

WORSHIP AT HOME
SUNDAY 9th MAY 2021



CHRISTIAN AID WEEK

The theme of this service is “The Song of the Prophets” and is offer to us by Christian Aid. Throughout the service there will be reflections by some of the prophetic voices of today as well as the ancient, prophetic voice of Micah.

[You will need a bible for the 2 readings.](#)

CALL TO WORSHIP from Psalm 96

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.

HYMN

<https://youtu.be/ZeCJiMYR74>

*Let all creation sing before the Lord
and every nation of the earth rejoice,
let all the trees lift a shout of joy
for the Lord is King.*

*Let the deep waters of the sea resound,
let every mountain, every hill sing out,
let all the fields make a joyful sound
for the Lord is King.*

Mighty river, barren desert,
howling wind and stormy weather,
every canyon every valley,
sing your praise and give him glory.
Nature proclaims the glory of our God,
nature proclaims his name.
Every star and constellation,
every wonder in the heavens,
silver moon and supernova,
sing a shining hallelujah!

Nature proclaims the glory of our God,
nature proclaims his name.
Honey bees and weeping willows,
grizzly bears and armadillos,
every narwhal and sea otter,
every son and every daughter.
Nature proclaims the glory of our God,
nature proclaims his name.

La la la la la la la
- All the earth, praise the Lord
La la la la la la la
- All the earth, praise the Lord.

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OPENING PRAYER

We celebrate our common home
**we worship 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 many prophetic voices of today,

we dare to praise and pray for the possibility of a transformed world. To the glory of God, Amen.

READING PSALM 96 vs 11-13

THE 1ST PROPHETIC VOICE

19-year-old Glory from the Philippines

"I am 19-year-old Glory, from the Philippines. I live on a small island of Tabugon, Carles with my family. It's beautiful and peaceful, with fresh air, coral reefs, and fresh seafood. But it is changing. Living on an island is very challenging. I really feel the impact of climate change. My message for the world is that, we must act on the crisis of climate change. We need to be responsible. We should be concerned on protecting our surroundings because this has been created for us. We have the wisdom to know what is right and what is wrong."

CONFESSION

For the beauty of the Earth desecrated by pollution, extinguished by forest fires, choked by plastic waste, **Christ our God, to you we plead; forgive us for systemic greed.**

For the urgency of this hour, ignored by apathy or procrastination, wasted by ineffective decisions, denied by economic interests;

Christ our God and Saviour, forgive us for selfish, short-term behaviour.

For the joy of human love fractured by forced migration, crushed by bereavement, lost to typhoons, floods, starvation; Christ, **our God, bringer of justice and hope, forgive us for this climate crisis.**

May God the Father forgive us, God the Son, heal us and God the Holy Spirit inspire us to truly love and value all creation and humanity AMEN.

We reflect upon our transgressions as we read or listen to the next song.

HYMN

<https://youtu.be/-LsqrROrAcM>

If the fields are parched
and the trees are felled
will the rocks cry aloud on their own?
If the birds are starved
and the beasts are killed
will the bones in the dust lift a song?

*Have mercy, Lord,
have mercy, Lord.
Forgive our broken ways.
Have mercy, Lord,
have mercy, Lord.
Renew the world you made.*

As the oceans rise
and the wells run dry
do we care if disaster is near?
If our children starve
will they cry to God?
Will they curse us for closing our ears?

Still a day will come
when the Lord returns
and the earth will be perfect again
No more greed or war,
no more tooth and claw,
for the wolf and the lamb will be
friends.

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THE 2nd PROPHETIC VOICE The
prophet Micah

READING Micah 6: vs 1-9

HYMN STF 255

<https://youtu.be/vqCOqgQhFyo>

The kingdom of God
is justice and joy,
for Jesus restores
what sin would destroy;
God's power and glory
in Jesus we know,
and here and hereafter
the kingdom shall grow.

The kingdom of God
is mercy and grace,
the captives are freed,

the sinners find place,
the outcast are welcomed
God's banquet to share,
and hope is awakened
instead of despair.

The kingdom of God
is challenge and choice,
believe the good news,
repent and rejoice!
His love for us sinners
brought Christ to his cross,
our crisis of judgement
for gain or for loss.

God's kingdom is come,
the gift and the goal,
in Jesus begun,
in heaven made whole;
the heirs of the kingdom
shall answer his call,
and all things cry glory
to God all in all!

Bryn Rees (1911–1983)

REFLECTION

The biblical scholar Walter Brueggemann has shown us one of the tasks of prophets is to inspire our imagination, to offer an alternative vision in which the Earth might be a different and better place, and then live that envisioned world into a reality. Micah is one such biblical prophet, but we might wonder if someone writing millennia before greenhouse gas emissions and ecological breakdown has anything to contribute as a source of hope and inspiration for action on the climate crisis.

Much like climate scientists and eco-activists have been clamouring for the attention of the world in the past few decades, Micah begins his prophecy with a message that is intended to go global: 'Hear, you peoples, all of you; listen, O earth, and all that is in it.' (Micah 1:2)

Micah names and shames the corruption of the political leaders, the dishonesty of the merchants and greed of those who control the use of land. He denounces their exploitation and oppression of people and land, he sees these social injustices as integral to the idolatry of the people of Israel, the misplaced worship and devotion to greed that religious leaders of his day have allowed to happen on their watch.

The work of theologian Walter Wink has shown us that such naming of the systemic 'powers' of injustice, along with a deliberate engagement with their spiritual and material manifestations, is a necessary step towards their redemption and establishing a vision of shalom.

As with Micah, so too climate injustice feeds upon the prolific idolatry and fallen principalities of money, power and rapacious self-interest, fuelled by the myth of perpetual growth. These false gods continue to entice the world away from a biblical vision of peace and justice.

If we are to imagine the better world presented to us in "The Song of the Prophets," then we need to begin with naming and engaging the systemic powers that have led to the injustices that now mar creation and threaten the survival of life. We do this not necessarily to condemn specific people, companies or practices, but to reveal their destructive consequences and engage them in an imaginative and prophetic return to their true vocations.

Micah does this memorably. Early in the prophecy, his incisive metaphors and subtle innuendo, play on names of the towns that perpetuate these injustices, leaving the message of judgment abundantly clear. Other prophets were known to resort to creative measures to getting their point across: Jeremiah smashed jars, Ezekiel dug through walls, and Isaiah walked around naked – to name just a few ways they grabbed attention and emphasised their message.

According to Micah, there's a lot of woe coming to those in power who plan injustice and plot 'evil deeds on their beds and even more trouble is on its way for those who are bribed to proclaim that everything on Earth is just as God would have it and 'no harm' will then befall us.

Climate chaos is not only coming, it is already upon us, not as punishment

from heaven but as a direct result of our behaviour. As ever, those harmful actions originate predominantly in the global North, but most perilously impact the poorest people on the planet as evidenced through Christian Aid.

God calls upon the mountains and the hills, the foundations of the Earth itself as witnesses for the prosecution of Israel. Back then, nature was only called to testify to the selfishness of the people and the injustices visited upon the poor. Now creation might be summoned as a wounded and feverish victim too.

While we might look to our own resources and solutions in response, God presents us with a more radical challenge in those familiar words of Micah *'what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?'*

God requires us to do justice with those who are the worst affected yet least responsible for the climate crisis. To do justice also requires justice for the Earth, to acknowledge that the raging fires, flooding rivers, devastating typhoons and species extinction are a result of the grave injustice of exploitation and neglect of the natural rhythms we must learn to live with in harmony.

God requires us to embody loving mercy and kindness. While this, of course, demands that we act with compassion for the wounded creation and for its hurting people, it also begs what may be the more difficult question: how are we to engage the fallen powers in such a way that show redeeming mercy to those who continue to reject the radical changes that are needed for a climate crisis to be averted? Is it to believe with hope that perhaps even the most ardent climate change-denying politician, or the most active carbon-emitting company has the potential to change?

It also offers an invitation to show ourselves mercy for any guilt we may feel for our own carbon dependency. Such mercy might save us from silent shame and allow us to loudly call for the system change needed.

And walking humbly means turning to God in prayer, in continuous and collective prayer for the planet. By joining with our sisters and brothers across the world in prayer, we remind ourselves that the Earth is the Lord's. In setting our hearts to seek God, we galvanise our courage to do justice and love mercy as we respond to the challenge and join in the mission of God in restoring the Earth.

THE 3rd PROPHETIC VOICE the communities experiencing climate change.

“Drought drives people to the brink. Storms tear families apart. Raging waters show no mercy. Our world is in crisis. We have the power to stop it. People living in poverty are on the frontline of this climate crisis. They are losing food, water, homes and family. Every day, they walk further, dig deeper and build stronger to survive. Unrelenting. Determined. They battle the worst of a climate crisis they did not create. This is unjust. But a better way is possible. A way that restores justice to our broken world today. A way that protects the future for all of us, our children and grandchildren.”

INVITATION TO DONATE

[e-envelope | Christian Aid Week](#)

We are invited to donate to the Abingdon Christian Aid Group this Christian Aid Week as we stand together with those on the frontlines to battle coronavirus and fight for climate justice.

WAYS TO DONATE

- You can use the link above.
- you can phone **020 7523 2226** to receive details of how you can make a donation via your bank.
- you can give via your local church.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION -You can watch this first prayer online at <https://youtu.be/MqbylgyvwBA>

Great God who makes the sun to rise and open the heavens;

hear the cry of the people.

People who sow in hope for rain but reap only despair;

hear the cry of the people.

People seeking shelter from the storm, their homes and hopes 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.” **Amen**

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. 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, 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

HYMN

(from LICC – Tune *Abide with me*)

<https://youtu.be/2Lp2mMpSa1E>

We seek your kingdom throughout
every sphere

We long for heaven's demonstration
here

Jesus your light shine bright for all to
see

Transform, revive, and heal society

Before all things, in him were all things
made

Inspiring culture, media, and trade

May all our work serve your economy

Transform, revive, and heal society

Peace, truth, and justice reigning
everywhere

With us be present in our public square

Fill all who lead with your integrity

Transform, revive, and heal society

Forgive us Lord, when we have not
engaged

Failing to scribe your heart on history's
page

Make us again what we were made to
be

Transform, revive, and heal society

Faithful to govern ever may we be
Selfless in service, loving constantly
In everything may your authority
Transform, revive, and heal society

THE 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.