
And all who are in want are blest.

Let every creature rise and bring
Its grateful honours to our King,
Angels descend with songs again,
And earth repeat the loud amen.

Isaac Watts (1674-1748)

Sending and blessing

Go into the world working together for change
so that everyone can thrive and share life in its
fullness.

And in all we do
let us show the love of Jesus.

Let us treat everyone with dignity.
We will show the love of Jesus.

Let us stand up for equality.
We will show the love of Jesus.

Let us fight for justice.
We will show the love of Jesus.

**May the God of hope
fill you with all joy and peace in believing,
so that you may overflow with hope
by the power of the Holy Spirit.**

Amen.

Service prepared by Graham Hepburn, CCL 30794