

Prayer Resource for Christian Aid Week 2024

Extraordinary Love

Thank you for joining us in prayer this Christian Aid Week.

The theme of our prayers is 'Extraordinary Love'. Together, we will explore God's love for us and our call to love our neighbour. We will hear too about Aline [pronounced Ahh-leen] Nibogora from Makamba Province in Burundi, and how she has persevered against the odds, persisting in faith, hope and love.

Using this resource

We have provided several options for the prayers of intercession, including written prayers, prayer prompts to inspire you, and suggestions for interactive intercessions.

Sharing Aline's Story

There are lots of ways to share Aline's story as part of your service. You can use our **Christian Aid Week Film**, which can be downloaded in advance. Alternatively you can find a series text boxes in the service below containing short readings for members of your church to share aloud. You can use our **PowerPoint slides** to show images of Aline, her family and Christian Aid's work in Burundi.



Aline Nibogora reading her Bible outside her house in Kayagoro village, Makamba, Burundi.

Prayer of Approach

God our comforter and source of our hope, we invite you to be present with us today.

Unite our hearts, as we lift up our global neighbours to you.

Jesus, let us be vessels of your abundant, transformative love, as we live as salt and light in your world.

Holy Spirit, stir up in us a prophetic voice, that we can speak boldly against injustice and systems of oppression.

Father, will you inspire us to put the wellbeing and dignity of others first, as together we build a world free from poverty.

In Jesus' name we pray,

Amen.

Prayer of confession with response

Creator God, you made us and cherish us as your beloved creation.

We confess that we have failed to care for the world you brought into being.

We have polluted the earth; we have consumed without thought for the future.

We have hardened our hearts and turned away from communities devastated by the climate crisis.

Out of the greatness of your love.

Lord, forgive us.

Jesus, you call us to love one another.

We confess that we have failed to love others as you love us.

Too often we have ignored cries for justice.

We have given our energies to protecting what is ours and failed to acknowledge that all we have actually belongs to you.

Out of the greatness of your love.

Lord, forgive us.

Holy Spirit, you give us wisdom and guide our ways.

We confess those times we have relied on ourselves alone, as though we had no need of you;

Those times we have ignored our neighbours cry for help because it would cost us our sense of comfort.

These choices cause ourselves to become dry ground, unable to grow the fruits of love, peace, joy and gentleness.

Yet through all our failings and faults you never leave us – you call us back to the right path and guide our steps always.

Out of the greatness of your love.

Lord, forgive us.

Prayer for action

Loving God,

Help us to listen to, and respond to, the voices of those enduring extreme poverty.

We know that compassion for others can bring healing and fullness of life for all, and we want to partner with you in seeing people experience this in Your name.

Help us to understand that we are one through your love, and that we are all loved by you beyond measure.

Jesus, we know that your call to go and make disciples of all nations means that you want us to build your kingdom of justice, mercy, and humility.

It isn't a task for the faint-hearted, but you haven't asked us to do this alone.

You have sent the Holy Spirit to strengthen us and guide us as we go out in Your name.

Holy Spirit, when we lose our sense of purpose, would you fill us with certainty.

When we doubt or throw up our hands in despair, would you fill us with faithfulness.

When we are tempted to choose our own comfort over helping others, would you fill us with the love of Christ that leads us to take up our cross to follow Him.

In Jesus' name we pray,

Amen.

Prayer of Intercession

Father God, we are thankful for your love that changes us. Your love turns our priorities upside down and, in doing so, makes us more fully ourselves.

Thank you for the people you have brought into our lives who have shown us tenderness, care and compassion when we have needed it most.

Remembering Aline's experience, we lift up people we know and people around the world who need to experience that same love and care. We pray that you would bring people into their lives who would journey alongside them, bringing them hope and ensuring their dignity in Jesus' name.

Lord, we pray for people around the world brought to the brink by extreme poverty, who are struggling to survive.

We pray especially for families in Burundi who do not have enough food, clean water, or access to healthcare. You call us in Proverbs to 'defend the rights of the poor and needy.'

Fill us with a holy determination to end the outrage of poverty. May we hear the cries of those who are excluded from power, and may we speak up with them as we cry out for justice in Your Name.

God, we are thankful for how Christian Aid Week is an opportunity for our church family to demonstrate Your love in action to our local and global community.

We give thanks for everyone who gives their time, gifts and resources during Christian Aid Week, and beyond. We pray that you would bless their efforts as they come together with a shared desire to end poverty.

Give them a deep sense of joy as they partner with You, and renew their strength as they faithfully seek to bring light to those trapped in darkness by poverty, injustice and inequality.

We offer these prayers in Jesus' name.

Amen.

Alternative Intercession Prayers

Offer your own prayers of intercession in response to these prompts:

- The people of Burundi as they continue to heal and rebuild after years of civil conflict which has caused internal displacement, trauma and fear.
- Christian Aid's partners in Burundi: Network of Religious Confessions for the Promotion of Health and Integral Wellbeing of the Family (RCBIF); the Council for Education and Development (COPEDE); the Anglican Community Development Service (SADC).
 - That they would have wisdom as they make decisions regarding projects and funding.
 - That all they do would demonstrate integrity and love to everyone they come in contact with.
 - That they would be protected and renewed both physically and mentally as they engage in incredibly demanding work.
- Village Savings and Loans Associations: that they may succeed in their mission of helping communities lift themselves out of poverty.

Reflective Prayer

You will need objects with rough and smooth textures, for example squares of sandpaper or pine cones, and smooth pebbles or beads.

Invite those present to begin by holding the rough textured object in their hands and lightly running their fingers over it (being careful not to hurt themselves).

Pray together (in silence or aloud) for those in difficulty, for anyone struggling with injustice. Ask for God's help in our own troubles. Call to mind a time we have failed to love our neighbour as we should. Pray about the difficulties of holding on to hope and faith during the rough patches in our lives.

Now invite people to hold the smooth object and explore its texture.

Pray together (in silence or aloud) with thanksgiving for God's steadfast love.

Pray for change in our world. Call to mind a time we have been a neighbour to others or received loving care from others. Pray that by God's grace and through our actions, justice, peace, and compassion would grow.