christian aid

Your Advent and Christmas Prayer Pack

Silent night. Hungry night.

Christmas is the time when we gather with family and friends, sharing food and gifts, as we celebrate the birth of Christ. But for communities like Donnay's in Ethiopia, homes, livelihoods and vital sources of food are disappearing overnight.

Climate shocks have intensified hunger, malnutrition and poverty in the region. Estimates suggest that more than half of under-fives are malnourished. Millions of pregnant women, breastfeeding women and young children need treatment because they're simply not getting the nutrition they need.

No one should worry that their children will go to bed hungry. That's why we need your support now.



Donnay with her youngest daughter Bore [pronounced Borray], who was born after flooding forced the family to flee.

Donnay's story

Ethiopia is at the sharp end of the climate crisis. Devastating droughts and catastrophic floods arrive without warning. For the Dasenech people [pronounced dass-a-netch] who depend on the Omo River for their survival, every day brings with it the danger of deadly flooding. With homes swept away and their possessions and livelihoods gone, families are plunged into hunger and poverty.

When the floods hit Donnay Yirpok's village, she and her children were forced to flee in the middle of the night. Donnay, who was pregnant, tells us: **'The flood was sudden and devastating. We escaped with our children without any belongings.'**

With their farm destroyed, and their food and livelihood with it, crisis was their only constant. The family endured hardship after hardship. They went without food most days, leaving the children at dire risk. They arrived at their new location hungry, homeless and empty-handed.

This Christmas, your church could help ensure that families battling hunger will have the support they need – families whose love, hope and determination are stronger than the threats they face.

Your church's support would mean everything this Christmas

We're asking you to use this pack in your Advent or Christmas services or prayer groups to pray for families who have lost everything, and to raise funds that can support them to recover.

Could you take a collection for our Christmas Appeal?
Or fundraise by singing carols in your community?
Explore our Christmas fundraising resources to help you plan your service or event at: caid.ie/Christmas

Your donation this Christmas could make an immediate difference by funding seeds, tools and agricultural training so that mothers like Donnay can start planting new farms to feed their children. Donnay is determined to rebuild her life after the flood. **'I hope to work hard and give my children a better future.'**

Gathering prayer

Jesus, Son of God,
Your birth brought together shepherds and kings; gather us today as one body, united through you in hope, joy and peace.

Light of all people, You were born to bring justice and mercy.

Illuminate our path and lead us into the ways of truth and compassion.

Make us ready to love and serve you through loving service to one another.

Amen.

Opening responses (Based on Isaiah 9)

A child has been born for us.
How will we welcome him?
He is named Wonderful Counsellor,
Mighty God, Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace.
How will we welcome him?
A son has been given to us.
He brings justice and righteousness.
How will we welcome him?
In our neighbour we see his face.
How will we welcome him?



Prayer for Advent and Christmas 2026

Lord Jesus,
We pray for all our neighbours, those close at hand and those many miles from us.
We hold before you communities devastated by floods and parents striving to ensure that their children are fed.
Lord Jesus, you came to show us the transformative power of your love. As we place our hope in your Kingdom come,
Help us to make that Kingdom a reality now.

Fill us with the radiance of your love and the joy that comes through service to others.

Make us a Kingdom people today, tomorrow and forevermore.
In Your name we pray, amen.

Prayer for a Nativity service

Loving God, as we gather to hear the story of the nativity of Jesus your Son, we give thanks for the joy and excitement of Christmas.

We pray to you for parents, carers and children everywhere.

We pray especially for children who do not have enough food to eat.
We ask you to help those children who, like the baby Jesus, are born without a safe place to sleep.

Show us what we can do to change our world, so that every child will be free to play, rest, grow and flourish.

We ask this in Jesus' name,
Amen.

Prayers for Our World

Lord, your love is stronger than flood waters, stronger than death itself.

Fill us with your fullness that we may comprehend the breadth, length, height and depth of your love.

We pray for all who put love into action by serving others.

We pray for loving families facing extreme challenges, particularly for families in Ethiopia affected by devastating floods.

Help us to love one another as you have loved us.

Lord, your mother gave birth in a cattle shed far from home.
We pray for mothers who have no choice except to give birth in dangerous conditions, without access to the medical care they need.
We pray for parents and carers forced to flee their homes with their children.
May you bring them peace and comfort and may they find safety.

Lord, you were born among a people under foreign occupation.
We pray for those who live with the threat of violence and the fear and uncertainty that conflict brings.

We pray especially for...
[name here places affected by conflict that you wish to pray for]
God of peace, you bless peacemakers.
We pray for an end to violence and for the protection of civilians.

Lord, you made your home with people pushed to the margins of society.
We pray for all people who are excluded or made to feel powerless.
We pray especially for the communities most affected by the climate crisis. May their voices be heard around the world.
Strengthen our compassion for our global neighbours and show us how to walk alongside them.

Loving Lord, you promise to hear us when we call upon you.
Receive these prayers in Jesus' name.
Amen.

Closing prayer

Almighty God,
at the birth of your Son, the angels
proclaimed the good news:
freedom from fear, peace on earth, joy
in abundance.
Send us out to live according to this
marvellous promise.
Make us your messengers,
in our words and actions,
as we work to see your kingdom come
on earth.
Amen.

Prayers of Blessing

Go in hope, that a fairer, more just
world is not just possible, but promised.
Go in peace, extending a hand in
solidarity to neighbours near and far.
Go in love, ready to see the image of
God in each face you meet.
Go in joy, anticipating the Birth that
reconciles all creation.

May God's marvellous light,
be a lamp for your feet
to guide you into the path of justice.
And may the Lord of peace himself
give you peace at all times in all ways.

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