

## Blairdaff and Chapel of Garioch Parish Church

Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2020 Christian Aid Sunday

To be able to access the links, go to the bottom of this page and left click on the date. This will download the pdf in a new window, then simply click on the links as indicated.

### Welcome

Today is Christian Aid Sunday. It marks the beginning of Christian Aid Week. All of the worship material for today is provided by Christian Aid.

#### Psalm 96:1-3

*Sing a new song to the Lord!  
Everyone on this earth, sing praises to the Lord,  
sing and praise his name.  
Day after day announce, "The Lord has saved us!"  
Tell every nation on earth,  
"The Lord is wonderful and does marvellous things!"*

Song [Bless the Lord O my soul](#) *Click on the link*



Almighty and eternal God, we worship with the family of humanity to praise, honour and thank you the creator of our common home.

With the mountains, islands and deserts, we honour you in the glory of your creation.

With the lakes, rivers and seas, we come to the source of living water.

With the land, its soil, seeds and sustenance, we give thanks for your generous provision.

With the forests of great trees, the lungs of the planet, we sing with joy and clap our hands.

We join with the whole of creation, inspired by those who have gone before and the prophetic voices of today.

*(Adapted from 'We are the Amazon',  
an Ecumenical act of solidarity and justice  
for the Amazon and its people.)*

Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;

let the sea roar, and all that fills it;

let the field exult, and everything in it.

Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy before you O Lord;

for you are coming, you are coming to judge the earth.

You will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with your truth.'

*(Adapted from Psalm 96:11-13)*

But Lord, the heavens are not glad, the earth does not rejoice;  
warming gases fill the atmosphere, pollution turns clean air foul, climate breakdown wreaks havoc.

The sea roars with the grief  
of all the plastic that fills it  
of the destruction of coral reef.

The fields exclaim despair for delayed rains and prolonged drought  
for species extinction on a daily basis.

No song of joy rings out from the trees of the forest decimated by forest fires.

How long O God, how long until your justice comes for all your creatures and the earth.?

In you we put our trust. Amen



Glory with her sister Lanie in the Philippines.

**I am 19-year-old Glory, from the Philippines, in my first year of college. I want to share my story to urge you all to take care of our environment, our Earth. For the youth across the world on this day, and to you all; we must act on the crisis of climate change.**

**I live on a small island of Tabugon, Carles (in the Philippines) with my family. It's beautiful and peaceful, with fresh air, coral reefs, and fresh seafood. But it is changing.**

**Living on an island is very challenging. I really feel the impact of climate change. Since childhood, I've witnessed the challenges my family face, due to the connected issues of poverty and climate change. As local fisherfolk, my parent's income and our lives depend on the sea.**

**Climate change has made the weather more and more unpredictable. At times we've not had enough to eat due to a low fish catch. Or my parents cannot afford to provide food or a school allowance. At present, water is very scarce, so we need to cross another island to buy water, even though it's very risky for us.**

**I feel so sad every time I witness senseless and uncaring people destroying our environment. It breaks my heart. It also breaks my heart when I see children in our community suffering from poverty, because their livelihood is so affected by climate change, just like my parents.**

**As a young person and concerned citizen of our community, I campaign to protect our ocean, like spreading the word for people not to throw their garbage or dump used motor oil in the sea. I also plant fruit trees and flowers in our yard.**

**Contd/**

**My parents and other residents in our village are involved in environmental and coastal management, like mangrove planting and sea patrolling to keep away the illegal fishermen.**

**We still remember typhoon Haiyan. We were so scared of the strong winds. The roof of our house was blown off. We sheltered in our kitchen, but then strong winds blew the coconut trees onto our kitchen. We panicked and cried. We decided to evacuate to our church but we couldn't go immediately because of the falling trees and other debris flying around.**

**With our trust in God, we were able to evacuate despite the danger and cold. On the next day after the typhoon, we go back to our house but we were shocked that everything was destroyed. Even our clothes were blown away. We had nothing because we were not prepared. It was a depressing time for us on the island.**

**My message for the world is that, we need to be responsible. We should be concerned on protecting our surroundings because this have been created for us. We have the wisdom to know what is right and what is wrong.**



**I realise how important it is for us young people to be involved in climate change. Especially for us who live on isolated islands and rely upon fishing. I feel angry at those who are abusing our natural resources. Through the support of a local climate change organisation, ICODE, we are motivated as a community, to protect our coastlines and our environment. We are much more conscious now.**

### **Prayer of Confession**

For the beauty of the earth, desecrated by pollution  
extinguished by forest fires, choked by plastic waste  
Christ, our God, to you we plead forgive us for systemic greed.

For the urgency of this hour, ignored by apathy or procrastination, wasted by ineffective  
decisions denied by economic interests, Christ, our God and Saviour, forgive us for selfish  
short-term behaviour.

For the joy of human love, fractured by forced migration, crushed by bereavement, lost to typhoons, floods, starvation, Christ, our God, bringer of justice forgive us for this climate crisis.

God you know me. You know that I can be loving and kind; and you know that sometimes I get things wrong. I'm sorry for the times I hurt other people, forget to listen to you and don't bother to take care of your world. Amen

Song: [For the beauty of the earth](#) [Click on the link](#)

### Bible Passage:

This script is from *The Message* to help us hear this familiar passage in a new light.

#### Micah 6:1-9 (MSG)

<sup>1-2</sup> Listen now, listen to God:

"Take your stand in court. If you have a complaint, tell the mountains; make your case to the hills.

And now, Mountains, hear God's case; listen, Jury Earth— For I am bringing charges against my people. I am building a case against Israel.

<sup>3-5</sup> "Dear people, how have I done you wrong? Have I burdened you, worn you out? Answer!

I delivered you from a bad life in Egypt; I paid a good price to get you out of slavery.

I sent Moses to lead you— and Aaron and Miriam to boot! Remember what Balak king of Moab tried to pull, and how Balaam son of Beor turned the tables on him.

Remember all those stories about Shittim and Gilgal.

Keep all God's salvation stories fresh and present."

How can I stand up before God and show proper respect to the high God?

Should I bring an armload of offerings topped off with yearling calves?

Would God be impressed with thousands of rams, with buckets and barrels of olive oil? Would he be moved if I sacrificed my firstborn child, my precious baby, to cancel my sin?

<sup>8</sup> But he's already made it plain how to live, what to do, what God is looking for in men and women. It's quite simple: Do what is fair and just to your neighbour, be compassionate and loyal in your love, and don't take yourself too seriously—take God seriously.

<sup>9</sup> Attention! God calls out to the city! If you know what's good for you, you'll listen. So listen, all of you! his is serious business.

## Reflecting on Micah and Climate Change

One of the tasks of the prophets, like Micah, is to inspire our imagination, to offer an alternative vision in which the earth might be a different and better place, and then live that envisioned world into a reality.

Micah begins his prophecy with a message that is intended to go global: 'Hear, you peoples, all of you; listen, O earth, and all that is in it.' (Micah 1:2)

Micah names and shames the corruption of the political leaders, the dishonesty of the merchants and greed of those who control the use of land. He denounces their exploitation and oppression of people and land, he sees these social injustices as integral to the idolatry of the people of Israel, the misplaced worship and devotion to greed that religious leaders of his day have allowed to happen on their watch.

As with Micah, so too climate injustice feeds upon the prolific idolatry and fallen principalities of money, power and rapacious self-interest, fuelled by the myth of perpetual growth. These false gods continue to entice the world away from a biblical vision of peace and justice and finding our place within the well-being of creation. If we are to imagine the better world presented to us in the 'Song of the Prophets', then we need to begin with naming and engaging the systemic powers that have led to the injustices that now mar creation and threaten its very existence.

We do this not necessarily to condemn specific people, companies or practices (that is too easy and such scapegoating is rarely pretty or helpful), but to reveal their destructive directions and engage them in an imaginative and prophetic return to their true vocations. Micah does this memorably. Early in the prophecy his incisive metaphors and subtle innuendo play on names of the towns that perpetuate these injustices leaving the message of judgment abundantly clear. Other prophets were known to resort to creative measures to getting their point across: Jeremiah smashes jars, Ezekiel digs through walls, and Isaiah walks around naked to name a few ways they grabbed attention and emphasised their message.

According to Micah, there's a lot of woe coming to those in power who plan injustice and plot 'evil deeds on their beds' (2:1), and even more trouble is on its way for those who are bribed to proclaim that everything on earth is just as God would have it and 'no disaster' will then befall us (3:11-12). Climate change disasters are not only coming, they are already upon us, not as punishment from heaven but as a direct result of our behaviour. As ever, those harmful actions originate predominantly in the global North, but most perilously impact the poorest people on the planet. The evidence Christian Aid has gathered from places like the Philippines, Kenya, Bolivia, Bangladesh and El Salvador is indisputable.

We might look to our own resources and solutions in response, God presents us with a more radical challenge in those familiar words of Micah 6:8: '... what does God require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?'

**Do justice** God requires us to do justice with those who are the worst affected yet least responsible for the climate crisis. To do justice also requires justice for the earth, to acknowledge that the raging fires, flooding rivers, devastating typhoons and species extinction are a result of the grave injustice of exploitation and neglect of the natural rhythms we must now learn to live in harmony with.

**Love mercy** God requires us to embody loving mercy and kindness. While this, of course, demands that we act with compassion for the wounded creation and for its hurting people, it also begs what may be the more difficult question: how are we to engage the fallen powers in such a way that show redeeming mercy to those who continue to reject the radical changes that are needed for a climate crisis to be averted?

It is to believe with hope that perhaps even the most ardent climate change-denying politician, or the most active carbon-emitting company has the potential to change. It also offers an invitation to show ourselves mercy for any guilt we may feel for our own carbon dependency. Such mercy might save us from silent shame and allow us to loudly call for the system change needed.

**Walk humbly** Walking humbly means turning to God in prayer, in continuous and collective prayer for the planet. In joining with sisters and brothers across the world in prayer we remind ourselves that the earth is the Lord's and in setting our hearts to seek God we galvanise our courage to do justice and love mercy as we respond to the challenge and join in the mission of God in restoring the earth.

You can join the Christian Aid prayer chain with Christians across Britain, Ireland and the world. You can sign up at <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/pray/prayer-chain> just click on the link.

*(Christian Aid thank the Rev Dr Craig Gardiner, tutor in Christian Doctrine at South Wales Baptist College for this reflection.)*

### Florence's Story



**Florence is full of life, love and laughter. The women in her farming group look up to her. She's courageous, kind, a survivor.**

**A few years ago, her husband died, leaving her a widow. At that time, she had no water to grow crops. Her children were hungry. She had to walk for hours on dangerous journeys to collect water. 'Life was miserable,' she said.**

**But with Christian Aid's help, things have changed for Florence.**

**Hear her story on this short video clip.**

Click on the link [here](#).

Then click on 'download' on the very first of the 24 options shown. An options bar will appear at the bottom of your screen, click 'open'. This will take a few seconds and will open a window. Click on "CW20 Churches Film with Voiceover". Make sure your sound is turned on.

## Bible Passage:

### 1 Peter 2:2-10 (GNT)

Be like new-born babies, always thirsty for the pure spiritual milk, so that by drinking it you may grow up and be saved. <sup>3</sup>As the scripture says, "You have found out for yourselves how kind the Lord is."

<sup>4</sup>Come to the Lord, the living stone rejected by people as worthless but chosen by God as valuable. <sup>5</sup>Come as living stones, and let yourselves be used in building the spiritual temple, where you will serve as holy priests to offer spiritual and acceptable sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ. <sup>6</sup>For the scripture says,

"I chose a valuable stone, which I am placing as the cornerstone in Zion; and whoever believes in him will never be disappointed."

<sup>7</sup>This stone is of great value for you that believe; but for those who do not believe:

"The stone which the builders rejected as worthless turned out to be the most important of all."

<sup>8</sup>And another scripture says,

"This is the stone that will make people stumble, the rock that will make them fall."

They stumbled because they did not believe in the word; such was God's will for them.

<sup>9</sup>But you are the chosen race, the King's priests, the holy nation, God's own people, chosen to proclaim the wonderful acts of God, who called you out of darkness into his own marvellous light. <sup>10</sup>At one time you were not God's people, but now you are his people; at one time you did not know God's mercy, but now you have received his mercy.

## Living stones

The rich imagery of stones and rocks in 1 Peter 2, that build but also block, shelter and protect, finds meaning in the material of the dams in Kenya which, in holding water, enable the enrichment of diet and the alleviation of drudgery. This opens up not only a more fruitful and rewarding use of time, but the enjoyment of life and family, or age, as well as youth. Who would begrudge such gifts of God?

As we learn from Florence's concern for her immediate neighbours, a right response to gift is to ask why others are still in need. This, perhaps, is the essence of 'holy priesthood': not

obstructing or hiding what God wishes to make obvious, but ensuring the flow of the know-how of the goodness of God, together building relationship and partnership with God and Creation. In such togetherness, the church discovers their identity: in mutual enrichment, rather than one-sided giving.

We look for joy, rather than pain in the giving that is integral to our faith, as a response to our own experience of God's goodness. Yet again, in this, we learn from Florence's gratitude when she proclaims: 'I am thankful to people who have donated to build this earth dam. I am praying God will increase their giving.'

*(Christian Aid thanks to the Rev David Coleman,  
Eco-congregations Scotland Chaplain)*

**Song [Let there be love shared among us](#) [Click on the link](#)**

### **Prayer of the People for the People**

God of abundant life, we see your goodness all around us and we thank you for every part of it; from the plants and animals which play their part in complex ecosystems, to the dry deserts and stormy seas which test the limits of life.



We pray that in this time of climate crisis and ecological emergency, you may help us to rediscover your love of creation and to reflect that in our own lives.

We thank you for contemporary prophets who are challenging us to act on climate change; for indigenous people and their invaluable knowledge of the land and sea where they live, for scientists dedicating their careers to warning us about changes to the planet, and for young people striking for their future.

We ask that you will help those in power to hear their prophetic voices. Help them to see beyond short term political priorities and business plans and give them wisdom and courage when they face difficult decisions.

We recognise the damage we have done to the earth and the injustice we see in society every day, all of it fuelled by worship of profit and possessions.

We pray for the coming of a better world with justice, kindness and humility at its heart. We ask that you guide us to be co-creators of this new world. Give us confidence to follow the prophetic voices to stand against injustice to people and to planet. So that together, in your strength, we stop this climate crisis.

We also lay before you the needs of 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.

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.

We ask all this in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray together...

Our Father, in heaven, holy is your name. Your Kingdom come your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread and forgive us our sin as we forgive those who sin against us and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For yours is the Kingdom the power and the glory for ever. Amen.

### **A Prayer for this time of Coronavirus**

Eternal Father, as we pray in our individual homes – around the nation and around the world – we are united as one family. It is clear that our futures are bound together more tightly than ever before. Even in the darkest moments, love gives hope. Love compels us to stand together in prayer with our neighbours near and far, and to give and act as one.



Thanks be to you loving God;  
for the health workers tending the seriously ill  
for the scientists working on a vaccination  
for the researchers analysing data and identifying trends  
for the media outlets working to communicate reality  
for the supermarket workers, hygiene and sanitation providers  
for the good news stories of recoveries and effective planning  
for the notes through letterboxes offering help and support  
for the internet and telephones and technology that connects  
for the awakened appreciation of what is truly important

Loving God,  
for those who are unwell and concerned for loved ones  
for those who were already very anxious  
for those in the 'most at risk to coronavirus' categories  
for those watching their income dry up  
for those who have no choice but to go out to work  
for those who are afraid to be at home  
for those who are more lonely than they've ever been  
for those who are bereaved and grieving.  
be their healer, comfort and protection, strength, shield and provision  
be their security, safety and close companion. Amen (from Christian Aid)

## **Benediction and Blessing**

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.

[Blessing](#) **click on the link**

If you wish to make a donation to Christian Aid, just click [here](#).

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One of the consequences of us not being able to worship together is that the church anticipates a fall in income. However, we continue to incur costs, of insurance etc. There will be little financial saving to our not meeting, yet revenues could be severely hit. Please prayerfully reflect on this and, if you are able, continue to put aside your financial offering so that you can make your contribution for the work of the church when we next meet together. Thank you.

Thank you too if you already give by standing order or by bank transfer, that is much appreciated.