

Order of Service Sunday, 10 May 2020

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.

Opening song

Let us build a house where all can dwell

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. 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;

Chorus: 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 a symbol of God's grace;
Here as one we claim the faith of Jesus:

Chorus

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:

Chorus

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:

Chorus

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:

Chorus

Prayer of confession and absolution

Introduction: How many times have you washed your hands today?

We approach our prayer of confession and absolution mindful of the ritual significance of hand washing in the Bible.

Hand washing in Scripture is closely associated with innocence and cleansing from sin.

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.

(Sung and played by Martin and Clara Coslett)

**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.**

Absolution and Anointing of Hands

“Christ Claims you for his own. Receive the sign of the cross, know that you are forgiven. With these hands serve the Lord in the power of the spirit”

Introduction to the reading: Psalm 31

The Revised Common Lectionary for today selects seven verses from this psalm, but since the words of the psalmist express many of the emotions that we might be experiencing during this difficult time, we will take the time to read and listen to all 24 verses.

A Psalm of David.

¹ In you, O LORD, I seek refuge; do not let me ever be put to shame; in your righteousness deliver me.

² Incline your ear to me; rescue me speedily. Be a rock of refuge for me, a strong fortress to save me.

³ You are indeed my rock and my fortress; for your name's sake lead me and guide me, ⁴ take me out of the net that is hidden for me, for you are my refuge.

⁵ Into your hand I commit my spirit; you have redeemed me, O LORD, faithful God.

⁶ You hate those who pay regard to worthless idols, but I trust in the LORD.

⁷ I will exult and rejoice in your steadfast love, because you have seen my affliction; you have taken heed of my adversities,

⁸ and have not delivered me into the hand of the enemy; you have set my feet in a broad place.

⁹ Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am in distress; my eye wastes away from grief, my soul and body also. ¹⁰ For my life is spent with sorrow, and my years with sighing; my strength fails because of my misery, and my bones waste away.

¹¹ I am the scorn of all my adversaries, a horror to my neighbours, an object of dread to my acquaintances; those who see me in the street flee from me. ¹² I have passed out of mind like one who is dead; I have become like a broken vessel.

¹³ For I hear the whispering of many— terror all around! as they scheme together against me, as they plot to take my life.

¹⁴ But I trust in you, O LORD; I say, 'You are my God.'

¹⁵ My times are in your hand; deliver me from the hand of my enemies and persecutors. ¹⁶ Let your face shine upon your servant; save me in your steadfast love. ¹⁷ Do not let me be put to shame, O LORD, for I call on you; let the wicked be put to shame; let them go dumbfounded to Sheol. ¹⁸ Let the lying lips be stilled that speak insolently against the righteous with pride and contempt. ¹⁹ O how abundant is your goodness that you have laid up for those who fear you, and accomplished for those who take refuge in you, in the sight of everyone! ²⁰ In the shelter of your presence you hide them from human plots; you hold them safe under your shelter from contentious tongues. ²¹ Blessed be the LORD, for he has wondrously shown his steadfast love to me when I was beset as a city under siege. ²² I had said in my alarm, 'I am driven far from your sight.' But you heard my supplications when I cried out to you for help. ²³ Love the LORD, all you his saints. The LORD preserves the faithful, but abundantly repays the one who acts haughtily. ²⁴ Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all you who wait for the LORD.

Pause to reflect and pray

Were there any verses or phrases that jumped out from the passage? Any phrases that you find helpful in these difficult days?

Gospel reading John 14:1-14

Introduction to the reading:

This is an extract from the long farewell that Jesus gave over the last supper, shortly after he washed the feet of the disciples with his own hands. Even though we are now in the Fifth Sunday of Easter, these words have a poignancy and power for us to absorb and process this Christian Aid Week Sunday.

Listen now to the Word of God.

'Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. ²In my Father's house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. ⁴And you know the way to the place where I am going.' ⁵Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?' ⁶Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.' ⁸ Philip said to him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.' ⁹Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, "Show us the Father"?' ¹⁰Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. ¹¹Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. ¹²Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. ¹³I will do whatever you ask in my

name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴If in my name you ask me^e for anything, I will do it.

Thanks Be to God

Song

Be still for the presence of the Lord

Be still for the presence of the Lord
The Holy One is here
Come bow before Him now
With reverence and fear
In Him no sin is found
We stand on holy ground
Be still for the presence of the Lord
The Holy One is here
Be still for the glory of the Lord
Is shining all around
He burns with holy fire
With splendour He is crowned

How awesome is the sight
Our radiant King of light
Be still for the glory of the Lord
Is shining all around
Be still for the power of the Lord
Is moving in this place
He comes to cleanse and heal
To minister His grace
No work too hard for Him
In faith receive from Him
Be still for the power of the Lord
Is moving in this place

(Silence)

Response

Look at your hands. Have a good look.

However your hands look to you, they are most certainly clean in these days of regular hand washing to prevent spreading the coronavirus. Our hands really are the most remarkable and useful tools, involved in so much of what we do and how we do things, even in these days of social distancing.

The psalmist writes of committing his spirit into God's hands, and at times of being in God's hands. He also describes his desire to be delivered from the hands of his oppressors and from a hidden invisible net that threatens to entangle him.

Our hands have become even more significant in these days of physical distance. We might long to hold the hand of a person we can no longer touch. We pray for the hands of medics to bring healing and comfort. We are grateful for hands stacking shelves and

delivering groceries and post. And we are extra wary of everything our hands touch that comes from outside our own home.

This Christian Aid Week we also think of how our hands can be far from idle. Though not handing out envelopes or hosting Big Brekkies or the many things we usually busy ourselves with this week, our hands can still reach out virtually to our neighbours around the world.

Neighbours in refugee camps and cramped living conditions, neighbours without adequate hand-washing facilities, neighbours who face the devastating impact of coronavirus with even less of the medical resources we have struggled to access here.

We reach out by clasping our hands together in prayer for our neighbours, and holding our hands open before God as we declare our needs and concerns for their wellbeing and our own.

We also reach out by participating in this digital Christian Aid Week, through making our online donations and sharing the stories from Christian Aid partners, working on the ground to be the hands and feet of love in action. If you wish, you can make a donation online to help vulnerable communities at caweek.org/payin

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.**

Song : Be thou my vision

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, I thy true son;
thou in me dwelling, and I with thee one.

Riches I heed not, nor all the world's 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 heav'n's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be my vision, O Ruler of all

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.

The Peace:

The risen Christ came and stood among his disciples and said "Peace be with you".
Then they were glad when they saw the Lord.

Alleluia.

The peace of the Lord be always with you

ALL: And also with you.

In our homes let us share the peace visually with our hands.

Closing blessing

As we go offline and wash our hands again, we say our blessing together:

**May the presence of the Creator refresh you, may the comfort of the Son
renew you, may the inspiration of the Spirit restore you 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