



We believe in life before death

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Christian Aid Week
11-17 May 2008

Order of service

Welcome

Opening responses

Leader: Come, Holy Spirit.
All: Come, Lord of life.
Leader: You bring each new day alive with possibility.
All: You fill creation with vitality and hope.
Leader: You give each human being great potential.
All: You inspire people to transform the world.
Leader: Come, Holy Spirit, and enter our worship.
All: Come, Lord of life, and infuse our lives.

Song or hymn of gathering/praise

Introduction

Leader: Today is Pentecost, and in our worship we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit to a needy world. It is also the beginning of Christian Aid Week, so we will be celebrating too the many ways in which Christian Aid's work empowers people in poor communities around the world. We will hear stories about how campaigning and development work are making a difference in Ghana and Bangladesh, and how some of the world's most vulnerable people are now on the frontline in facing the effects of climate change. And we will have the opportunity to respond by praying, giving, and taking action.

All age talk or 'Story from Ghana'

Song: *Alleluia* (South Africa)

Alleluia

Words: Traditional
Music: Origin unknown © control

Prayer of praise

Leader: Boundless God,
We praise you for your transforming love,
Poured onto your disciples on the day of Pentecost,
And freely offered to us now.

We praise you for your Son,
Who, in his words and his actions, brought good news for the poor.

We praise you for the Spirit that changes lives,
And for the many lives changed through Christian Aid.

Give us open hands and hearts to receive the gift of your Holy Spirit,
And open eyes and ears to perceive your Spirit at work in the world today.
We ask this in Jesus' name.
Amen

Video: *Christian Aid in Bangladesh*

Prayer of confession

Leader: Creating God, we confess our role in damaging your creation.
 Loving God, we ask you to forgive us for forgetting our global neighbours.
 Redeeming God, we pray to be free of the sin which burdens us.

Lord, have mercy.

May the wind and flames of Pentecost disturb our complacency.
Awaken our sense of responsibility, and kindle our imaginations.
Give us confidence to redress the balance of our greed and selfishness,
and act as channels for your transforming love.

Lord, hear our prayer.
Amen.

Reading: Acts 2:1-21

Song or hymn of invocation

Optional reading: 1 Corinthians 12:3b-13

Sermon or video: *Pentecost Voices*

Song or hymn of concern/response or video: *Climate change reflection*

Interactive prayer stations or prayers of intercession

Song: *Raise your voices*

Break our hearts and break our silence
Make us more than conquerors
Shake the dust, awaken lives that
Speak for those who are never heard

*Raise your voices
Cry out, cry out to Him*

Cease your singing, end your dancing
Offer no more sacrifice
Strain to hear the sounds of justice
Rising up to fight for life

*Raise your voices
Cry out, cry out to Him*

*Spirit of the Lord fall afresh on me
Fill me with the love I know I need
To preach good news to the poor
Sight to the blind
Freedom, shout freedom...*

Offering our actions and our gifts

Leader: Come, Holy Spirit. Move in our hearts and inspire us now to respond to the needs of your world through our prayers, our giving and the offering of our voices to campaign for change.

Those who have had least to do with creating the problem of climate change are those who are suffering the most from its effects. We now have the opportunity to call for climate justice for the world's most vulnerable people. Please sign the action card you have been given, to speak out for those who can't. Sign the card to urge the government to take urgent action on climate change now.

We will now take a few minutes of quiet for our collection and to fill out our action cards. While you are doing this, please think and pray about climate change, the value of speaking out and what it would be like to be voiceless.

When you have finished, please come to the front and put your envelope in the offering basket and your card side by side with the others, to build a wall of faces to represent our voices supporting the voiceless.

As each person comes forward they say:

Here is my voice; I offer it to the voiceless

Once all the cards have been brought up to the front, the following words are said:

Leader: We are the voice that speaks up for the voiceless.

All: Many voices joining their unheard cries.

Leader: One voice speaking out the truth can change a community.

All: Many voices speaking out the truth in unity can change the world.

Leader: One person giving generously can change a life.

All: Many people giving sacrificially can change the world.

Leader: One voice lifted up in prayer moves the Father's heart.

All: We are many voices, echoing that prayer for justice, for freedom and for transformation.

Leader: We say together the prayer on the cards, giving our voices to the voiceless, and lifting them to intercede for change in our world.

Prayer for Christian Aid Week

**All: God of the rushing wind,
sweep through my indifference.
God of the fiery flames,
ignite my compassion.
God of the many voices,
open my mouth to speak out against injustice.
That through your Spirit
and my actions
this world may be transformed.
Amen.**

Commissioning of collectors and all those active in Christian Aid Week

Leader: Today we have celebrated the coming of the Holy Spirit and the empowering of God's people. We have been inspired by the story of the disciples who were transformed into people who were passionate about changing the world. We have been amazed by the examples of Rekha from Bangladesh and Dumata from Ghana, who have each given a

voice and a future to their communities. Now we want to ask for God's Spirit to fill us as we respond to God's call to go out into the world to act on behalf of all those in need.

Leader: We pray:

Ever-present God, thank you for these people who are taking action this Christian Aid Week. They are your hands and feet in our world, going in peace and serving with love. Fill them with your Spirit. May they know your blessing, your strength, and your presence with them as they go.

Help them to know that they do not stand alone: they stand with people across your world, who seek justice and peace.

Help them to know that they do not go alone: they go with your Spirit to build your kingdom.

And help them to know that they achieve amazing things: together their actions empower your people and transform your world.

All: Be with them this week we pray. In the name of your precious Son, Jesus Christ,
Amen

Song or hymn of sending/blessing

Closing responses

Leader: In the face of poverty and injustice

All: We will not give in.

Leader: With communities around the world

All: We will not give in.

Leader: Empowered by the Spirit

All: We will not give in.

Leader: And so may the blessing of God,
Life-giver, change-maker, love-creator,
Be with us now and always.

All: Amen.

A Eucharistic prayer for Christian Aid Week

Leader: The Lord be with you

All: And also with you.

Leader: Lift up your hearts

All: We lift them to the Lord.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All: It is right to give you thanks and praise.

Leader: Holy and ever living God, it is right to give you thanks and praise. You formed the earth from a void. You let the earth bring forth living creatures, and you created humankind in your own image. And you saw that it was all very good. You delighted in your creation and reflected your glory and beauty in what you have made. Therefore, we praise you, joining with all of creation as we say:

**All: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory,
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord,**

Hosanna in the highest.

Leader: All glory to you, loving God. Through your son, Jesus Christ, you showed us how to live and how to love. Jesus came to proclaim good news to the poor, and he lived among the poor and the marginalised. In his life, he set us in right relationship with one another, and in his death he reconciled our sins on the cross. At this time of Pentecost, we pray that the traditional boundaries that divide the human family may be reconciled and that we can all speak the same language of love.

All: Come Holy Spirit

Leader: On the night before he died, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, and said, 'Take, eat: this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me'.

All: Come Holy Spirit

Leader: As supper was ending, Jesus took the cup of wine, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them and said, 'Drink this all of you. This is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for all the human family for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in remembrance of me.'

All: Come Holy Spirit

Leader: Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith:

**All: Christ has died
Christ is risen
Christ will come again.**

Leader: God of unending love and justice, send your Holy Spirit among us and bless these gifts, so that as we come to your table to receive your body and blood, we are empowered to overcome human divisions, and freely share your banquet of life with our sisters and brothers around the world. All this we ask in the name of your Son, our ultimate redeemer and reconciler.

All: Amen.

Acknowledgements

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