

**Christ Church, Ipswich**  
*Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2022*  
**May Church Parade and Christian Aid Service**

Hello. I hope all is well.

**My sabbatical and summer leave**

We have been discussing this at Deacons and it's been mentioned at Church Meeting too, but it is possible I think that some friends may not be aware that I'm going on sabbatical in June and July, and then annual leave in August. With a little leave beforehand, my last day of ministry before this begins will be Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> May. If you were thinking of discussing something with me in the near future, please do get in touch with me over the next week or so before I disappear for the summer! We are very thankful to the Deacons and the Church for my sabbatical.

**Violet's Baptism next week**

We are really looking forward to celebrating Violet Fairbrother's baptism next Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> May. We're very grateful to Revd David Rees who will be joining us after leading worship at St John's URC to conduct the baptism.

**Today's Service**

This week, we'll be delighted to welcome the Scouts and Guides to our May all-age worship Service. We will include a focus upon the work of Christian Aid within this service which is at the start of this year's Christian Aid week.

Let us worship God together:

**A gathering prayer**

Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer,  
 we gather together,  
 to seek Your presence  
 in our time of worship.

**An opening prayer**

Meet us at our point of deepest need.  
 Connect us with the needs of others.  
 Equip us to join in your creative work.  
 Transform us more into your likeness.  
**We are hungry for your righteousness.**

We gather with Janet Zirugo  
 and her community in Zimbabwe this Christian Aid Week.  
 May her story make us hungry for justice  
 and even more impatient for change.  
**We are hungry for 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.**

## **R&S 289 To God be the glory, great things he has done!**

To God be the glory, great things he has done!  
So loved he the world that he gave us his Son,  
who yielded his life in atonement for sin,  
and opened the life-gate that all may go in.

*Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! Let the earth hear his voice!  
Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! Let the people rejoice!  
O come to the Father, through Jesus the Son;  
and give him the glory - great things he has done!*

O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood,  
to every believer the promise of God!  
And every offender who truly believes,  
that moment from Jesus a pardon receives:

Great things he has taught us, great things he has done,  
and great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son;  
but purer and higher and greater will be  
the wonder, the beauty, when Jesus we see:

Fanny Crosby (1820-1915) altd.

### **A prayer of adoration**

Lord of the heavens and the earth,  
Lord of all creatures above and below ground,  
Lord of the oceans, the ebb and flow of tides:  
**Lord of everything, your glory and majesty is supreme.**

Lord of all our yesterdays, written in the pages of history.  
Lord of what is to come, the story that is yet to unfold.  
Lord of our now, your presence among us:  
**Lord of everything, your glory and majesty is supreme. Amen.**

### **A prayer of praise and thanksgiving**

For being with us at our beginning,  
for being with us at our journey's end,  
for being with us today, here and now,  
we say a heartfelt:  
**Thank you, Lord.**

For relationships,  
for family and friends,  
for you making your home among us,  
we say a heartfelt:  
**Thank you, Lord.**

For your sharing our tears,  
for your words trustworthy and true,  
for your promises that give us hope,  
we say a heartfelt:  
**Thank you, Lord.**

For the journey we are on today;  
like excited youngsters asking 'Are we there yet?'  
our cry is, 'What next, Lord? What next?'  
For your ever-loving presence  
and the joyful expectation of what is to come,  
we say a heartfelt:  
**Thank you, Lord.  
Amen.**

### **The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

## Psalm 148

### *Praise for God's Universal Glory*

<sup>1</sup> Praise the Lord!

Praise the Lord from the heavens;  
praise him in the heights!

<sup>2</sup> Praise him, all his angels;  
praise him, all his host!

<sup>3</sup> Praise him, sun and moon;  
praise him, all you shining stars!

<sup>4</sup> Praise him, you highest heavens,  
and you waters above the heavens!

<sup>5</sup> Let them praise the name of the Lord,  
for he commanded and they were created.

<sup>6</sup> He established them for ever and ever;  
he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.

<sup>7</sup> Praise the Lord from the earth,  
you sea monsters and all deeps,

<sup>8</sup> fire and hail, snow and frost,  
stormy wind fulfilling his command!

<sup>9</sup> Mountains and all hills,  
fruit trees and all cedars!

<sup>10</sup> Wild animals and all cattle,  
creeping things and flying birds!

<sup>11</sup> Kings of the earth and all peoples,  
princes and all rulers of the earth!

<sup>12</sup> Young men and women alike,  
old and young together!

<sup>13</sup> Let them praise the name of the Lord,  
for his name alone is exalted;  
his glory is above earth and heaven.

<sup>14</sup> He has raised up a horn for his people,  
praise for all his faithful,  
for the people of Israel who are close to him.  
Praise the Lord!

This is a wonderful Psalm which sounds an all-inclusive call for praise of the Lord. From the heights of the heavens (v1-6) to the deepest depths of the earth (v7-12). Humanity, old and young, and of all genders, are called along with stars, sea monsters, stormy wind, cattle, birds and creepy crawlies to join in this chorus of praise. In the context of a world of climate injustice, this Psalm makes it crystal clear that we are all creatures. Humanity is part of creation. The raising up of a horn for his people (v14) is one of the catalysts for such praise. The horn of an ox or a ram is a symbol of power throughout the Old Testament. Those who hold power and influence are a key element of how we tackle this climate crisis. In our worship and praise as followers of Jesus, we look to God as the source of power, who models the kind of power that serves the weakest.

This Christian Aid Week, we are invited to praise God with Janet Zirugo, 70, who lives in Zimbabwe. She praises God with gladness as her family are no longer hungry: 'My life is changing. We are thankful.'

### Christian Aid Video

#### R&S 90 O Lord, all the world belongs to you

1. O Lord, all the world belongs to you  
and you are always making all things new.  
What is wrong you forgive,  
and the new life you give  
is what's turning the world upside down.
2. The world's only loving to it's friends,  
but your way of loving never ends,  
loving enemies too;  
and this loving with you  
is what's turning the world upside down.
3. The world lives divided and apart,  
you draw us together and we start  
in our friendship to see  
that in harmony we  
can be turning the world upside down.

4. The world wants the wealth to live in state,  
but you show a new way to be great:  
like a servant you came,  
and if we do the same,  
we'll be turning the world upside down.
5. O Lord, all the world belongs to you  
and you are always making all things new.  
What is wrong you forgive,  
and the new life you give  
is what's turning the world upside down.

Patrick Appleford (1925 - ) alt.  
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**New Testament Reading****Revelation 21:1-6**

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. <sup>2</sup> And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,  
 'See, the home of God is among mortals.  
 He will dwell with them;  
 they will be his peoples,  
 and God himself will be with them;

**Gospel Reading****John 13:31-35**

<sup>4</sup> he will wipe every tear from their eyes.  
 Death will be no more;  
 mourning and crying and pain will be no more,  
 for the first things have passed away.'  
<sup>5</sup> And the one who was seated on the throne said,  
 'See, I am making all things new.' Also he said,  
 'Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.'  
<sup>6</sup> Then he said to me, 'It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.  
 To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life.'

*Jesus Is Rejected by the Jews*

<sup>22</sup> At that time the festival of the Dedication took place in Jerusalem. It was winter, <sup>23</sup> and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the portico of Solomon. <sup>24</sup> So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, 'How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.'  
<sup>25</sup> Jesus answered, 'I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name testify to me; <sup>26</sup> but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep. <sup>27</sup> My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. <sup>28</sup> I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. <sup>29</sup> What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father's hand. <sup>30</sup> The Father and I are one.'

**A short talk on our Sunday Lectionary readings and the work of Christian Aid***Reflecting on Revelation 21:1-6*

- John writes of his vision in the book of Revelation. It is a revelation that brings not only hope for the future, but also a vision of how God wants the world to be. John writes the book of Revelation at a time when the Roman Empire is advancing. The Empire seeks more and more political and economic power. And to get it, the Romans demand that their own emperors and traditional gods are worshipped. But John is providing another way, the way of worshipping God. The scenes he describes provide encouragement to the early churches to directly challenge the powers that would suppress the Kingdom of God.

*The new creation*

- John's vision challenges us today to not settle into this contemporary global empire but to seek to understand a 'new heaven and new earth.'
- Here, God comes to dwell with mortals in a new earth, to live in the home that earth was intended to be. The earth as God's home gives us much inspiration to participate in that work of re-creation now. A work that challenges the loss and damage caused by climate injustice.
- The idea of the earth as God's home is described beautifully by Miroslav Volf and Matthew Croasmun: 'Human beings and the world come to fulfilment when they become in actuality what they have always been in intention: when God rules the world in such a way that God and the world are "at home" with each other – more precisely, when God comes to dwell in the world and when the world has become and experiences itself as being God's home.' (For the Life of the World, 2019.)

*Every tear wiped away*

- In both his vision in the throne room of Revelation 7:16-17 and in seeing the new heaven and new earth in Revelation 21:3-4, John draws our attention to God wiping away every tear from the eyes of those who have suffered.

- The anticipation of such comfort and tender compassion serves as a catalyst to us today to ensure the tears of frustration and desperation of those hungry to provide can be wiped away. To stand with people like Janet who are living at the sharp end of the climate crisis.
- Drought is making Janet's community hungry and impoverished, denying them the fullness of life and dignity God intended. We have an opportunity to participate in creating a glimpse of the earth as God's home when we work together to help women like her to grow fresh food to feed their families and to work to recover the loss and damage caused by climate injustice.
- In this season of Easter, verse 4 gives us much comfort and hope that the life-denying effects of the climate crisis, and the death and heartache of the global pandemic, will be no more. This and every Christian Aid Week, we work towards the day when all such injustices, death and suffering have ended.
- And in stories about drought and hunger from Zimbabwe, may the anticipation and invitation of verse 6: 'To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life,' come as refreshment to all our world-weary souls.

#### *Reflecting on John 13:31-35 - The new commandment*

- Jesus' giving of the commandment to love one another was new to the disciples. They were used to being asked to devote themselves to God but this commandment – love one another – was new in its scope and inspiration, spurred by the love that Jesus had for them.
- 'By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.' Jesus entreats us to demonstrate our love for him by loving one another. It is out of the fullness of the love poured into us by God that we in turn pour out love to our sisters and brothers.
- Love acts, as demonstrated so powerfully by Jesus enduring the cross and overcoming death.

Each action we take this Christian Aid Week demonstrates our love in action:

- give to help women grow crops that survive in the drought (Envelopes, donations)
- raise your voice for justice by joining the Christian Aid Loss and Damage campaign
- pray that families will stay strong and be provided for during times of drought.
- live actively caring for creation and people created in the image of God.

Amen.

#### ***A moment for reflection***

#### **The Compassion Hymn**

1. There is an everlasting kindness you lavished on us,  
When the radiance of heaven came to rescue the lost.  
You called the sheep without a shepherd to leave their distress,  
For Your streams of forgiveness and the shade of Your rest.

2. And with compassion for the hurting You reached out Your hand,  
As the lame ran to meet You and the dead breathed again.  
You saw behind the eyes of sorrow and shared in our tears;  
Heard the sigh of the weary, let the children draw near.

*What boundless love, what fathomless grace  
You have shown us, O God of compassion.  
Each day we live an offering of praise  
As we show to the world Your compassion.*

3. We stood beneath the cross of Calvary and gazed on Your face,  
At the thorns of oppression and the wounds of disgrace;  
For surely You have borne our suffering and carried our grief,  
As You pardoned the scoffer and showed grace to the thief.

4. How beautiful the feet that carry this Gospel of peace  
 To the fields of injustice and the valleys of need;  
 To be a voice of hope and healing, to answer the cries  
 Of the hungry and helpless, with the mercy of Christ.

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***Our prayers of intercession***

Lord of all,  
 we pray today for all in our world  
 who are ill- equipped to cope with what life brings them –  
 the poor, the hungry and the homeless;  
 the disabled, the sick and the suffering;  
 the oppressed, the weak, the persecuted.  
 Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

We pray for those denied their basic human rights –  
 a basic education,  
 employment,  
 freedom of speech and conscience,  
 or the proper reward for their labours.  
 Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

We pray for those living in lands racked by war,  
 victims of brutality and violence,  
 and we pray for refugees,  
 those with no country to call their own.  
 Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

We pray for those living in those parts of the world  
 which are seeing the greatest changes due to the climate crisis.  
 We pray for them  
 as they face great challenges that are not of their making  
 and as they seek to live and flourish despite this injustice.  
 Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

Lord of all,  
 we thank you for those  
 who have the courage to stand up for such people –  
 the courage to stand out against injustice,  
 and the faith to believe something can be done about it –  
 organisations like Christian Aid who worked tirelessly,  
 despite powerful opposition,  
 frequent misunderstanding,  
 and all kinds of obstacles,  
 to build a fairer world.  
 Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

Lord, give them strength to continue their work,  
and give us the will to support their cause,  
not just once each year in Christian Aid week,  
but every day,  
through the lives we live,  
the sacrifices we make,  
and the faith we proclaim.  
Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

We take a moment to also pray for those on our hearts today. We bring them before God now.

*A moment of quiet.*

Lord, in your mercy,  
**Hear our prayer. Amen.**

### **R&S 96 Great is thy faithfulness,**

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 hath 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.

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!

Thomas O. Chisholm (1866–1960)

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### **A sending out prayer**

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

### **The Blessing**

And may the blessing of God Almighty,  
Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer,  
be upon us and those we love, this day and always. **Amen.**

### **The Grace**

**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,  
be with us all evermore. Amen.**

Resources taken and adapted from Christian Aid, Nick Fawcett's *Prayers for all Seasons*, *ROOTS for Churches Limited*, and *BUGB Gathering for Worship*. The Bible reading is from the New Revised Standard Version Bible: Anglicised Edition, copyright © 1989, 1995 the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA. Used by permission. All rights reserved.  
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