

# Christian Aid Week

11 – 17 May 2025

## All-age worship service guide

### Introduction

This all-age worship is part of Christian Aid Week, which this year also celebrates Christian Aid's 80th anniversary. This guide aims to enable intergenerational learning and sharing through activities that can engage people of all ages. Contributions from everyone are encouraged and welcomed.

At the heart of this service is an exploration of these big questions:

- What gives us hope?
- Where does our hope come from?
- How can we support others to live hopeful lives?

Some songs have been suggested, but of course you may well have others you'd prefer to use.

### You'll need:

- Downloads of Fischy Music songs (*Written on the Palm of God's Hands* and *May you Find Peace*) if you have chosen to use them. You'll find more information about how to do this below. Audio versions of the songs can also be downloaded from Spotify.
- The accompanying PowerPoint (the relevant slides are indicated throughout this service outline).
- Paper/card, scissors and pencils.
- Pre-cut hand outlines (see appendix 1).
- Aurelia's story (see appendix 2).
- Tables or areas around the church where groups can work together on the four activities.
- Enough chocolate buttons for everyone present to have one towards the end of the service (including dairy free options).
- Poster and questions (appendix 3).
- Copies of matching activity, which you can have cut out (appendix 4).



Aurelia holding the fertiliser she learned how to make with the support of our partner, Congcoop.



- Collection plate/bucket/envelopes for Christian Aid.



Christian Aid Week resources can be ordered from our website at [caweek.org/Resources](http://caweek.org/Resources) or by scanning the QR code below.

It's a good idea to set out the things you'll need on a couple of tables at the back of church, if there's room.

## Fischy Music

To sign up for a free one-month trial of Fischy Music Online, email Fiona at [info@fischy.com](mailto:info@fischy.com) with your church name, address, postcode and contact email address.

This will give you (and all church staff and volunteers) access to the 'RE & Collective Worship Song Package.' To help you learn the songs and get the most out of this resource, each song has:

- a sing-along song video
- a learn-the-song video
- audio tracks
- teaching resources, including sheet music.

The free trial includes access to more than 50 RE & Collective Worship songs, the Christian Aid Week playlist, a free training video and 10% off an annual subscription to Fischy Music Online.

Please note that you need good wi-fi to stream songs on Fischy Music Online. Find out more at [fischy.com/churches/what-we-offer](http://fischy.com/churches/what-we-offer)

## Sunday school resources



Many of the following ideas can be adapted for use in Sunday school. If you'd like to explore Christian Aid's work in greater depth in Sunday school or youth settings, please find resources at [caid.org.uk/Schools](https://caid.org.uk/Schools).

### GATHERING



**Slide 1:** As people arrive, you could play the song *Let Justice Roll Like a River* in the background, or another song of your choice. Ask people to draw around and cut out hands in readiness for the service. It would be useful to have some already cut out for those who are late or unable to do this.

Start by explaining that this service is part of the celebrations for Christian Aid Week and Christian Aid's 80th anniversary. Ask if anyone has heard of Christian Aid and if they know what it does.

**Slide 2:** Christian Aid is a charity that supports people to build better futures. It works in three main ways:

1. Through partners to support communities to live full lives, free from poverty.
2. Responding to emergencies and helping people who have experienced disasters such as earthquakes, floods, famine and conflict.
3. Calling on decision makers to make the world a fairer place for everyone.

**Slide 3:** We're going to learn about Aurelia today and how Christian Aid is supporting her as she makes lives better for those she knows and loves. Aurelia lives in Guatemala where, due to the climate crisis, gruelling heatwaves and extreme weather are destroying her farm. Here's a photo of Aurelia with some of her grandchildren.



**Slide 4:** We'll learn what an amazing person Aurelia is and how she takes things into her own hands, finding ways to make life better for her family and community. We're also going to be learning about how Aurelia's finding solutions as a result of gaining skills, knowledge and tools, helping her to hold hope in her hands.

We'll find out what she's holding in her hands in this photo, too!

**Slide 5: Song** – *Written on the Palms of God's Hands* or one of your choosing.

## ENGAGING

**Slide 6:** Show the Christian Aid Week film, which can be found at [caweek.org/resources](http://caweek.org/resources). Read out Aurelia's story (appendix 2 with accompanying PowerPoint, slides 7-16) and ask the congregation, as they listen, to give a:

- Thumbs down whenever they hear something they think is a challenge faced by Aurelia and her community.
- Thumbs up when they hear a solution that Aurelia has found.

Aurelia has hope for the future because of her own determination, alongside the new skills and knowledge she's gained. Aurelia is a source of hope for her community and changing lives for the better. Explain that there is now some time for everyone to do a couple of activities (or more) that will help them think a bit more about hope and hands.



**Song** – use a song of your choice before the activities.

**Slide 17:** Activity stations around church (allow enough time for each person to do at least two of the following activities):

- Aurelia's poster image (appendix 3).
- Pairs of hands matching activity (appendix 4).
- Write prayers of hope on fingers of the cut-out hands to add to a prayer tree (appendix 5 provides an image of a cocoa tree which could be used).

- Team competition using hands together – choose one of the following tasks:
  - How many clothes pegs can you hold from a washing line?
  - Make as tall a tree as possible out of newspapers/scrap materials or have a tower building competition using cardboard boxes or toy bricks.

Ask whether having more than one pair of hands gives you more hope of winning?

**Slide 18:** Draw together the various ideas found in the powerful imagery of hands – God holds us in his hands (Ps 37:24, Jn 10:28); we are God’s hands and feet (Mt 25:40); and Aurelia holding hope in her hands because of all the actions she and her community are taking (Romans 15.13, 1 Peter 4:10). Ask the congregation what it means that Aurelia is holding hope in her hands?

## RESPONDING

**Slide 19:** Choose **one** of the following two ways of using our hands to pray. Do leave times of silence as part of these prayers to allow pause for people's own thoughts and responses.

1. Hope is not always easy to find but praying is an important way for us to find hope. We’re now going to pray using our hands as a guide. There will be short pauses so you can say your own prayers in silence if you would like to.

First, hold out a hand in front of you. Each finger will remind us of someone to pray for. Hold your thumb with your other hand. Your thumb is closest to you. So, let’s start by praying for the people who are closest to us – our family, our friends, the people we love. [Pause]

Next, hold your index finger, the one you use for pointing. Let’s pray for the people who help show us the way to live, who teach us and heal us: teachers, doctors and nurses, and others. [Pause]

Now your middle finger, which is the tallest. It reminds us to pray for the leaders of our country and our world; such as the people who work in Parliament, and those who have the power to make decisions about money, war and peace. [Pause]

Now hold your fourth finger. We'll use it to remind us to pray for people who are excluded, marginalised and oppressed, and people who are trapped in poverty. We pray for Aurelia and her community in Guatemala. [Pause]

Your last finger is your smallest finger. It can remind us to pray for ourselves. In a moment of quiet, let's bring our own needs to God, and ask God to give us hope for today and tomorrow. Let's use this time to think of actions we could take to help bring hope to others – our neighbours, both local and global. [Pause]

2. A follower of Jesus (Saint Augustine) once described hope as having two beautiful daughters: anger and courage. Anger at the way things are and courage to see that they do not remain as they are. We're going to use that idea in our prayers. So, we'll hold out one hand when we think of things that make us angry and the other when we need courage to do something about them. We'll then bring our hands together as in prayer to show that we can have hope because Jesus is always with us.

So, hold out one hand as we think of the many millions in the world today who don't have enough to eat and yet there is enough food for everyone.

Now hold out the other hand as we think of all the organisations like Christian Aid who try to help but also the many people who ask our world leaders to ensure that the world's resources are shared fairly. Now bring your hands together and we'll be quiet for a moment to ask God to bring hope to those living in poverty.

Hold out one of your hands again as we think about how the climate crisis is affecting most badly those countries who did the least to cause it, such as Guatemala. Droughts, floods and storms cause dreadful devastation, while oil companies make huge profits from the burning of fossil fuels.

Now hold out the other hand as we think of organisations, including Christian Aid, as well as individuals who are working to make the polluters pay for the damage that is caused and to support people living in those worst-affected countries.

Now bring your hands together and in a moment's silence, let's ask God to bring hope and love to replace greed.

For the last time, hold out one hand and think of something that concerns you that needs the darkness to disappear. It could be to do with someone or a situation you know. It could be at school, or in your community.

Now hold out the other hand and think of how that concern could be helped by something you could say or do.

Now bring your hands together and keep them there while I say:  
Thank you God that you invite us to pray and that you hear the concerns we have. Please bring your hope and love into the situations we have prayed about so that your hope fills us and helps us work for a better world.

Amen.

**Slide 20:** Sing *Let Justice Roll Like a River* (listen for the words 'the solutions are in our hands'). This can also be downloaded from <https://youtu.be/MX90qjBLT98>

**Slide 21:** As you leave the service today you'll be able to give towards Christian Aid's work as it supports people like Aurelia. Giving can be a sign of hope – being generous and investing in the future.

## SENDING



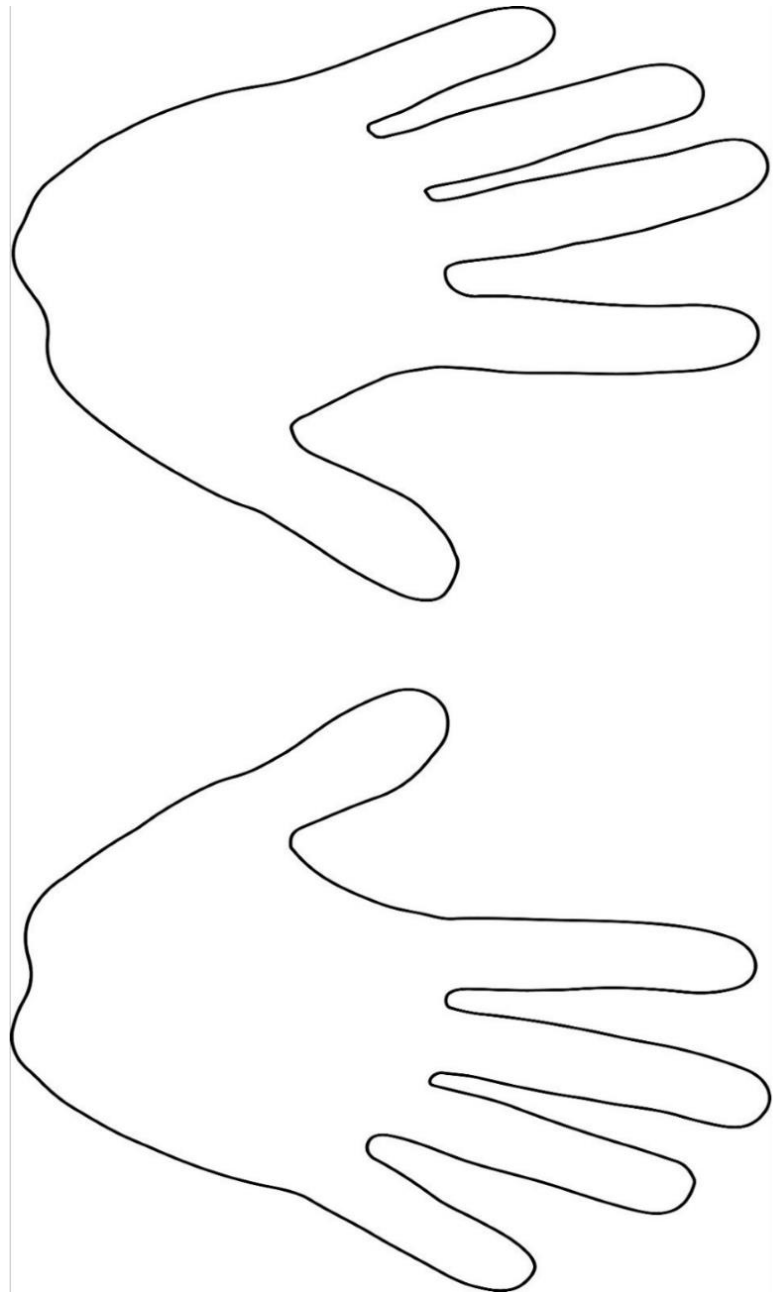
**Slide 22:** Chocolate button reflection.

Give everyone a chocolate button (or dairy free alternative if needed) with the instruction not to eat it immediately! Remind people that one of the solutions for Aurelia was to grow cocoa and make chocolate. So, to finish with, in a moment's silence, ask the congregation to put the chocolate button in their mouths. Let the chocolate button melt slowly, allowing the delicious taste to seep into their bodies as a reminder of how God wants to fill us with love and hope. As it melts, we can think about where hope is needed in the world and how we, along with Christian Aid, can help bring that hope.

**Slide 23:** Choose a prayer from the Christian Aid Week prayer resources, which can be found at [caweek.org/Worship](http://caweek.org/Worship).

**Slide 24:** Sing a song of blessing such as *May you Find Peace* (Fischy Music) which uses hands to emphasise the words and to send each other out into the coming week. Or sing *The Blessing*, which can be found on YouTube, sung [by children](#) and [by churches across the UK](#).

## Appendix 1



This template is available, if there isn't time for those attending to draw around their own hands and cut them out in readiness for the service.



## Appendix 2 – Aurelia’s story

**Slide 7 and 8:** Aurelia is an inspirational farmer and community leader, and lives in Guatemala. She has eight grown-up children and lives with one of her sons and his wife. Aurelia’s many grandchildren visit her home every day.

**Slide 9:** Aurelia’s family belongs to the Indigenous Q’eqchi’ (pronounced: Co-WAY-chee) community of the Alta Verapaz region. It’s a close and supportive rural community who live by a blend of Mayan and Catholic traditions, holding the natural world as precious and sacred.



**Slide 10:** The climate crisis and industrial plantations have changed Q’eqchi’ land dramatically. Heatwaves, storms and unpredictable seasons are ravaging farms. Industrial agriculture is taking over the last of the region’s natural resources to feed the world’s richest countries. Many of the vital crops Aurelia grows to feed her family are withering and dying before her eyes. It’s a heartbreaking injustice that a community should be threatened by a climate crisis they didn’t cause.

**Slide 11:** Like the other women and girls in her community, Aurelia must go twice a day to collect water from a cenote – a natural sinkhole like a cave, with water at the bottom. Her walk takes around an hour each way, and part of it follows a steep, dark and slippery route that journeys in and out of the cenote.

In Aurelia’s lifetime, water sources could be found much closer to home, but both heatwaves and industrial plantations have drained them dry. Collecting water takes longer, which means community members have less time for other activities, such as selling produce that allows them to then buy other things their family needs. This pushes families further into the poverty trap.

**Slide 12:** Fortunately, Aurelia heard about an organisation called Congcoop that works in her area of Guatemala. A Christian Aid partner, Congcoop trains people like Aurelia in ways of farming that work with nature so that they produce crops that can cope with the impact of the climate crisis. By working with Congcoop, Aurelia has learnt skills and knowledge to grow native seeds that are better suited to the climate crisis. She's producing her own organic fertiliser, creating nurseries, constructing rainwater collection systems, and making nutritious food and medicine for her chickens. Congcoop also provided Aurelia with seeds and tools.



Aurelia with her dried plantains, ready to grind with cacao to make chocolate plantain bread, to consume and sell. Our partner lends the dehydrators seen here to communities, to help with their income generation projects.

**Slide 13:** Aurelia can now grow cacao, sugarcane, cinnamon, corn and pineapples. She's restoring her ability to provide food for her family. Because Aurelia's now hopeful for the future, she's developed and leads other activities in her community, including producing chocolate, establishing a farmers' market, and fighting for women's rights.

**Slide 14:** With the support from Congcoop, Aurelia's learnt how to make chocolate and to sell it at a good price. With her profits, Aurelia can buy household essentials like soap and salt, and support her young grandchildren to stay in school.

**Slide 15:** Aurelia is a celebrated leader who holds the hopes of her community in her hands. Whatever she learns with Congcoop, she shares. As Aurelia trains other women in climate resilient farming, they too can adapt their practices and protect their families.

**Slide 16:** Aurelia also supports Congcoop to address the pressure that Indigenous farmers feel to sell their land to developers. Congcoop discourages land sales and supports communities to make their land work for them, so they don't feel that selling is their only option. Aurelia is supported by Congcoop, which is supported by Christian Aid, which in turn is supported by churches like this one. Together, we can put the unstoppable power of hope into action.

## Appendix 3



# Holding hope in her hands.



**'I give my life to my neighbours, sharing my knowledge.'**  
Aurelia

The climate crisis is ravaging the farms of indigenous communities in Guatemala. As plants die, food becomes scarce. But with specialist training, Aurelia's leading her community to grow resilient crops, conserve water and make fertiliser.

Will you help fund vital tools and training, so farmers like Aurelia can support their community to escape hunger?  
Donate today: [caid.org.uk/hunger](https://caid.org.uk/hunger)









Christian Aid is a registered charity in the United Kingdom. Christian Aid is a member of the Christian Aid International network. For more information, visit [caid.org.uk](https://caid.org.uk)

Ask people to work in either one group, or in groups of twos and threes depending on the number of people. Look at the poster and talk about the possible answers to the following questions:

1. What do you think Aurelia is doing?
2. What is she holding in her hands?
3. What do you think Aurelia is feeling (and why do you think that)?
4. Why does Aurelia think she has hope in her hands?
5. What questions would you like to ask Aurelia?

## Appendix 4 – Holding hope in your hands matching activity

Depending on the size of the group, either work together as a whole group or in twos or threes. Cut out the cards and sort into either challenges faced by Aurelia and her community, or solutions that they have found. Then see if you can match them so that each challenge has a solution. There may well be more than one right answer!

Challenge	Solution
Deforestation 	Make polluters pay 
Families not getting enough to eat and children not growing properly 	Growing a wider range of native crops 
Droughts and floods 	Building water collection systems 
Many women are living in poverty 	Sharing knowledge 

Don't have anywhere to sell their produce



Farmers' market



Children not in school



Sell chocolate



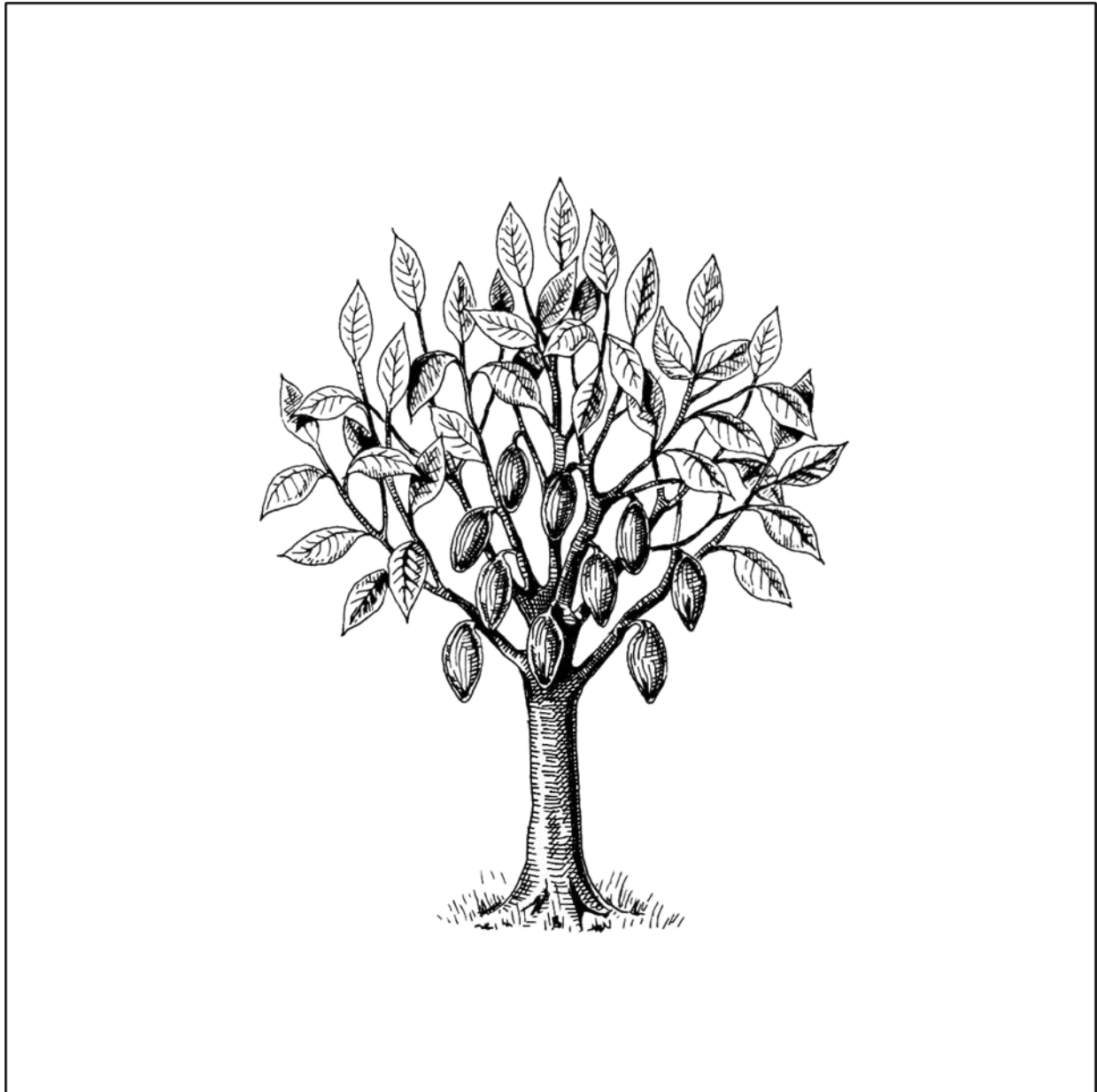
The land can no longer grow enough food for everyone



Make use of fertilisers to help support the soil



## Appendix 5 – Cocoa tree



This tree could be enlarged, or used for inspiration to draw a tree. The cut-out hands can be placed on it to create a prayer tree.