



Christian Aid Week 10 – 16th May 2021

SOURCE

The source of the river motivates, sustains and inspires us to raise our prophetic voices for climate justice.

We come to the source of the water of life, to dwell in the presence of God in prayer.

*“let justice roll on like a river,
and righteousness like a never-failing stream”. Amos 5:24*

Amos spoke out against the suffering and oppression caused by injustice,
what actions do you take?

We follow in the footsteps of Amos when we choose to raise our voices against the climate crisis.

WHY do this?

Because, every day, people living in poverty are battling a crisis of survival they did not create.

This is unjust. This is climate injustice.

People like Rose in Kenya who has to walk further than ever before to get water in the drought. Every day, she walks 3 - 4 hours carrying heavy water containers on her return. She feels wearied by the journey and hungry from a lack of food.

Rose, whose feet are worn by walking, has hardly any ‘carbon footprint’.

This is the impact of climate injustice.



Prayer points

Ask God to refresh you if you are weary of the suffering in the world

Ask God to replenish you with whatever you need to live carefully with creation.

Ask God to renew your resolve to take action on the effects of climate breakdown.

Prayer

God of all creation,
we come, together or apart,
longing to meet with you to be
refreshed and restored by the
spring of living water, by the
source of all life.

In your mercy, meet with us here.
AMEN



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UPPER COURSE

The river flows fast in the upper stages of its journey. It is full of vigour. Waterfalls cascade, rapids rumble over rocks, valleys are sculpted by erosion.

There is so much energy to be harnessed.

This is the energy with which we hear the fervent words of Amos *“let justice roll on like a river, and righteousness like a never-failing stream”*. Amos 5:24

How does righteousness flow like a never-failing stream?
What does it mean to do the right thing?



The power of water leads us to consider renewable solutions to the climate crisis. Hydropower could be a good alternative to carbon-emitting fossil fuels, if done in the right way.

Yet, large hydro dams can often come at the cost of indigenous communities, and the sacred land that they have lived on for generations.

Prayer points

Pray that the voices of indigenous communities may be heard and heeded as we learn how to live in harmony with nature.

Pray for a rapid and just transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy.

Pray for a radical change of heart for politicians.

Pray that as a global community we will care for our common home and for people living in poverty, where the right thing is done in the right way.

Prayer

Spirit of God
who hovered over the waters,
harness your power in us
to live faithfully and in harmony
with the rhythms of righteousness,
for the restoration of creation
and the glory of your name.
Amen.



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MIDDLE COURSE

The river gets larger as it is joined by tributaries. The streams of water join forces to bring even greater transformation to the landscape. The river becomes an even greater agent of change.

In Ezekiel 11:1-20, the prophet Ezekiel speaks of the radical change made possible by the spirit of God:

‘I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them; I will remove their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh, so that they may follow my statutes and keep my ordinances and obey them. Then they shall be my people, and I will be their God.’



With help from Christian Aid, Florence and her community have built a different kind of dam from the hydro dams in Guatemala. It is a dam that stores rainwater, creating a longer-lasting source of water to help the community survive the climate crisis. This water supply has transformed their lives. Now, Florence uses the water to grow tomatoes, onions and chillies on her farm. Her children can eat healthy, nutritious vegetables. It's her source of life and joy.

Florence uses the water from the dam to keep honey bees. She sells the honey for cash at the market. She is reaping a good life for herself and her family.

‘I have been sustained by the earth dam,’ she says. ‘My life has changed. I am very happy. You can see on my face: my face is shining. I have strength and power.’

Prayer points

Pray for unity between world leaders on the need to take action for climate justice.

Pray that hearts inclined to self-interest and indifference to the suffering of others will be transformed.

Pray for whatever transformation is needed in your heart as you respond to the climate crisis.

Prayer

Our God,
we pray for transformation
of hearts and minds,
for the stones of indifference
to become hearts of compassion,
for the stones of anxiety
to become hearts of hope.
In your name we pray,
Amen.



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LOWER COURSE

The river is now wide and carries a lot of silt and stones, particularly when in spate from much rainfall. The surrounding land can be very fertile but also prone to flooding.

‘On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. (Revelation 22:2)

The rivers of Bangladesh are laced across the country, providing much-needed silt for soil fertility, yet the silt can often cause rivers to flood.

Coastal areas are also vulnerable to tidal surges which can flood entire villages. This is happening more frequently as typhoons bombard the area.

People defend themselves by building ‘protection dams’ to capture the flood water and protect their community. The dams work even better when they’re combined with a large, healthy buffer of mangrove forest; plants and trees to stabilise them. The roots of the trees hold soil together, prevent the silting of rivers and subsequent flooding, and the leaves absorb carbon dioxide.

That is why, in many programmes around the world, Christian Aid help people to plant trees.

‘When we plant trees,
we plant the seeds of peace and hope.’
Wangari Matthai, a Kenyan climate activist.



Michael Jr holds a tree sapling outside his home in Kenya

Points for prayer

Pray that the planting of trees would become an international priority and nature would be given space to flourish for the good of all creation.

Pray for protection for the forests of the Earth and for the end to the burning of the Amazon rainforest.

Pray for the vision of creation healed to inspire us all to do what we can to be part of that healing process.

Prayer

Creator God,
from the tree of the garden of Eden,
to the tree in the city in Revelation,
we thank you for your vision
of creation healed.
Help us to be your agents of
restoration,
tending to the beauty of the Earth,
and enabling your healing of the nations.
Amen.



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Kokoli catches crabs for a living in Bangladesh



Rose walks for over two hours to fetch water in Kenya



Michael Jr holds a tree sapling outside his home in Kenya



Florence and her community have built an earth dam for their village in Kenya



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MOUTH

As we reach the mouth of the river, it arrives at its destination,
flowing into the fullness of lake, loch, estuary, sea or ocean.
It lays down the load it has been carrying,
its energy is expended.

All around the world, young people are leading communities in the call for climate justice, to speak out and expend their energy for the restoration of creation. Glory experienced the terror and fury of Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines.

She encourages us all to get involved:



‘My message for the world is that we need to be responsible. We should be concerned about protecting our surroundings because they have been created for us. We have the wisdom to know what is right and what is wrong.’

Glory and her friend Lanie have fun

Points for prayer

Pray for courage and wisdom to lift your voice in the cause of climate justice.

Pray for young people to continue to be supported, empowered and listened to as a prophetic voice for climate justice.

Pray for Glory and all those living at the sharp edge of climate injustice to have the resources they need to prepare and be protected from the climate crisis.

Prayer (Based on Psalm 65:5-8.)

O God of our salvation,
you are the hope of all the ends of the Earth
and of the farthest seas.
By your strength you established the mountains,
you are girded with might.
You silence the thundering seas,
the roaring of the waves,
the tumult of the peoples.
Those who live at Earth's farthest bounds are
awed by your signs;
you make the gateways of the morning and
the evening shout for joy.
Help us to add our voice
to creation's praise and
to shout for climate justice.
Amen.



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Final blessing

Let justice roll down like a river,
may righteousness flow like a
never-ending stream
and may the joy of creation
fill you anew
as you pray, act and give for
the restoration of creation
and the flourishing of all people.
In the name of the
Creator, Son and Spirit,
Amen.