

Order of Service

for Christian Aid Week 2025

Abounding hope



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

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

The theme of our service materials is 'abounding hope'. In prayer, scripture and song we'll explore the hope that is ours through Jesus Christ. We'll learn about 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 Order of Service to be flexible. You're welcome to copy and paste any elements you want to use in your worship. We've provided several options for the prayers of intercession, including written prayers, prayer prompts to inspire you, and suggestions for interactive intercessions.

At the end of this document, you'll find a list of suggested songs and hymns for your service. This includes links to external sites and to recordings of songs written specially for Christian Aid.



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, or streamed on our website or YouTube channel.

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**, as well as our **all-age service guide**, for more ideas. All can be found at caweek.org/Worship



Amelia with her daughter Yakelin, aged four.

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/Fundraising

All you need for Christian Aid Week 2025

In addition to this Order of Service, you'll find more resources for your church on our website at caweek.ie/Worship

These include:

- Notes for speakers and preachers preparing a Christian Aid Week sermon or talk.
- PowerPoint slides to use in your worship.
- Materials to help you prepare an all-age service for Christian Aid Week.
- A children's activity sheet.
- Our Christian Aid Week film.



Order of Service

Introduction

Welcome your community in your own words.

Our service today is about hope: the hope that we share through Jesus Christ and the hope we're called to show in action throughout our lives. In this service, we'll hear from Aurelia, who lives in the Alta Verapaz region of Guatemala. Indigenous communities like Aurelia's have seen first-hand the impact of the climate crisis and industrial exploitation, with rivers drying up, crops failing and food under threat.

But Aurelia won't give up. 'I really give my life to my neighbours,' she told Christian Aid. Aurelia's love for her neighbours and abounding hope sustain her as she works to transform her prospects and those of her community.

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.

Hymn or song – *see our suggestions at the end of this document.*

Call to worship

We pray together to our Lord:

Giver of living water, we thirst for your presence.

Let your steadfast love be upon us, as we hope in you.

Bread of life, we hunger for your word.

Let your steadfast love be upon us, as we hope in you.

Holy one, you set a path before us, we seek to walk in your ways.

Let your steadfast love be upon us, as we hope in you.

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.



Opening prayer

(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.
Amen.



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

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.
'Let justice roll down like water,' you tell us.
But we block the flowing streams and drain the rivers dry.
In your mercy:
Forgive us and help us.

Loving Lord, you came not to be served but to serve.
We confess that we have buried our talents,
and turned away from those who need our gifts.
'Love your neighbour as yourself,' you command us.
But we worry that such love will cost us too much.
In your mercy:
Forgive us and help us.

Holy Spirit, you empower us with abundant hope.
We confess that we have given in to cynicism,
and declared that the world cannot change.
When we despair, you are there to comfort us.
But we try to rely on ourselves alone.
In your mercy:
Forgive us and help us.





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

(To be used as a Collect if this is part of your tradition.)

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.

First reading:

For services on
Sunday 11 May or
at other times:

Acts 9:36-43

'She was devoted to
good works and acts
of charity.'

For services on
Sunday 18 May or
at other times:

Acts 11:1-18

'The Spirit told me
to go with them
and not to make a
distinction between
them and us.'

For services at
any time:

Joel 1:17-20

'Even the wild animals
cry to you because
the watercourses are
dried up, and fire has
devoured the pastures
of the wilderness.'

Hymn or song – see our suggestions at the end of this document.

Christian Aid Week film – watch at caweek.org/Resources



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.

Second reading:

For services on
Sunday 11 May or
at other times:

John 10:22-30

'My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish.'

For services on
Sunday 18 May or
at other times:

John 13:31-35

'I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.'

For services at
any time:

Mark 6:30-44

'They said to him, "That would take more than half a year's wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat!"'

Sermon or talk – see caweek.ie/Worship for notes and ideas.

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)

Let us pray together.

We watch in hope for the Lord:

our God will hear us.

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...

[Pray here for places and people affected by war and violence. You may wish to include prayers for:

Peace in the Middle East.

An end to the war in Ukraine.

Those affected by conflict in Sudan.


Christian Aid's partners working in Guatemala to ensure every person is protected from violence and has access to a robust justice system.]

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.

Creative ways to pray can be found in our **all-age service pack** at caweek.ie/Worship

- Use our cacao tree prayer activity in our all-age resources to create your own display. Write prayers on cacao pods to hang on the tree.
- Aurelia holds hope in her hands when she creates rich fertiliser that can revive her soil. In our pack you'll find ways to pray with your hands and hold up your hope before God.

A meditative prayer activity for services or small groups

Sit in a circle. Place a large bowl of water on a table in the centre of the circle.

You could add some drops of fair trade essential oil to the water. Some fair trade oils such as lemongrass are often produced in Guatemala.

Listen to a recording of *La Paz de la Tierra (The Peace of the Earth)*, a traditional Guatemalan song, translated by Christine Cardon and arranged by John Bell.

As the music plays, go to the table one by one and dip your fingers in the water. Make the sign of the Cross on the back of your hand.

When you return to your seat, think of Aurelia and other women in her community walking long distances every day to gather water. Pray silently for these women and for all the people of Guatemala.

End by saying these words from the song together: **'The peace of the rivers be with you, the peace of the oceans too, deep peace falling over you. God's peace growing in you.'**



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



Sharing the Peace

If you usually share the Peace in your worship, you may wish to use the following verse:

May grace and peace be yours in abundance in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

(2 Peter 1:2)

Peace be with you.

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.'**

Hymn or song with collection

You may wish to include some wording in your Order of Service to explain how people can donate. For example:

Use the envelopes on your seat/pew, or visit caweek.ie to make your contribution. By completing the Gift Aid slip, you're helping to make your giving go further. Please consider making a regular contribution to Christian Aid's work. More information is available about this on the envelope and online.



Aurelia holding the fertiliser that she learned how to make with the support of our partner, Congcoop. She now shares her knowledge with her neighbours.

Prayer of thanksgiving and dismissal

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.

Amen.

Blessing

God of hope, fill us with all joy and peace in believing,
that we may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.



Hymn and song suggestions

Bread of Life, Hope of the World (Bernadette Farrell).

Everything is Yours (Jake Isaac). Created in partnership with Christian Aid.

Forgive us when our Deeds Ignore (Martin Leckebusch).

The Gifts we Bring Express our Love (Brian Hoare).

Global Neighbours (Fischy Music). Created in partnership with Christian Aid, particularly suitable for an all-age or children's service.

God is Here! As we your People (Fred Pratt Green).

God of all Comfort, God of Compassion (Joel Payne and Matt Weeks). Created for Christian Aid's 75th anniversary. Also available at resoundworship.org/song/god-all-comfort

God of Justice (Tim Hughes).

God, the Maker of the Heavens (Sam Hargreaves).

Heaven Shall Not Wait (Graham Maule and John L. Bell).

If the Fields are Parched (Chris Juby).

In Every Generation (Ally Barrett).

The Kingdom of God is Justice and Peace (Taizé).

La Paz de la Tierra (The Peace of the Earth). (Traditional Guatemalan, trans. Christine Cardon and arr. John L. Bell.)

Let Justice Roll Down (Garth Hewitt).

Lord of the Earth's Resources (David Mowbray).

O God of Boundless Hope (Brian Davis).

Show me how to Stand for Justice (Martin Leckebusch).

The Song of Kingdom Come (Paul Field and Martin John Nicholls). Created in partnership with Christian Aid.

Speak Up (Fischy Music). Created in partnership with Christian Aid, particularly suitable for an all-age or children's service.

Those who Hope in the Lord (David Casswell).

Touch the Earth Lightly (Shirley Erena Murray).

We Do Not Hope to Ease our Minds (Marnie Barrell).

What Does the Lord Require (Albert F. Bayly).

When I Needed a Neighbour (Sydney Carter). Written for Christian Aid in 1965 and re-recorded for Christian Aid's 75th anniversary.

When Mountains that we Thought Secure (Gareth Hill).

With God all Things are Possible (Graham Maule and John L. Bell).

You Came to Raise the Last and Least (Ally Barrett).

You Made a Universe So Full of Wonder (Ally Barrett).