

Together in Prayer

for Christian Aid Week 2025



Aurelia is a farmer, community leader, mother and grandmother living in the Alta Verapaz region of Guatemala.

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

The theme of our prayers is 'abounding hope'. In prayer, we'll explore the hope that is ours through Jesus Christ and the power of hope even in the most challenging circumstances. We'll also hear from Aurelia, a community leader and farmer, who belongs to Guatemala's Indigenous Q'eqchi' (pronounced Co-WAY-chee) community. As her crops die before her eyes, Aurelia can see the devastating impacts of the climate crisis first-hand. But she continues to abound in hope. Aurelia has dedicated herself to serving her neighbours, so that together they can share a more secure future.

Using this resource

We've designed this prayer resource to be flexible. You're welcome to copy and paste any elements you want to use in your service, meeting or prayer time. We've provided several options for the prayers of intercession, including written prayers and prayer prompts to inspire you.



Amelia with her daughter Yakelin, aged four.

Hear from Aurelia and Amelia

In our Christian Aid Week film, you'll learn more about Aurelia and another member of the Q'eqchi' community – Amelia. A mother of two and a goalkeeper on the local football team, Amelia farms land that's been in her family for generations. She relies on farming to feed her children. But the climate crisis is killing Amelia's precious crops too. That's why she's challenging herself to learn new farming techniques. Amelia wants to ensure her children have a nutritious diet today and better prospects tomorrow.

Our film can be downloaded from caweek.ie/Resources in advance of your service to make viewing easier.

Alternatively, you'll find a series of text boxes in the service below containing short readings for members of your church to share aloud. These readings enable you to hear directly from Aurelia about her experiences. You can use our **PowerPoint slides** to show images of Aurelia, Amelia and Christian Aid's work in Guatemala. And you can consult our **guidance on preparing a sermon or talk**, for more ideas. All of these resources can be found at caweek.ie/Worship



Collecting for Christian Aid

If you're planning to take a collection for Christian Aid at your service, thank you! Your donations will enable us to continue our vital work in Guatemala and around the world.

There are lots of different ways to donate, including our red envelopes, through donations online and by setting up a fundraising page. Find out more about how to run a Christian Aid collection or fundraise at caweek.ie/Collections and caweek.ie/Fundraising

All you need for Christian Aid Week 2025

In addition to this prayer resource, you'll find other resources you can use in church services or at fundraising events on our website at caweek.ie/Resources and caweek.ie/Worship

These include:

- Notes for speakers preparing a Christian Aid Week sermon or talk.
- PowerPoint slides to use in your service or meeting.
- A children's activity sheet to use either during the CAW service or in Sunday School.
- Our Christian Aid Week film.

Opening Prayer

As we gather together, let us pray for those like Aurelia whose hope overflows into action. And let us seek to follow in Aurelia's footsteps in our own commitment to the good of our neighbours.

(Based on Ephesians 1)

Gracious God,
you gather all creation together in love.
As we meet today,
enlighten our hearts,
so that we may perceive the hope to
which you have called us.
As your children, may we
grow into your likeness,
filled with compassion and desiring justice.
Embolden us to live out our calling,
and put faith, hope and love into action.
In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

Aurelia's story – part one

In the Alta Verapaz region of Guatemala, 90% of people are living in poverty. The region is home to the Indigenous Q'eqchi' (Co-WAY-chee) people. Men in the community often seek work away from their homes, while women grow crops to feed their families.

Aurelia is a community leader, a mother of eight and a beloved grandmother. In recent years record high temperatures and unpredictable weather patterns have hit farmers like her hard. Water sources are drying up or being polluted by industry.

Aurelia and others from the place where she lives walk for around four hours each day during the two trips they must make to collect safe, clean water from a cenote – a natural sinkhole like a cave, with water at the bottom.





Prayer of confession

Merciful Father, you challenge us through the words of prophets. We confess that we have failed to listen, or pretended not to hear.

Through the prophet Amos, you tell us to 'Let justice roll down like water,' but our industries block flowing streams and drain the rivers dry. Forgive us when we have put our own comforts, desires and possessions above the welfare and needs of our global neighbours.

In your mercy:

Forgive us and help us.

Loving Lord, you came not to be served but to serve. We confess that we have often buried our talents out of a desire for an easier life, and turned away from those who need our gifts because we fear that you will might not continue to provide for us.

Jesus, you tell us to 'Love your neighbour as yourself,' but we worry that such love will cost us too much. Forgive us when we forget that your Holy Spirit freely gives us love that is vast and deep and high. And that in turn we should show that love to others.

In your mercy:

Forgive us and help us.

Holy Spirit, we ask you to empower us with abundant hope. We confess that we have given in to cynicism and declared that the world cannot change. Help us to reject these thoughts of defeat and to live in the victory that Jesus has won through his death and resurrection.

When we despair, you are there to comfort us. Remind us that we are the people of the Cross - sons and daughters of the Most High. And that your promised Kingdom will come.

In your mercy:

Forgive us and help us.

In Jesus' name we pray, amen.



Aurelia, left, and her neighbour, Sofia, pray before producing their cacao flour.





Aurelia's story – part two

Aurelia has seen first-hand the impact of the climate crisis. **'Climate change has been killing our crops, and this is our food,'** she says. **'As the plants are dying, the next thing that will die is us.'**

But Aurelia isn't giving up. Congcoop, Christian Aid's partner in Guatemala, supports communities with agricultural resources and training that help them to become more climate resilient. Aurelia took up the opportunity to gain new skills with Congcoop. She's combining her deep knowledge and understanding of her land with innovative techniques. She's making organic fertiliser, constructing rainwater collection systems, and growing a wider range of crops.

A prayer for Christian Aid Week 2025

Lord, you are faithful to your promises.
Through the Spirit you bless us with abounding hope.
When power seeks to silence justice,
give us the courage to raise our voice.
When an end to poverty seems far off,
renew our faith in your kingdom come on earth.
When our neighbour reaches out,
inspire us to respond with overflowing love.
In Jesus' name,
Amen.

Aurelia's story – part three

With Congcoop's support, Aurelia is using her cacao harvest to make chocolate products to sell at a local market. **'I feel very joyful and grateful when I'm preparing chocolate,'** Aurelia says. **'I make cocoa products with all my heart! Perhaps that's why they have such a good flavour!'**

Aurelia has a big multi-generational family to take care of, from her father Ricardo to her many grandchildren. But she's always looking to help more people in her community. **'I really give my life to my neighbours, sharing my knowledge with them,'** she told Christian Aid. Despite the long journeys to collect water and the need to work on her own farm, Aurelia still finds time to support other women and show them the skills she's learned through her training.



Prayers of intercession

There are three options for prayers of intercession: a written set of prayers; prayer prompts to inspire you; and suggestions for creative prayer activities.

Option 1:

(Responses based on Micah 7:7)

Lord, hear us as we pray for your creation.
We pray for an end to the destruction of the natural world.

We hold before you communities who are watching their land become parched and their rivers dry up.
We pray for farmers like Aurelia who carefully tend their crops, only to see them wither and die.

We grieve for what has already been lost and damaged.
Show us how to act now to help those most affected by the climate crisis.
Energise us, that we may use our power to make change happen.
We watch in hope for the Lord:
our God will hear us.

Lord, hear us as we pray for all people living in poverty.
For children who will not be able to eat a nutritious meal today, or cannot afford to attend school.
Fill us with a fierce determination to end the outrage of poverty.
May we hear the cries of those who are marginalised in our world.
May we speak up with them for a more equal and just society.
We watch in hope for the Lord:
our God will hear us.

Lord, hear us as we pray with thanksgiving for peacemakers and changemakers.
We give thanks for community leaders like Aurelia, whose hope is her power.
We pray for Congcoop, Christian Aid's partner in Guatemala, who support communities through training.
Strengthen those working for peace and protecting human rights.
We pray for a just peace wherever there is conflict, thinking especially of...
We watch in hope for the Lord:
our God will hear us.



Aurelia and her mother on the long walk back from collecting water.



Lord, you welcome us when we are heavy laden with sorrow or pain, in you we find rest.

We pray for all those known to us who are sick or suffering.

[Remembering particularly...]

We pray for all those who are grieving.

[Remembering particularly...]

We pray especially for communities living in poverty around the world who have suffered great losses: the loss of homes, the loss of access to clean water, the loss of family members.

Bless those who mourn and give them your comfort.

We watch in hope for the Lord:

our God will hear us.

Lord, hear as we pray for those whose hope overflows into action.

We give thanks for all those giving, acting and praying this Christian Aid Week.

May each of us seek to serve our global neighbours.

Help us to see the value of our loving service, whether we make cups of coffee, shake collection buckets, step out on sponsored walks, or offer support in other ways. Make us your witnesses, proclaiming your kingdom.

We watch in hope for the Lord:

our God will hear us.

We offer these prayers in Jesus' name.

Our God will hear us.

Amen.

Option 2:

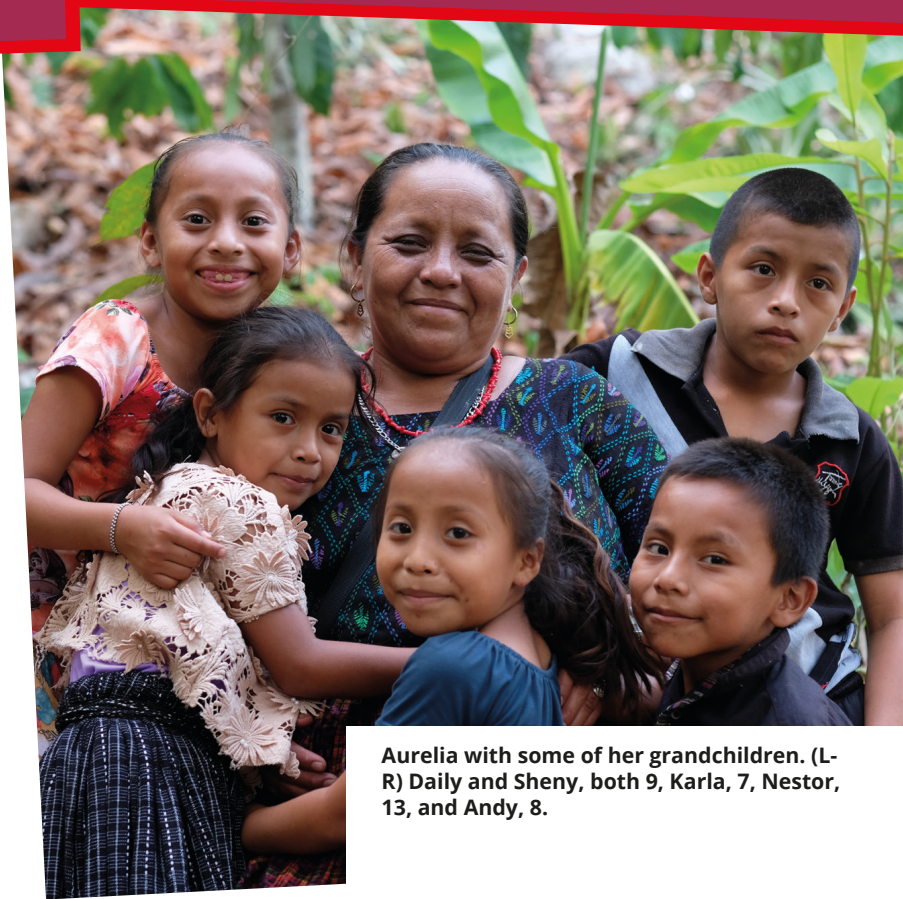
In response to these prompts, offer your own prayers for:

- The people of Guatemala, particularly Indigenous communities who are often among the most marginalised groups in the country.
- Christian Aid's partner in Guatemala, Congcoop. Pray for the success of their training programmes, for their staff and their work in 2025 and beyond.
- Anyone living in poverty.
- Households surviving on one meal a day. Parents who worry about feeding their children. Children whose growth is stunted due to malnutrition.
- Farmers across the world feeling the impact of the climate crisis.
- Communities who don't have access to clean water or have to travel long distances to collect the water they need.
- Large corporations running plantations in Guatemala. Pray that they take responsibility for the impact they have on the environment and Indigenous communities.
- Governments and those with power. Pray that they work for justice and prioritise tackling poverty.
- The work of Christian Aid and their partners. Pray for all who support this work by giving, acting and praying together.

Option 3:

Before your service, plant sweet peas or another tall or climbing plant, such as a sunflower, in a large pot. Include a cane to support the plant.

During the service, give those present wooden lolly sticks and felt tip pens. Ask them to write a word or two on the stick to represent what they wish to pray for. Invite people to 'plant' their prayer sticks around the edge of the pot. In the weeks after the service, as the plant or plants grow around and above the prayer sticks, invite people to consider what has grown through their prayers and actions.



Aurelia with some of her grandchildren. (L-R) Daily and Shený, both 9, Karla, 7, Nestor, 13, and Andy, 8.

Aurelia's story – part four

Life for Aurelia and her community remains tough, and as the climate crisis intensifies, she fears things will get tougher. Enduring droughts, storms and fierce heat, Aurelia can see the impacts of climate change accelerating. **'There was a prediction this would happen in the future,'** she says, **'but it has come earlier. This is very worrying for our kids and especially our grandkids.'**

Indigenous farmers are often under pressure to sell their land to big developers, leading to further environmental damage. But Aurelia says that she and her neighbours remain **'unified'** and **'courageous'**. They won't give up hope. **'I want to tell donors to continue supporting Christian Aid,'** Aurelia says, **'because through Congcoop, they've been supporting us.'**

Prayer of thanksgiving and close

God of all, you have abundantly blessed us.

As we go out from this place,

help us to do justly, love mercy and walk humbly with you.

We give thanks for the vital work of Christian Aid

and for all who support this work.

May your compassion flow through our actions and offerings.

Loving and faithful God, give us hope and send us out to serve you, this day and every day.

In Jesus' name we pray, amen.