

QUEENSFERRY PARISH CHURCH

MIDWEEK SERVICES

MAY

Christian Aid Week this year is from 10th – 16th May but, because next Thursday (13th) is Ascension Day, we are looking at Christian Aid on May 6th. Just like last year fund-raising events will either not be possible or will be severely limited. There are materials available online with ideas of possibilities while we still live under restrictions. I am using again this year the suggested material for an online Christian Aid service. The leader may wish to look at the Christian Aid website for different ideas.

Week 1 – Christian Aid – Life before death

Leader:

Christian Aid week again needs to be done differently this year. We can still acknowledge that we are part of a global community. We are neighbours near and far and many in the world are suffering the effects of the coronavirus pandemic more severely than in the UK. May our shared experience unite us in praise and prayer as one human family separate but together in the house that is God's world.

Opening Sentences

GOD OF ALL THE EARTH
BE PRESENT WITH US NOW,
IN EACH OF OUR HOMES AS WE CONNECT TOGETHER.
BUILD US INTO A SPIRITUAL HOUSE,
A HOLY PRIESTHOOD,
OFFERING SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES
ACCEPTABLE TO YOU
THROUGH JESUS CHRIST
OUR RISEN REDEEMER AND HEALER.

Read: 1 Peter 2 verses 4 - 9

Hymn or song: Suggested hymns to read are: 198 "Let us build a house where love can dwell", which is a reminder that the Church is never a building, and 189 "Be still, for the presence of the Lord"

Read Psalm 31

Prayer

God our Lord, we come to you with open hands, some of us with hearts full of questions about why so many people have suffered or died from Covid, some of us bruised by bereavement, some of us fearful of what the future holds in terms of economic recovery and all of us stunned by how our lives have been affected by the events of this past 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 in silence

SILENCE

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 for so long from loved ones in hospital or care homes and hold close those who are hurting alone.

SILENCE

God in your mercy

HEAR OUR PRAYER

In this season of Easter, travelling towards Pentecost, renew us with resurrection hope that, while weeping lingers in this night, joy will come in the morning.

God in your mercy

HEAR OUR PRAYER

In this Christian Aid week we pray for and with communities across the world who are most vulnerable to coronavirus; those in refugee camps and city slums; those with limited facilities to wash hands and limited opportunities to isolate from others. In particular we remember the people of India where resources cannot keep up with demand.

God in your mercy

HEAR OUR PRAYER

We pray for Christian Aid partners who are working in difficult situations to provide help and materials to ensure better hygiene, and who are communicating clear accurate information to the most vulnerable and ensuring they are kept as safe as possible.

God in your mercy

HEAR OUR PRAYER

And now hear us as we pray further in the words Jesus taught his disciples saying:

OUR FATHER

Read: John 14 verses 1 - 14

Reflection

Reflect for 5 – 7 minutes. There is lots of material about the work of Christian Aid online to stimulate your imagination!

One of the suggestions is to think about hand washing and how, in Scripture, it is closely associated with innocence and cleansing from sin. (Suggested scriptures: Exodus 30 verses 17 – 21; Psalm 26 verse 6; Job 9 verse 30; Matthew 27 verse 24 and James 4 verse 8)

This part of the service might involve music or something visual; it might involve silence.

If you choose to look at hand washing you might like to use this meditative prayer:

As we turn on the tap we turn our hands 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 our hands, purge from us all that brings us harm and might harm others.

Remove the invisible guilt and shame that so often keep us from you.

As we rinse our hands we trust in your overflowing grace making all things new.

Amen.

Prayer

This is a time for prayers for the world, for the communities in which we live; for the Church and those who minister here in any capacity; for those known to us to be in particular need of our prayers; for ourselves.

CLOSING BLESSING

MAY THE PRESENCE OF THE CREATOR REFRESH YOU

MAY THE COMFORT OF THE SON RENEW YOU

MAY THE INSPIRATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT RESTORE YOU

TO BE LOVE IN ACTION, EVEN FROM A DISTANCE, IN OUR NEIGHBOURHOODS, NEAR AND FAR, THIS DAY AND FOR EVERMORE. AMEN.

I have adapted material from various Christian Aid resources for this service.