



Order of Service: Christian Aid Week

On Sunday 3rd May 2020

In the villages of Groby and Ratby

As we work together as churches in both villages, members and ministers of each of our churches, The Methodist Chapel in Ratby, the URC in Groby, St Philip and St James in Ratby and St Philip and St James in Groby are contributing. Working together we remember and demonstrate our unity in Christ and his call to love our neighbours – which means everyone in the whole world! Welcome wherever you may be, near or far, to our worship today.

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.

*We say together the words printed in **bold**, knowing we are united across time and space in the power of Christ.*

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.
Amen.**

Opening song

Let us build a house where love can dwell
Led By Paul and Jane Cox

Introduction to the song

It may seem strange to sing the lyric: 'All are welcome in this place' at a time when no one is welcome into our homes (except those who live there) or to collective worship in our church building. However, at this time more than ever, we are learning that the church is not the building but it is us, the people. Peter calls us living stones in his epistle. Though separate, we can build up together into a spiritual house where love can dwell, and be lived out in our everyday actions.

**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 prophets speak,
and words are strong and true,
where all God's children dare to seek
to dream God's reign anew.
Here the cross shall stand as witness
and as symbol of God's grace;
here as one we claim the faith of Jesus.
All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.**

Let us build a house where love is found
in water, wine and wheat:
a banquet hall on holy ground
where peace and justice meet.
Here the love of God, through Jesus,
is revealed in time and space;
as we share in Christ the feast that frees us.
All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where hands will reach
beyond the wood and 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 confession and absolution

Introduction: How many times have you washed your hands today? Hand washing in Scripture is closely associated with innocence and cleansing from sin. (See Exodus 30:17-21, Psalm 26:6, Job 9:30, Matthew 27:24, James 4:8 to mention a few.)

You may wish to take your device to your sink as we pray this together, or bring a bowl of water, some soap and a towel to a safe distance before your computer. Or simply join in this prayer as you watch the ritual of hand washing.

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.

Psalm 31

Reading

Rev'd Judith Lincoln

Sermon

Let us pray together using our open hands.

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.
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

Be Thou My Vision
Led by Trevor Pringle

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me, save that thou art -
Thou my best thought, by day or by night;
Waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word;
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord.
Thou my great Father; thine own may I be,
Thou in me dwelling and I one with thee.

Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise;
Thou mine inheritance, now and always;
Thou and thou only first in my heart,
High King of heaven, my treasure thou art.

High King of heaven, my victory won,
May I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

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.

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.**

Closing offering

If you wish to make a donation to Christian Aid, you can do so online at caweek.org/payin

Also, for one week only we are offering a **human Jukebox** where you can request praise songs from a published list. Between **10th - 16th May at 7pm** just enter 'The Praise Jukebox' on your Facebook search box to arrive at our Churches Together Page. Visitors will be able to choose from popular praise and worship songs by sending a comment requesting a song. Our captive musician will then play /sing it for you live.

We are hoping that this will be a popular evening activity and that all visitors will also make a donation to Christian Aid via the Justgiving link on The Praise Jukebox Page. All donations will go direct to C.Aid and you can be confident that your bank details will be secure. The minimum donation is set at £2 and visitors will be able to gift aid their donation if applicable.

We hope that you will feel able to encourage your friends to make donations and/or to visit the Praise Jukebox.