

Westminster Abbey



A Service of Thanksgiving and
Reflection on the 80th Anniversary
of Christian Aid



Thursday 12th June 2025
Noon

80 YEARS OF HOPE

In the aftermath of the Second World War – with lives upended and countries laid to waste – the churches of Britain and Ireland united to support refugees. From communities who were themselves reeling from the effects of the war, congregations gave sacrificially and in solidarity, laying the cornerstone of a movement that would go on to become Christian Aid.

And with every new generation ever since, a vast global network of supporters, partners, churches, and staff have harnessed something formidable. Something that cannot be silenced by injustice. Something that refuses to sit back and watch poverty ravage communities. I call it the unstoppable power of faith, hope, and love.

Our faith drives us forward in the knowledge that poverty was never part of God's plan for the world and that through collective action with people of every faith and belief, we can work together for good.

Hope inspires us to ask difficult questions and seek to tackle the causes of poverty, such as the climate crisis, conflict, and unfair economic systems. Hope compelled us to campaign against apartheid and hope drove us forward to campaign for debt relief and to create the fair-trade movement. Hope is in our hearts when we campaign for wars to cease and work with partners across social, political, religious, and cultural divides, building peace so people everywhere can restore and protect their dignity and freedom.

Christian Aid's approach is to shift power and decision-making to local communities, investing in locally-led responses so that people living in poverty can make their voices heard and create their own opportunities for a life free from poverty.

Above all, our greatest motivation is love. Love sustains us with energy and passion as we re-commit to continue to work alongside our sisters and brothers worldwide.

*The Right Reverend and Right Honourable Dame Sarah Mullally DBE
Bishop of London and Chair of the Board of Trustees, Christian Aid*

NURTURE HOPE, GROW CHANGE

Like Christian Aid, justice, love, dignity, and equality have been driving forces for my community activism.

I was born into a caste where people are forced to clean human waste by hand, simply because of birth. This is not a job — it is indignity imposed upon us.

Growing up, I was taunted and called an 'untouchable'. I couldn't understand why my community should be forced into a menial occupation like manual scavenging; why I was made to feel inferior, or why the caste system should dictate terms for my whole life.

From childhood, I saw this injustice and I longed for another way. For over 40 years, I have worked to liberate my people. But I have not done this alone.

With the support of Christian Aid, I founded *Safai Karmachari Andolan* – a campaign to help people find a way out of manual scavenging and into other dignified livelihoods, free from stigma. We see a society without caste discrimination or gender norms that limit potential. We have over 6,300 volunteers in communities that work to raise awareness of rights.

Finally, our efforts led to the amendment of laws in 2013. Strict measures were brought in to finally eliminate manual scavenging. This legal change has allowed women to assert their rights more confidently. No longer are they asking for mercy, but they are demanding justice – they know their legal rights and can stand on the law.

Your love, solidarity and compassion are expressed in our lives and in the movement. It helps us speak truth.

From childhood, I hoped for change. Whenever we hope for something, hope becomes a part of our lives.

On Christian Aid's 80th anniversary, I implore you to nurture hope deep in your heart, allow it to grow and blossom into fruits of change.

Bezwada Wilson
Founder, *Safai Karmachari Andolan*, Delhi

Members of the congregation are requested kindly to refrain from using private cameras, video, or sound recording equipment. Please ensure that mobile phones and other electronic devices are switched off. The whole of the church is served by a hearing loop. Users should turn their hearing aid to the setting marked T.

The service is conducted by The Reverend David Stanton, Sub-Dean.

The service is sung by the Westminster Abbey Special Service Choir, directed by Matthew Jorysz, Sub-Organist.

The organ is played by Paul Greally, Assistant Organist.

The Sacred Choir, Twyford Church of England High School, and the Kingdom Choir are led by Karen Gibson MBE. The soloist is Emmanuel Smith.

Before the service, St Mary's Church of England School, Walthamstow, sing outside the Great West Doors of the Abbey.

Before the service, the Sacred Choir, the Kingdom Choir, together with Emmanuel Smith, sing

We are Marching in the Light of God *traditional Zulu*
(Siyahamba)

Alexander Hamilton, Deputy Organist, plays

Pièce d'orgue BWV 572 *Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)*

Andante from Trois Pièces *Josephine Boulay (1869–1925)*

Lied from *Louis Vierne (1870–1937)*
Vingt-quatre Pièces en style libre

Paean from Five Short Pieces *Percy Whitlock (1903–46)*

Allegretto grazioso H 56 *Frank Bridge (1879–1941)*

Westminster from London Suite *Eric Coates (1886–1957)*

Meditation on Brother James's Air *Harold Darke (1888–1976)*

Sponsoring and supporting Church Leaders process to their places in the Lantern.

The Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, together with the High Commissioners of Zambia, Bangladesh, and Sierra Leone, arrive. They are received by the Sub-Dean and Chapter. Presentations are made and they are conducted to their seats.

The Right Worshipful the Lord Mayor of Westminster, Councillor Paul Dimoldenberg, is received. Presentations are made and he is conducted to his seat. All stand and sit as directed.

ORDER OF SERVICE

The choir sings the Introit

ALmighty and everlasting God, give unto us the increase of faith, hope, and charity; and, that we may obtain that which thou dost promise, make us to love that which thou dost command; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Naji Hakim (b 1955)

Collect for the Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity

All stand to sing the Hymn, during which the procession moves to places in Quire and the Sacrarium.



TELL out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord:
unnumbered blessings, give my spirit voice;
tender to me the promise of his word;
in God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his name:
make known his might, the deeds his arm has done;
his mercy sure, from age to age the same;
his holy name, the Lord, the Mighty One.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his might:
powers and dominions lay their glory by;
proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight,
the hungry fed, the humble lifted high.

Tell out, my soul, the glories of his word:
firm is his promise, and his mercy sure.
Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord
to children's children and for evermore.

Woodlands 186 NEH
Walter Greatorex (1877–1949)

Timothy Dudley-Smith (1926–2024)
after Luke 1: 46–55

All remain standing. The Reverend David Stanton, Sub-Dean, gives the Bidding

WE gather on holy ground to give thanks to God for the life and witness of Christian Aid. In this Service of Thanksgiving to mark their 80th Anniversary, we are given the opportunity to reflect on the incredible journey taken together with global partners, and in solidarity with so many communities in crisis.

In these 80 years, Christian Aid has witnessed the unstoppable power of hope in action; providing long-term development support and humanitarian relief worldwide, highlighting suffering, tackling injustice and championing people's rights. With global partners, Christian Aid has reached millions, helping them overcome poverty, rebuilding lives, and facing the challenges of today. Together we work to build a world where everyone can live with dignity, equality, and justice: work rooted and grounded in love.

Today as we gather together, we will reflect on the profound impact of our collective efforts and recommit ourselves to the cause of hope, and we honour the unwavering spirit that continues to fuel the work of Christian Aid.

All sit. The Right Reverend Dame Sarah Mullally DBE, Bishop of London and Dean of His Majesty's Chapel Royal, and Patrick Watt, Chief Executive Officer for Christian Aid, give a Reflection

All stand to sing the Hymn



ALL my hope on God is founded;
He doth still my trust renew.
Me through change and chance he guideth,
only good and only true.
God unknown,
he alone
calls my heart to be his own.

Pride of man and earthly glory,
sword and crown betray his trust;
what with care and toil he buildeth,
tower and temple, fall to dust.
But God's power,
hour by hour,
is my temple and my tower.

God's great goodness aye endureth,
deep his wisdom, passing thought:
splendour, light, and life attend him,
beauty springeth out of naught.
Evermore
from his store
new-born worlds rise and adore.

Daily doth th' Almighty giver
bounteous gifts on us bestow;
his desire our soul delighteth,
pleasure leads us where we go.
Love doth stand
at his hand;
joy doth wait on his command.

Still from man to God eternal
sacrifice of praise be done,
high above all praises praising
for the gift of Christ his Son.
Christ doth call
one and all:
ye who follow shall not fall.

Michael 333 NEH

Meine Hoffnung stehet feste Joachim Neander (1650–80)

Herbert Howells (1892–1983)

translated by Robert Bridges (1844–1930)

All sit. Bishop Mike Royal, General Secretary, Churches Together in England, reads the first Reading

WITH what shall I come before the Lord,
and bow myself before God on high?
Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings,
with calves a year old?
Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams,
with tens of thousands of rivers of oil?
Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?
He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?

Micah 6: 6–8

Thanks be to God.

Placards representing eighty years of Christian Aid are processed past the High Altar. During the Procession, The Sacred Choir and Kingdom Choir sing

When I needed a neighbour

Sydney Carter (1915–2004)

Ally Barrett (b 1975)

words commissioned for Christian Aid's 80th Anniversary

All sit. Storm Cecile reads her own poem, The unstoppable power of hope

The Reverend Canon Kate Bottley, Minister, Ordsall (All Hallows) & Retford St Michael, Christian Aid Supporter, reads the second Reading

A LAWYER stood up to test Jesus. 'Teacher,' he said, 'what must I do to inherit eternal life?' He said to him, 'What is written in the law? What do you read there?' He answered, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself.' And he said to him, 'You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.'

But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, 'And who is my neighbour?' Jesus replied, 'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while travelling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, "Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend." Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?' He said, 'The one who showed him mercy.' Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'

Luke 10: 25–37

Thanks be to God.

All stand to sing the Hymn



FATHER, hear the prayer we offer:
not for ease that prayer shall be,
but for strength that we may ever
live our lives courageously.

Not for ever in green pastures
do we ask our way to be;
but the steep and rugged pathway
may we tread rejoicingly.

Not for ever by still waters
would we idly rest and stay;
but would smite the living fountains
from the rocks along our way.

Be our strength in hours of weakness,
in our wanderings be our guide;
through endeavour, failure, danger,
Father, be thou at our side.

Sussex 357 NEH
traditional English melody

Aspiration after Psalm 23
Love Maria Willis (1824–1908)

All sit. The Reverend Dr Jerry Pillay, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, and Minister in the United Presbyterian Church of South Africa, gives the Address

The choir sings the Anthem

THE spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he hath anointed me
to preach the gospel to the poor:
he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted,
to preach deliverance to the captives,
and recovering of sight to the blind,
to preach the acceptable year of the Lord;
to give unto them that mourn a garland for ashes,
the oil of joy for mourning,
the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness,
that they might be called trees of righteousness,
the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.

For as the earth bringeth forth her bud,
and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth,
so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise
to spring forth before all the nations;
as the earth bringeth forth her bud.

*from The Apostles Op 49
Edward Elgar (1857–1934)*

Isaiah 61: 1–3, 11

All stand for the Act of Recommitment. Bezwada Wilson, Founder of Safai Karmachari Andolan, a Christian Aid partner in India, says

Hope brings us here. As God the Creator brought life and light into creation, we are called to bear God's light into the world.

Diana Gichengo, Executive Director of The Institute of Social Accountability, a Christian Aid partner in Kenya, says

Hope holds us together. As God the Son brought good news to the oppressed and commanded us to love one another as he has loved us, we are called to proclaim that love in our words and in our actions.

Bezwada Wilson says

Hope pushes us forward. As God the Spirit comforts, challenges, and keeps us, we are called to work for the kingdom as one body, knit together in the unstoppable power of hope.

Diana Gichengo says

Hope brings us here. Hope holds us together. Hope pushes us forward. Today, we recommit to that hope, and the love we bear for one another and all God's creation.

Destiny Ocheje, a student from Twyford Church of England High School, says

Today, in this place, as fellow children of God, do you commit yourself to walk in the ways of peace and justice?

We do

Today, in this place, do you commit to answering God's call, giving more together than we can give alone, and living a life of service to God and your neighbour?

We do

As we walk forward together, do you commit to putting your hope into action and bearing the love of God into the world?

We do

Bezwada Wilson says

Christian Aid Family, we are part of a global neighbourhood. As we stand together, we connect and commit to one another and to the world in the unstoppable power of hope.

The Reverend Helena Bickley-Percival, Sacrist, says

Let us pray

All sit or kneel

Elizabeth Hutcheson, Christian Aid Organiser, Shawlands Trinity Church, Glasgow, says

WE give thanks for the staff and volunteers of Christian Aid who, for the past eighty years, have given of themselves in the support of the most vulnerable across the world. We pray for those who continue to work to bring dignity and hope where there is inequality and despair, that they might know the strength and power of the Holy Spirit.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Dr Cynan Llwyd, General Secretary of Churches Together in Wales, says

WE give thanks to God for the gift of his creation, and all that gives us hope and sustains us in our work. We pray for all supporters of Christian Aid and for our partner organisations, that those who work in the midst of danger and difficulty might be upheld by the love of Christ.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Robert Haywood, Christian Aid Volunteer, London, says

LET us pray for all those who are wounded by conflict, injustice and poverty; for all who are at risk or in distress this day and who are unable to live full and flourishing lives. We pray for that day when peace will reign over the earth, and all people will be known, loved, and valued as God's children.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

The Reverend Helen Cameron, President of the Methodist Conference, says

GOD of justice and mercy, we cry out for a world where all are treated as equals, where no one is oppressed, and dignity belongs to all people. Break the chains of injustice. Lift up the weak and humble the powerful. Make love our foundation. Let peace and justice flow like a river that never runs dry.

*a prayer from Christian Aid Partner, Peter Nasir,
General Secretary of the East Jerusalem YMCA*

Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

The Sacrist concludes

In confidence and hope let us pray in the words that Jesus taught us:

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.
And 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.

All stand to sing the Hymn



O JESUS, I have promised
to serve thee to the end;
be thou for ever near me,
my Master and my Friend;
I shall not fear the battle
if thou art by my side,
nor wander from the pathway
if thou wilt be my Guide.

O Jesus, thou hast promised
to all who follow thee,
that where thou art in glory
there shall thy servant be;
and, Jesus, I have promised
to serve thee to the end;
O give me grace to follow,
my Master and my Friend.

O let me hear thee speaking
in accents clear and still,
above the storms of passion,
the murmurs of self-will;
O speak to reassure me,
to hasten or control;
O speak, and make me listen,
thou guardian of my soul.

O let me see thy footmarks,
and in them plant mine own;
my hope to follow duly
is in thy strength alone;
O guide me, call me, draw me,
uphold me to the end;
and then in heaven receive me,
my Saviour and my Friend.

Wolvercote 420 NEH
William Ferguson (1874–1950)

Hymn for the Newly Confirmed
John Bode (1816–74)

The Sub-Dean pronounces the Blessing

GO forth into the world in peace; be of good courage; hold fast that which is good; render to no-one evil for evil; strengthen the faint-hearted; support the weak; help the afflicted; honour all people; love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be amongst you and remain with you always.
Amen.

All remain standing as the procession moves to the west end of the Abbey Church

Music after the service:

Prelude in E flat BWV 552i

Johann Sebastian Bach

The bells of the Abbey are rung

Members of the congregation are requested kindly to remain in their seats until directed to move by the Honorary Stewards

There will be a retiring collection for Christian Aid.

To donate, please scan the QR code below:

