

# Unwavering hope

## A daily devotional

Christian Aid Week 14-20 May



Esther prays in her church in Malawi.



Jen Bishop in the field beside her home.

In Malawi, soaring costs of food and essentials are crushing dreams, keeping people in desperate poverty.

Children are robbed of the chance to go to school when their families can't pay the fees. Farmers are struggling to survive in the face of the climate crisis and its threat of devastating droughts, floods and storms.

Through our series of daily reflections, Bible readings and prayers, we will explore the lives of two strong women, Esther and Jen, who are determined to make their children's dreams come true.

For Esther Saizi, support from Christian Aid has been transformative.

By joining her local pigeon pea programme run by a Christian Aid partner, Nandolo Farmers Association, she is able to secure a fair price for her crops.

With her peas, Esther can support her daughter's dreams and send her beloved grandchildren to nursery.

For Jen Bishop, the future is more precarious. She's a loving mum who dreams of her children being able to have the education they deserve.

Her hard-working boys have earned places at top colleges – but Jen cannot afford to send them both.

No mum should have the heart-breaking choice of which child to educate, and which one will miss out on their dreams.

Esther Saizi and her cooperative meet every morning in the warehouse Christian Aid has built and bake bread from pigeon pea flour to sell at the local market.



**This Christian Aid Week, you can help dreams come true. With your gifts, prayers and actions, you could help farmers like Jen plant better seeds, secure a fairer price for their crops, and build happier futures for their children.**

At the back of this devotional, you'll see a prayer person. Please join us by writing a prayer for climate justice and returning it to us.

Support us by calling on the companies and countries most responsible for the climate crisis to pay for the loss and damage they have caused.

**Christian Aid has worked in Malawi for 20 years.** Together with our partners, we empower vulnerable communities to find practical and sustainable ways out of poverty. This includes giving them the skills to:

- grow crops that are more resilient to the climate crisis
- restore soil fertility
- increase harvests
- learn business skills
- join cooperatives to earn more for their crops.





Esther prayed for  
God's guidance when  
her husband died.



# Sunday

'Let the peace of Christ  
rule your hearts, since  
as members of one body you  
were called to peace. And be  
thankful' (Colossians 3:15, NIV)



This is Esther Saizi in Malawi. She's a baker, a farmer, a leader – and a woman strong in faith and hope.

When we met Esther, she welcomed us with a big smile. She told us: 'Every day, the first thing that I do when I wake up is pray. I thank the Lord for protecting me throughout the night, and then I ask him to be with me with everything I am going to do.'

Just like Esther, take some time today to pray. You could watch the sunset, go for a walk, listen to music, light a candle, or simply be still in God's loving embrace.

**What will you share with God today? What are you grateful for? Let your heart speak.**

Everlasting God,  
no matter what I face today,  
help me to remember  
you are with me, always.  
Thank you for guiding me,  
protecting me  
and holding me in your love.  
Amen.





# Monday

'For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also' (Matthew 6:21)

Esther gently rocks her grandson Emmanuel to sleep. He has been unwell, but within moments he is fast asleep in her arms.

She treasures her grandchildren. Their smiles. Their cheeky laughs. Their soft hands. As they grow, they remind her more and more of someone she's loved before.

**'When my husband passed away, I was heartbroken,' she says. 'I knelt down and prayed to God that he would help me. I also sat down with my children to say: "You can see the tragedy that has fallen on us, but the good thing is... we can continue his legacy."'**

Esther with her beloved grandsons, Nespp and Emmanuel.



Have you ever thought about what legacy you will leave? A legacy can be the lessons and values we pass on to our loved ones, but it can also be the gifts we leave too.

A gift in your Will can be a legacy of hope to others, such as your family and friends, but you may also like to consider leaving a gift to Christian Aid.

It's a gift that tells an inspiring story about the things you have cared about and valued in your lifetime. Even better, it could make a lasting difference to communities like Esther's, for generations to come.

**Today, you might wish to consider leaving a legacy of love for your global family. Please visit [caid.org.uk/legacy](https://caid.org.uk/legacy)**

Jesus,  
when our hearts break,  
you weep with us.  
Help us to have faith  
in your love that shines  
like the dawn.  
Amen.

# Tuesday

‘The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs’

(Matthew 13:31-32)

For 10 years, Esther grew pigeon peas. She never received a fair price from exploitative middlemen. She was devastated as a violent storm washed away her crops. She felt powerless in the face of the fierce weather caused by the climate crisis. She was desperate.

So it was a happy day when she joined her local cooperative. Esther learned how to store her peas in a warehouse, safe from increasingly frequent floods and storms. By joining together with other farmers, she could sell her peas for a better price. At last, she could turn her peas into profit.

With her pigeon peas, Esther can bake delicious bread, support her daughter's dreams, and send her grandsons to nursery.

**Like Esther's peas, our actions might seem small, but together we can make huge changes.**

**Today, will you pray for all we will achieve together this Christian Aid Week?**

God of goodness,  
open my eyes to see  
how we plant the seeds  
that hold future promise.  
Open my ears  
to hear your call.  
Open my heart  
to trust in your unfailing love.  
Amen.

**These tiny pigeon peas are bursting with life-changing goodness.**





# Wednesday

'I pray that God may give you a spirit of wisdom... so you may know what is the hope to which he has called you' (Ephesians 1:17-18)

Jen proudly dresses her son Chimwemwe for school.

Jen is full of hope for her talented children.

**'My heart longs to see my children finish school,' she says. 'These dreams are very important to me, because I want to be sure that I am creating a good future for my children.'**

Jen works hard to provide for her children. But she can barely scratch a living from the soil. Heavy rains are causing poor harvests and floods. Soaring costs of food, fuel and school fees are crushing dreams and keeping her family in poverty.

She faced a heartbreaking choice – which of her children

would she send to school, and which child would have to put their dreams on hold?

**This Christian Aid Week, you can help dreams come true. Your gift could help famers like Jen build happier futures for their children. Go to [caweek.org](http://caweek.org)**

God of love,  
awaken us to the dreams you  
hold for us.

When times are tough,  
help us hold onto hope.  
May we live in hope  
through all we say and do.  
Amen.



# Thursday

## Ascension

'Remember, I am with you always' (Matthew 28:20)

With these words, Jesus promises to watch over his friends and to be with them always.

What comfort these words bring to us today. Our world is troubled by war, soaring costs and the climate crisis. Yet there is always hope.

Hope is everywhere. Hope is in Esther's smile. Hope is in your kindness – whether you post envelopes, bake cakes, or pray with us this Christian Aid Week.

From her pigeon pea business, Esther bought tools to help her daughter Ziwoe set up a carpentry workshop with her husband Peter.

Like so many people in our own churches and communities, this young family is struggling with rising prices. But this warm-hearted couple are determined not to let this hold them back.

**'From the beginning of our marriage, one of the things that we told each other is that we have to be happy. Problems will always be there, but we must make sure that we are happy,' says Peter.**

**How can you keep hope and joy in your heart today?**

Risen Jesus,  
we give you thanks,  
for nothing, not life nor death,  
nor anything in creation,  
could ever separate us  
from your love for us.  
Kindle in our hearts  
your warm fire of justice,  
and an unwavering hope.  
Amen.

**Peter and Ziwoe  
with their sons  
Nespo and  
Emmanuel.**







# Friday

'Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said: "Take, eat; this is my body"' (Matthew 26:26)

Esther grinds flour from her pigeon peas to bake bread, cakes and doughnuts. And her family loves it.

Her daughter Ziwone tells us, laughing: 'My first-born son, Nespo loves the bread so much that when his grandmother comes without any bread, he gets really mad!'

Esther makes many tasty recipes from her pigeon peas.

'After I cook pigeon peas I invite my children. I share the food with everyone. It is food that makes a meal for the whole day,' she says.

The price of food has doubled in the last 12 months, but Esther's peas are keeping her family fed.

**Give thanks today for healthy, nutritious meals for Esther's family.**

Bread of life,  
broken for all,  
give us a generous heart  
to love our community  
as one family.  
Amen.



**Esther cooks up her famous one-pot wonder from her homegrown pigeon peas.**



**Esther shares her cooking with the whole community, including her daughter Ziwone and her grandchildren, Nespo and Emmanuel.**



# Saturday

'Jesus said to him: "Today salvation has come to this house"' (Luke 19:9)

**Esther checks her field of crops.**

It would have been easy to join in the crowds and mutter: 'Jesus is going into the house of a sinner.'

As a tax collector, Zacchaeus was despised. He lived lavishly while everyone else was struggling. But Jesus looks at Zacchaeus with love.

In turn, Zacchaeus promises to right his wrongs and give half of his possessions to help people in poverty. You can imagine Jesus' joy as he forgives him.

Just like the crowds, Esther was exploited by middlemen, who gave her a low price for her crops.

Esther was then robbed when a violent storm – made more

intense by the climate crisis – washed away her harvest.

The climate crisis has not been caused by people like Esther. It has been created by rich nations and fossil fuel companies.

Zacchaeus made restitution to those he had wronged. We believe those who have caused the climate crisis must do that same.

**Please join us in prayer.**

**Write your prayer for climate justice, on the next page.**

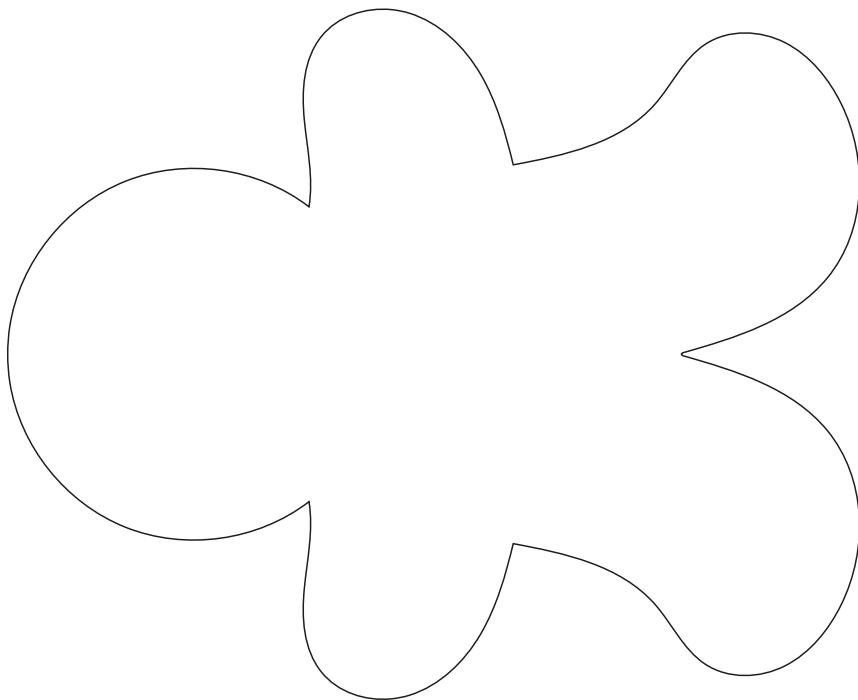
Use our church activity pack at **[caweek.org/riseup](https://caweek.org/riseup)** to involve others, and show that your church is united by hope.

# Add your prayer for climate justice

We believe that the companies and countries most responsible for the climate crisis need to pay for the loss and damage they have caused.

**Using the prayer person, write a prayer that polluters will right their wrongs and pay up. Send a picture of your prayer person to us to [dublin@christian-aid.org](mailto:dublin@christian-aid.org), and we'll add it to our online gallery.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email\* \_\_\_\_\_



\*If you are happy to hear from us by email, please provide those details above. We will keep you updated about our work and the difference your support is making. We promise never to share your details with any other organisation for marketing purposes. For more information please visit [caid.org.uk/privacy](https://caid.org.uk/privacy) or [caid.ie/privacy](https://caid.ie/privacy)

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