



ST STEPHEN'S CHURCH CANTERBURY

A SERVICE FOR CHRISTIAN AID WEEK

22nd May 2022 6pm



Jessica, hungry to provide for her children, carries maize grain from the fields to make porridge to feed her family

Welcome to St Stephen's for this service.

We are grateful to Stephen Barker and the choir of St Stephen's and Charlotte Hardwick for their participation in this service.

Christian Aid works with people living in poverty, regardless of religion, race, or gender. Christian Aid's focus this year is on the pervasive problem of hunger and the underlying cause, which is climate injustice.

We invite you to make a response to what you have heard this evening by donating to the work of Christian Aid.

You may do so through the Canterbury Christian Aid Group Just Giving page:
<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/camoo0407>

or donate in the collection plate. If you are a UK taxpayer, please use the Christian Aid Gift Aid envelope for your donation. Please ensure that you complete all sections of the envelope including the box confirming you are a UK taxpayer. Christian Aid will reclaim an extra 25p for every £1 placed in the envelope. Cheques should be made payable to '**Christian Aid**'.

Or you can send a cheque, again payable to Christian Aid, to Jennie Bukht at 6 Chantry Hall, Dane John, Canterbury, CT1 2QS, and receive an acknowledgement,

Or you can make a bank transfer to: (acct name) Christian Aid, (acct no. 08853738, branch sort code 60-04-27).

*Please ensure that mobile phones are switched off.
Thank you for your cooperation.*

*An induction loop system for the hard of hearing is installed in
the church.*

Words of welcome and introduction:

In our service today, we will consider what it means to live fruitful lives. This is a phrase used throughout the Bible. Bearing fruit that is good and that will last is something which we are called to do as followers of Jesus.

What does this mean, to bear fruit, in today's world? In a world where 44 million people face the challenge of daily food shortages and chronic hunger, what does 'fruit that will last' mean to all our lives?

As fruit is a source of sweet sustenance and life, we cannot only consider the challenge of hunger. We must also consider the solutions and the change which we can help bring about.

We will root these questions in the stories of Jessica and Janet from Zimbabwe. We will reflect on these big questions through the lived experience of hunger caused by drought.



Janet and her fellow congregants gather joyfully at church for the Sunday service

Prayer

Creator, Son, and Spirit, we gather
to seek your presence in our time of worship.

We are hungry for you.

Meet us at our point of deepest need.
Connect us with the needs of others.
Equip us to join your creative work.
Transform us more into your likeness.

We are hungry for your righteousness.

We gather with Jessica and Janet
and their communities this Christian Aid Week.

Make their stories make us hungry for justice
and even more impatient for change.

We are hungry for your justice.

We gather with all of creation,
with the mountains and the hills.

We shall burst into song,
with the trees of the field
we will clap our hands.

We are hungry to praise you. Amen

Hymn: All things bright and beautiful

*Chorus: All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful,
The Lord God made them all.*

1. Each little flower that opens,
Each little bird that sings,
He made their glowing colours,
He made their tiny wings. *Chorus*

2. The cold wind in the winter,
The pleasant summer sun,
The ripe fruits in the garden,
He made them every one. *Chorus*
Chorus

3. The purple-headed mountain,
The river running by,
The sunset and the morning
That brightens up the sky. *Chorus*

4. He gave us eyes to see them
And lips that we might tell
How great is God almighty,
Who has made all things well.

Cecil Frances Alexander 1818-1895

Prayer of Confession

Good God of creation, we sing praise to you.
But even as we raise our voices
we know that we have faltered and failed.
Walking on paths that turned our hearts inward,
sitting with those who scoffed at the cries of people in poverty,
mocking those on the margins, denying the earth in her distress.
Too often our leaves have withered, our branches are barren.
We have failed to be pruned and the axe is now poised.
Poised to cut down
the excesses that crucify all creation,
the systems that impoverish all people,
the privileges that diminish our faith.

But even now it is not too late.
For in the face of judgment comes the offer of grace
and the hope that deadwood can spring to life.
Where we have failed to bear good fruit
and share your abundance for the earth.
God have mercy

When our actions and intentions
have been as chaff for the winds of heaven
God have mercy

Forgive us.
Restore us.
Inspire us now
To delight in your purposes,
to embrace your possibilities,
to inhabit your promises,
to flourish as fruit for the world you so love
And bring healing for all the nations.
Amen

Reading: Revelation 22: 1-6

Hymn: For the beauty of the earth,

1. For the beauty of the earth,
For the beauty of the skies,
For the love which from our birth
Over and around us lies;
*Lord of all, to Thee we raise
This our sacrifice of praise.*

2. For the beauty of each hour
Of the day and of the night,
Hill and vale and tree and flower,
Sun and moon, and stars of light;
Lord of all

3. For the joy of human love,
Brother, sister, parent, child;
Friends on earth and friends above;
Pleasures pure and undefiled;
Lord of all

4. For Thy Church which evermore
Lifteth holy hands above,
Offering up on every shore
Her pure sacrifice of love;
Lord of all

F.S. Pierpoint 1835-1917

Jessica's story



Jessica walks home from the garden with her husband and children as the sun sets

Are you hungry? What's for your dinner tonight? Jessica Mwedzi, a loving mum in Zimbabwe, fears her family won't eat tonight. When food is scarce, she can only give her children one bowl of porridge a day. She shares her heartbreak: 'My children crave a decent meal, but I can't provide. It pains me to send them to bed hungry.' For Jessica, drought means every day is a struggle for survival. Like many women in Zimbabwe, she toils on her farm, but no food can grow on her ashen dry land. 'One year, we had no rain. The scorching sun burnt my crops just as they were about to bloom. It was so painful and disheartening.' It's unjust that drought robs Jessica of the power to provide for her family. Her husband is unwell, so she is the only breadwinner. She says: 'Women are at the mercy of climate change and hunger.' Once before, when things were desperate, Jessica asked her neighbours for food. But she came home with nothing. Jessica is hungry. Hungry for a good meal. Hungry to earn a decent living. Hungry to provide a more hopeful future for her family. You can help this loving mum turn hunger into hope. Your gift this Christian Aid Week could help Jessica grow seeds that thrive in the drought. In the months to come, she'll turn these seeds into fresh food like tomatoes, beans, and cucumbers to sell and feed her family. She'll have the joy of seeing her children grow up happy and healthy. Jessica's love for her family gives her courage to stand strong against the threat of drought. 'My children give me the power to go ahead,' she says. 'I pray they have a better future.' This Christian Aid Week, as you sit down to eat your favourite family meal around the table, please pray for Jessica and her family. Your gifts and prayers could fill families like hers with hope.

Charlotte Hardwick will sing “Touch the earth lightly”

Shirley Erena Murray 1931-202

Janet’s story



**In the past, Janet’s family has gone through drought which devastated their harvests and drove the family into hunger.
Today she smiles because her family now has food to spare.**

What makes you smile? For Janet Zirugo, 70, it’s seeing her grandchildren’s faces light up as she hugs them tight. Janet has a big heart. Many of the children in her family are orphans, and she is their sole provider. ‘In my family, children look up to me and I must give them food. I am more than glad to share what I have,’ she says. In her village in Zimbabwe, Janet has seen how drought pushed her family into desperate hunger. ‘One year, there was so little food. Rains had not fallen. We ate things which we wouldn’t eat in normal times. My heart was so painful thinking that my family would die. By God’s grace we did not die. We soldiered on.’ With faith, hope and love, Janet brought her family through this painful time. Thanks to kind people like you, she was given drought-resistant seeds that can grow in this harsh climate. You’ll be happy to know her farm is now bursting with life. She proudly shows us the food she has grown – bowls full of groundnuts, wild fruit, golden corn, a rainbow of colour. Now, she is strong and resilient. With all her strength, she works on her farm, so her family never again go hungry. She has built a storeroom to keep her harvest safe and secure, to help her bounce back in future droughts. She knows when changes are coming and can adapt before crisis hits. ‘My life is changing,’ she says. ‘This project is lifting us up. We are thankful. It makes me happy to see my family are strong and well fed.’ As she reflects on how her life has changed, Janet sings with joy. We rejoice with her.

Hymn:

1. The kingdom of God
is justice and joy,
for Jesus restores
what sin would destroy.
God's power and glory
in Jesus we know
and here and hereafter
the kingdom shall grow.

3. The kingdom of God
is challenge and choice:
believe the good news,
repent and rejoice!
His love for us sinners
brought Christ to his cross,
our crisis of judgement
for gain or for loss.

2. The kingdom of God
is mercy and grace,
the captives are freed,
the sinners find place,
the outcast are welcomed,
God's banquet to share,
and hope is awakened,
in place of despair.

4. God's kingdom is come,
the gift and the goal,
in Jesus begun,
in heaven made whole.
The heirs of the kingdom
shall answer his call,
and all things cry 'Glory! '
to God all in all.

Bryn Rees 1911-1983

Address by Revd Brian McHenry, Chair of Canterbury Christian Aid Group

The choir sings the anthem “Look at the World”. *John Rutter (b. 1945)*
(During the anthem, your contributions to Christian Aid will be collected).

Prayers of thanksgiving and intercession

(The responses in this prayer of intercession are taken from Revelation 7:16-17)

Creator God, cultivator of our faith,
thank you for the privilege of living in this global garden
planted to bear your fruit,
to delight our tongues,
to fill our stomachs,
to energise our bodies.
You have given us life in all its fullness.
You have given us life, yet millions still hunger.

Take these gifts of money and use them to help Christian Aid support communities throughout the world, and partners who hunger to provide. But may our support not end here.

May we be the seeds from which your kingdom grows.

In our hunger for peace, we pray for those countries that are suffering from the effects of conflict and climate change, particularly Zimbabwe.

But may our concern for them not stifle our concern for

Ukraine Afghanistan

Syria Yemen

South Sudan Ethiopia

Myanmar

and all those other places to whom our hearts have become hardened through over-familiarity.

They will hunger and thirst no more.

In our hunger for justice, we pray for people in this country who are struggling to pay their bills and feed their families.

But may our concern for them not stifle our concern for

Jessica

Janet

and all who hunger to provide for those they love, in our global community.

The sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat

In our hunger, we pray for people in positions of power and authority in government, the law, commerce and the media in this and every land.

But may our concern for them not stifle our concern for

your little ones,

children who go to bed hungry,

whose parents struggle to provide for them in times of desperate drought.

God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

And in our hunger, we pray that you will fill us with your hope,

your passion

and your life,

that we may go out from this place to give, act and pray.

So, all who hunger to provide may be filled to overflowing.

In the name of Christ,

farmer, gardener, and cultivator.

Amen

We ask all this in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray together. We join in praying the Christian Aid global 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 forever.
Amen**

Hymn:

1. Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father,
There is no shadow of turning with thee,
Thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not,
As thou hast been, thou forever wilt be.
*Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see.
All I have needed thy hand has provided,
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!*

2. Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,
Sun, moon, and stars in their courses above
Join with all nature in manifold witness,
To thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love.
Great is Thy faithfulness...

3. Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide,
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!
Great is Thy faithfulness...

Thomas Chisholm (1866-1960)

Blessing

In the name of God who plants the seed of justice:
Be hungry.

In the name of Christ who hangs on the tree of love:
Be fruitful.

And in the name of the Spirit who inspires God's will in our hearts and our lives:
Be celebrated.

You are Christ's people,
here and throughout the world,
now and forever.

Amen

Organ voluntary

Please stay after the service for refreshments.



Janet Zirugo in her thriving garden