

9 May 2021

*Christ Church New Southgate  
& Friern Barnet*

Please join with us at 11am on Sunday in person, online or on paper.

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Welcome to Christ Church

*Children's song – God you made them all*

<https://youtu.be/z9hdZ6mEmLQ>

*Psalm 98*

O sing to the Lord a new song  
**sing to the Lord, all the Earth.**  
Sing to the Lord, bless his name;  
**tell of his salvation from day to day.**  
Declare his glory among the nations  
**his marvellous works among all the peoples.**

For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised.

Come and celebrate our common home  
**we gather with the family of humanity.**  
With the mountains, islands and deserts  
**we honour the glory of God in 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 God's generous provision.**

With the forests of great trees, the lungs of the planet  
**we will 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**

We dare to praise and pray  
**for another possible world.**  
**To the glory of God, Amen**

Adapted from 'We are the Amazon'

*All age activity: A-Z Thank you for creation*

Take a moment to write out the alphabet and think of something to thank God for from his creation of the world for each letter.

*Reading: John 15:9-17*

<sup>9</sup> I love you just as the Father loves me; remain in my love. <sup>10</sup> If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love.

<sup>11</sup> "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. <sup>12</sup> My commandment is this: love one another, just as I love you. <sup>13</sup> The greatest love you can have for your friends is to give your life for them. <sup>14</sup> And you are my friends if you do what I command you. <sup>15</sup> I do not call you servants any longer, because servants do not know what their master is doing. Instead, I call you friends, because I have told you everything I heard from my Father. <sup>16</sup> You did not choose me; I chose you and appointed you to go and bear much fruit, the kind of fruit that endures. And so the Father will give you whatever you ask of him in my name. <sup>17</sup> This, then, is what I command you: love one another.

*Christian Aid Week: Rose's Story*

Rose is caught in a cycle of climate chaos. From severe drought to flooding, extreme weather robs her of what she needs to survive: a reliable source of water. Without water, every day is a struggle. Without water, Rose is thirsty and hungry. This is her climate crisis.

'When I was a young girl, there was plenty of food,' Rose says. Now, the rains are totally unreliable. The climate crisis has galvanised extreme weather and Rose's community are

feeling the brunt of it. For months at a time, Rose lives with drought.

'I often feel hungry,' Rose says. 'Because of climate change, I worry a lot about food. I pray to God that the rainfall will become normal like it used to be.'

In recent years, the drought has been so bad that it's caused a hunger crisis. Crops wither and die. Rivers run dry. People struggle to survive.

Rose strives to provide for her grandchildren who live with her. She does all she can to give them happy childhoods, but the climate crisis is driving her to the brink.

In times of drought, Rose sets out on a long and dangerous journey every morning to collect water for her family. She walks on an empty stomach.

The coronavirus pandemic has only increased the urgent need for families to access a reliable source of water for handwashing.

In Kitui county, eastern Kenya, 8 out of 10 people depend on water to grow crops, for food and to earn a living. Without a reliable water source, staple crops like maize and beans are damaged and destroyed.

The lack of water forces people to walk further and further to find a dependable source. Cows, sheep and goats are becoming weak without access to water, and can't produce milk or be sold. People are struggling to cope. Lives are at risk.

#### *Prayer of Lament*

O God, 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.

#### *Confession*

God you know us.

You know that we can be loving and kind;  
and you know that sometimes we get things  
wrong.

We're sorry for the times we hurt other  
people,

forget to listen to you

and don't bother to take care of your world.

**God forgive us,**

**Jesus bless us.**

**God's Spirit help us to grow in love.**

**Amen.**

*Video prayer by Christian Aid's Global Theology  
Advisor, Bob Kikuyu.*

Great God,

Who makes the sun to rise, and opens the  
heavens

Hear the cry of the people

Who sow in hope for rain, but reap only  
despair

Hear the cry of the people

Seeking shelter from the storm, their hopes  
and homes submerged

Hear the cry of the people,

When creation is hitting back, with rage and  
resistance

Give us hope, grant us salvation,

Give us a new relationship with creation

With reverence to tend this gift from You

And say once again of the earth and all you

created  
It is GOOD.

*Sermon : May we know the joy of Jesus.*

This week we had Holly Park school come and visit our church. Two excitable year 4 classes enjoyed playing Christ Church Bingo and heard the story of Pentecost for the first time ever. At least 5 in each class had never been in a church before. 1 little boy had only ever been in a mosque. Nobody had seen a baptistry before. They were delightful children to host in our church. The Year 4 syllabus asks children to identify and understand the symbols and practices of places of worship. The first symbol we talked about was the bible. We looked up John 15 where Jesus says to his disciples – I am the vine. I asked the children : can you see a connection between this part of the bible and this building. Well - it kind of worked! For while they looked at the windows, they didn't know what a vine was or what it looked like, or that a vine is where grapes come from.

In Jesus' day, everyone knew where grapes came from. Vines and grapes were an abundant fruit in biblical times and are a dominant image throughout scripture. In the Psalms we see wine as a symbol of gladness and joy, look up Psalm 4 or 104 for examples. Further more we still the people of God as a vineyard, a role that Jesus fulfils completely inviting all of his disciples to be new followers on the vine. Jesus said: I am the real vine, and my father is the gardener v1. The image of the vine around this church reminds us to be connected to God and to keep connected to God. Abide in me and I abide in you.

Quite a few of the children were keen to know how old our church building is. My favourite guess was: '1975?' Another comment was this: 'if it was built a 100 years ago, how come it's still standing up?' 'With excellent and deep foundations' was my reply;

my reply and my hope for when we start building work here ! While these children today didn't know what a vine looked like, the people that lived in Friern Barnet in 1910 did know what a vine looked like. They knew what fruit and flowers symbolised because our community then was far more rural, even agricultural in parts. Still why did they start with the vine theme and carry it on? For it's not just on one window, it's on every single one, and even larger ones towards the front. Is it just to remember to remain in God?

Historically congregational and non-conformist churches were plain. But there began an architectural trend in the 1850s for our type of churches to use decoration. This is a picture of Rev. George Mauder's memorial window at the Wesley memorial Methodist church in Oxford. Apparently in the day biblical fruit and flowers were considered a safe choice to satisfy the congregation that it was still a non-conformist church but attract new people through the modern look. If you look closely at our building, you'll notice it has a slight art deco feel. Some of the window patterns echo of Rene Mackintosh designs, don't they? It seems reasonable to suggest that the building was designed to be attractive to the newcomer by embracing the trends of the day and referencing scripture for the existing congregation. For as you know the first church building was our hall built in 1883 and that building is plain indeed.

This third picture is called the triumph of the cross, it's on the dome above the altar at Basilica San Clemente in Rome. Here we see a extraordinary image of a vine with the cross coming out of it directly and from the foot of the cross comes branch after branch after branch. The message of our windows, isn't just to remain in Christ. It's to remain in Christ, because suffering is coming. Suffering can come at any time, without warning or delay. In the early days of this congregation, the Boar war was fought with world war 1

starting and world war 2 to come. The Spanish flu was to come in 1918. The war memorials on our left and right remind us of the great suffering endured by this congregation and so many others. Into this environment, the call of scripture is to remain in Jesus' love, remain connected to him for when trouble comes, and it will, it will sustain.

Verse 11 says this: 'I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.' Here Jesus is talking to his disciples about what is to come. He is about to go to die on the cross. He can see calvary, and yet encourages his disciples in joy.

This verse is the purpose statement of this long parting speech from Jesus to his disciples. To speak of joy when he himself is on the threshold of deep trial and suffering is an indication of what joy is. Hebrews 12.2 summarises Jesus' passion for us: It was for the joy set before him he endured the cross. Despite the suffering of the cross, the loneliness of the death, this is a joy that believes that resurrection is coming. This joy does not deny sorrow or suffering but co-exists with them.

Jesus' parting words to his disciples are an encouragement to abide in the love of God and dig deep into consistent, unending joy. And he knows that they are going to need each other to get through. Their love for one another and their sacrificial giving for their friends will strengthen them to endure. It is not duty, obligation or command that will enable them to remain faithful and bear lasting fruit. It is love, friendship and joy.

In this Christian Aid week, we seek to show love, friendship and joy. We hope that it is our love for one another that inspires our giving. That it is our friendship with communities we get to know through the stories of people like Rose that motivates us to sacrificial acts of solidarity. And it through

our generous giving and sacrificial actions that we bear lasting fruit and know complete joy.

The joy that we participate in and experience in and through Christian Aid Week does not lead us away from suffering and struggle, but towards it. We choose to look towards the pain and see the possibilities for transformation. Jesus goes on to explain to the disciples that even pain will turn to a joy that no one can remove (John 16:20-22).

This Christian Aid Week, as we choose to hear the struggle Rose faces, we pray for transformation and we act for change, so that our joy may be complete.

There is always one kid in every class who has a lot of questions. One boy kept on putting his hand up. His final question was this: what does the word communion mean? The heart of communion is sharing in bread and wine together. It also means sharing life together. Part of being a church is sharing in each other's sorrow and joy, to lift others up when they are weary and to be held when we are grieving. We demonstrate our love for God when we share our life together, we demonstrate our friendship with Christ when we care for our neighbours through Christian Aid, we find joy when we face suffering together knowing that joy comes in the morning. Let us remain in Jesus and discover this joy. May it bind our hearts, may it bind our life together, may this joy unite us and enable us to share God's joy wherever he may lead us.

*Reflective time of prayer*

*Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession*

God, in your mercy  
**hear our prayer.**

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.

God, in your mercy  
**hear our prayer.**

God who speaks through unexpected  
people,  
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 pray 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.

God, in your mercy  
**hear our prayer.**

God of second chances,  
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.

God, in your mercy  
**hear our prayer.**

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.

God, in your mercy  
**hear our prayer.**

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

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 for ever.  
Amen.

You can raise your prophetic voice by taking  
action right now. There are several  
opportunities to be involved in the campaign  
for climate justice in 2021.

- Sign up to be part of the Christian  
Aid prayer chain at  
[www.caid.org.uk/prayerchain](http://www.caid.org.uk/prayerchain)
- Give to Christian Aid
- Sign climate justice matters campaign  
[www.caid.org.uk](http://www.caid.org.uk)

## Notices

- Join in at Baptist assembly programme on 14-16 May.
- Please remember next week's service begins at 10.30am with the national Baptist service as part of the assembly

## *Blessing*

**May God bless us  
with wonder at creation's glory.  
May God bless us  
with fury at creation's spoiling.  
May God bless us  
with courage at this critical hour.**

And may the blessing of God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
rest upon us and  
on all creation,  
this day and  
for the future to come.  
Amen.

*Song: Let all creation sing*  
<https://youtu.be/ZeCJjiMYR74>