

Order of service:

75th Anniversary service

Introduction

Leader 1: Ideals, they have a way of firing the imagination. They (Ideals) become ideas and ideas demand action. And sustained action brings change. The first Christians weren't called Christians at all, but the 'Followers of the Way.' Look where we have come by walking a different path together. Christian Aid.

Leader 2: Christian Aid began 75 years ago in the UK as a response from Christian churches seeking to offer relief and build reconciliation in post-war Europe with those displaced by violence. It began by reaching out to neighbours, by standing together, by walking and working together, and that principle continues today. At a time of crisis, when the temptation might have been to circle wagons and focus on our own recovery, the Churches recognised that we are one body, one family, our futures bound together.

Leader 1: Christian Aid, born from the body of Christ and a living example of the church in the world. So, as we stand together today, physically scattered but

spiritually connected, we reflect on this milestone – 75 years of rage and hope – rage because poverty is still an avoidable scandal that has no place in God's vision; and hope, because we have made a difference and we have made progress. We have brought change.

Leader 2: We take a moment now to pause and consider how we work our way out of business. Every generation has its particular challenges to rise to ... World War II and the devastation and despair it caused; Civil Rights, Apartheid, AIDS, Ebola, Debt Relief, Fair Trade...Change comes when we stand together.

Leader 1: Today, as Europe and the Global North vaccinate our way to a new normal, COVID stalks the global south ... today, as the UK prepares to host the G7 and COP26, inequality and climate disruption scar the landscape and cause seemingly irreversible damage to our shared home. Today, we share a common gift – life. But that is a gift some barely get to unwrap while others of us have so many gifts piled so high we struggle to appreciate the ones that matter most.

Leader 2: Today, we pick up the mantle of rage and hope and recommit ourselves to the cause of life in its fullness for everyone.

The membership of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland recommit to our partnership with Christian Aid and our global neighbours. We will not stop until poverty ends. We will not stop until all God's people and God's creation can thrive.

Leader 1: Christian Aid, working in 29 countries around the world, our staff and partnerships, recommit to our sponsoring churches and our shared mission. We will not stop until extreme poverty ends. We will not stop until all God's people and God's creation can thrive. And we vow to work our way out of business.

Leader 2: Christian Aid: Born from need and compassion ...

Leader 1: Christian Aid: Growing through

Call to worship

Let Justice Flow (Tim Presswood)

(A film of this call to worship and opening song is available in the Christian Aid Pray resources page: christianaid.org.uk/pray)

It is a poem / prayer based on Amos 5 vs 24. Designed to be spoken by a variety of voices– each line represents a different voice. Start slowly and gently, with plenty of space, gradually gathering pace and intensity as the water approaches the thunderous waterfall cry of "Justice!" which all the readers can join.

Voice 1: Above city streets
over country fields
amidst rocks and stones

Voice 2: trickles
tinkles
tickles
springs

Voice 3: a word
a voice
a solo
crying in the wilderness

Voice 4: No!

justice and an unshakable sense that poverty needn't be a reality we accept...

Leader 2: Christian Aid: Sustained by glimpses of success – roots of change taking hold and shooting up despite rocky ground and challenging landscapes.

Leader 1: Christian Aid is you. It is us. We will not stop until all God's people and God's created planet can thrive. And we vow to work our way out of business.

Voice 5: polishing pebbles
beauty wells
from deep beneath earth's
privilege

Voice 6: I hate
I despise
your religious festivals

Voice 1: a thought seeps
subversive through cracks
over rocks
over barren land

Voice 2: watering
nourishing
enlivening
inspiring
in-spiring

Voice 3: breathing in the dream
that things can be
different
that things should be
different
that things must be
different

Voice 4: crystal clear

	a stream of living water	
Voice 5:	confluence convergence concourse	Voices 2/3/4: torrential / unstoppable / rapids disrupt
Voice 6:	I hate I despise your religious festivals	Voice 5: interrupt the way things are
Voice 1:	I hate I despise your empty words	Voices 6/1/2: disrupt / disorder /disturb
Voice 2:	fill your cup overflows	Voices 3/4/5: flowing / flooding / flourishing
Voice 3:	your cup overflows	Voices 6/1/2: I hate / I despise / your religious festivals
Voice 4:	now thunders a mighty roar	Voices 3/4/5: justice rolls on / justice flows / justice courses
Voice 5:	voices come together	Voices 6/1/2: a river/ righteous / an unending stream
Voice 6:	flow together	
Voice 1:	join together	Voices 3/4/5/6/1/2: thundering / cascading / roaring / crying / shouting / singing JUSTICE!
Voice 2:	in harmony	
Voice 3:	all creation joins	
Voice 4:	all creation merges	
Voice 5:	all creation groans	
Voice 6:	as one longs for fulfilment	

Song:

The Song of Kingdom Come

Martin John Nicholls and Paul Field
(2015)

This was originally written for
Christian Aid's 70th anniversary and
has been reworked slightly for this
service by Resound Worship.

Prayer

Voice 1:

Justice-loving God, it began with a trickle, like a tear that left a small but determined track. The trickle became a stream, and the stream merged its course with others, from scattered places, converging into a mighty river.

The trickle became a torrent – vast and unstoppable. Born in the confluence of rage and hope, the churches called Christian Aid into being.

In a time when violence had scattered the world, its corners groaning ... love gathered momentum and drew us together.

Weak and war-weary, we prayed then as we do now that ...

All: Drop by drop, brick by brick, step by step, voice joining to voice. Your kingdom comes

Voice 2:

Justice-loving God, lasting change does not come by itself. It takes vision – people gathered round a plan.

It needs to be rooted in the community who will live in it and it takes persistence and partnership that those on the ground are best placed to build.

Only when a firm foundation is laid, can the building begin - brick by brick, incremental change by incremental change – more than bricks and mortar but an imaginative architecture that is adaptable and stands the test of time.

(Images of Christian Aid's sustainable development work)

For 75 years, Christian Aid have been empowering communities, working in partnership across the world to put themselves out of business, to make poverty history.

As we reflect on the structures that have changed, at the spaces that have been improved, we cannot help but see that there is still so much to do. Today is not time to down-tools and go home, but to dig deep and continue to build a better future for all.

All: Together we pray that drop by drop, brick by brick, step by step, voice joining to voice. Your kingdom comes

Voice 1:

Justice-loving God, sometimes change begins with a solo voice or a muted cry. And if we listen, other voices join.

The melody calling for change soars, the volume increases and harmonies blend and what began as a solo sounds like a symphony.

For 75 years, the churches have joined their voices with a global chorus calling for change. Not silent in the face of systemic injustice, persistent poverty and our own privilege, we commit to sing out even louder.

The discordant noise of greed, the shouts of those who fear losing their power and the drums of war will not drown us out

because we pray that..

All: Drop by drop, brick by brick, step by step, voice joining to voice. Your kingdom comes

Voice 2:

Justice-loving God, every journey starts with a single step.

We know we do not journey alone but walk in the footsteps of saints and strangers who lived their lives in love with your world.

We stand now at a crossroads and consider how best to move forward. As we look back over the road already travelled, over terrain navigated or neglected, over landscapes changed for the better and ones still lying fallow or robbed of all their resources, we stand together and consider the work still to be done.

Justice loving God we lean on you and on each other as we pray that ...

All: Drop by drop, brick by brick, step by step, voice joining to voice. Your kingdom comes

Selah

A moment to reflect
(film provided)

Gospel reading:

Luke 4: 14-30

Spoken word:

Reflection by poet Lucy Berry
(film provided.)

Song

When I needed a neighbour.
Film provided of a new recording of Sydney Carter's song written for Christian Aid.
Recording by Resound Worship.

Selah

A moment to reflect
(film provided)

Reflection

This is our today. All our very different but very connected realities. The world we live in. The world we love in. As Jesus spoke, he exclaimed that Today, today the scripture is fulfilled in your hearing. That was a pivotal moment. A movement in time, a paradigm shift. That from today, things will be different. Jesus spoke of a new reality, a reality of freedom, healing and jubilee. A life that could not be imagined, but it was promised. From today.

We humbly come before God and cry out for a different future. We mourn what we have lost so far, we celebrate what has been gained, and look forward with hope that comes from Jesus. As Jesus read His manifesto of a new future, we too, can share our manifesto of hope. Our commitments to living a life committed to seeing each of God's children having a life to the full. Our commitment to listening to God's heart for His people and join in. A commitment to seeing a different future to our past. From Today.
Please join with us in reflection as we hear our young campaigners share their manifestos of hope for the future. We would love to hear your commitments (write them in the chat box), as we join together to move forward in hope. Let this be your paradigm shift. From Today.

Film provided of the reflections by some Christian Aid prophetic activists.

Recommissioning prayer:

Leader 1:

Gracious God, we thank you:
For calling Christian Aid to be your agency of service and change
For enabling Christian Aid to expose that scandal of poverty
For its prophetic voice that has fearlessly spoken out against injustice
For its courageous actions and advocacy:
We thank you for your faithfulness over these 75 years

All: We give you our thanks and praise

Leader 2:

God our shepherd, we thank you:
For your leading, guiding, and directing of Christian Aid
For the leaders who have captured and ran with your vision -
For Janet Lacey, Michael Taylor, Daleep Mukerji and Loretta Minghella
For Amanda Khozi-Mukwashi, her directors, and team
For the many trustees who you have called to serve:
We thank you for your leadership over these 75 years

All: We give you our thanks and praise

Leader 1: Loving God, we thank you:

That you have called us to love our neighbours as ourselves
For your sponsoring churches, who have responded as custodians of Christian Aid
For the many pilgrims who have journeyed with us and helped us in this ministry of helps –
For congregations, supporters, partners, groups, and volunteers
For the many young people in our churches, schools, colleges and universities who have started their journeys too
For their generosity and selflessness in giving, acting, and praying
We thank you for your lovingkindness over these 75 years

All: We give you our thanks and praise

Leader 2

Creator God, Christian Aid began its work in a ravaged world
This COVID19 pandemic has once again challenged the poorest and most vulnerable nations
We pray that you will:
Renew within us a similar purpose, urgency, and fervency.
Enhance our work with global partners to end the poverty impacting those treated as last, least and left behind.
So, we pray for the strength and humility



to work with those who are made in your image,
in their struggle for justice, equity, and dignity.
We pray that no one is left behind,

All: To this we recommit

Leader 1

Transcendent God, for whom 75 years is but a moment,
this expanse has witnessed such dramatic change and upheaval.
Our world, your world, appears more divided than ever
We pray that political and economic decisions that adversely impact the marginalised and the vulnerable will be reconsidered and reversed.
We pray for our work leading up to COP 26 and the salvation of our planet
For meaningful partnerships, dialogue, and change
We pray that no one is left behind

All: To this we recommit

Leader 2

God of justice,
You have called us to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly before you
You have called us to look after the widow, the orphan, and the stranger
You have called us to feed the hungry, quench the thirsty, visit the prisoner and clothe the naked
You have called us to heal the wounds of the hurting
You have called us to act not just in words but in deed
We pray that you will answer the cries of:
Black lives Matter
for the rights and safety of women, refugees
and all those seeking justice and inclusion
That everyone will live life in all its fullness
We pray that no one is left behind

Response: To this we recommit

Leader 1

God of hope, send us in your power to be your witnesses
To love, mercy, peace, and justice,
Be our strength, protector, and provider
That we may serve you fearlessly, trust you unconditionally, act boldly, and speak prophetically
To your Church, to your world and to ourselves

**All we ask these things in the name of your son, Jesus Christ,
Amen.**

Song

'God of all comfort.'
A new song written and recorded for the 75th anniversary by Joel Payne from Resound worship. (Film available)

Benediction

In these days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit upon all people.

May God's Spirit anoint your dreams and visions, for you are painters of peace.

May God's Spirit anoint your murmurs and your songs, for you are heralds of justice.

May God's Spirit anoint your youngest and oldest, for you are communities of change.

In your rising, in your resting, in your walking, in your speaking,
in your praying, in your striving, in your giving, in your crying,
may you know the Spirit of the Lord upon

you.

May she labour through you and in you,
and all those who stand with you,
until that day when freedom resounds
throughout God's earth,
and justice rolls down, and righteousness
streams out,
and all God's children know the blessing
that belongs to us all.

Amen.

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order of service.