



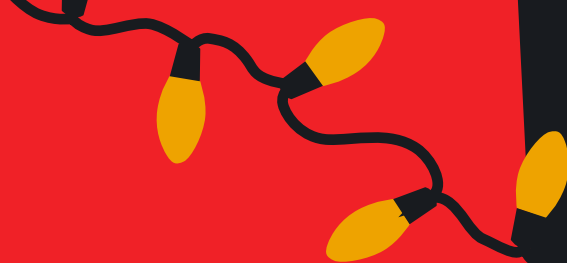
Advent wreath 2025

Pray with us this Advent

As we prepare our Advent wreath, we begin our journey through this season of waiting and promise. Advent invites us to hold fast to hope – even when the world feels uncertain. For each Sunday of Advent, as you light a candle on your Advent wreath, we have a short reflection, and a prayer from voices around the world. These can be

read out in your church service, or used for your own personal reflection.

This year, we bring stories of hope, peace, joy, and love from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Each one is a powerful reminder that God is at work, even – perhaps, most especially – when events might suggest otherwise.



Week 1:

Sunday 30 November, 2025

Theme:

Hope



Story focus:

Joyce and Emiliana

Joyce gave birth to Emiliana as bombs fell in nearby Minova. Just two months later, gunfire forced her family to flee into the forest. With Emiliana tied to her chest, Joyce ran through the night, praying for her children's survival.

'I was asking God, if I die, who will take care of my child?'

'I knew I could die at any moment but was hoping the first two [Buloyez and Larose] could at least grow up first and look after my baby.'

'I asked God to give me health, strength and wisdom to raise Emiliana well.'
Joyce tells Emiliana, 'You will live like God had planned.'

Joyce's prayers are a testament to the power of hope; a mother's belief that her child's life can be shaped by love, learning, and purpose. Her story reminds us that hope is not passive. It is active, resilient, and rooted in faith.



Prayer:

Our prayer for this week, on the theme of hope, comes to us from Christian Aid colleague Jennifer Weaver.

Loving God,

As we step into this season of Advent, we recognise that we live in a world where brokenness is all around us and where the cries of injustice echo across the earth.

We pray for courage like Joyce's to find strength in the midst of fear, to trust in your faithfulness and find hope for the future.

Pour out your Spirit into our hearts, that we might be hope-bringers to our communities.

This Advent, may we choose to hope, knowing that you're at work restoring the world, bringing justice and healing to all of creation.

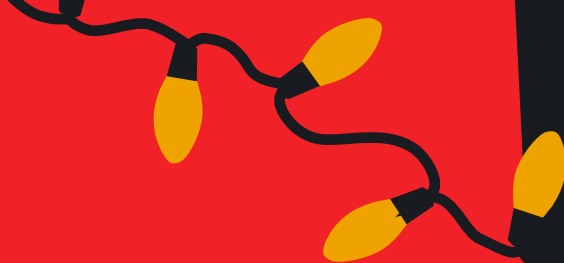
Amen.

Collect:

God of hope, strengthen our hearts to act in service of those living with despair.

Amen.





Week 2:

Sunday 7 December, 2025

Theme:

Peace





ECC-MERU staff visit a programme in the DRC.

Story focus:

ECC-MERU's peacebuilding programme

ECC-MERU (Churches of Christ in Congo – Ministry for Refugees and Emergencies) is one of Christian Aid's trusted partners in the DRC. Their peacebuilding programme tackles the root causes of domestic and community-based violence, helping communities to move beyond survival and into restoration.

Christian Aid's peacebuilding programme in the DRC, delivered in partnership with ECC-MERU, aims to build deep-rooted, sustainable peace by addressing the

structural causes of violence.

ECC-MERU supports young adults to become agents of peace, reframes harmful ideas of masculinity, and helps survivors of domestic violence gain economic independence. Their work is grounded in faith and driven by compassion.

In a region where violence has fractured families and communities, ECC-MERU's commitment to peace is a powerful witness to the hope of Advent. Their work echoes the message of the angels at Christ's birth: 'Peace on earth, goodwill to all.'
(Luke 2:14)



Prayer:

Our prayer for this week, on the theme of peace, comes to us from Christian Aid colleague Kevwe Edekovwere.

Heavenly Father,

You are the God of peace, the kind of peace that only you can give. You are the one who calms the storm and stills the raging seas. Amid conflict across the world, we turn to you, our refuge, strength and hope.

Lord, where there is division, sow unity. Where there is hurt, bring healing. Where there is anger, speak your gentle truth. Where there is fear, let your perfect love cast it out.

May your peace, which surpasses all understanding, guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

And may your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven a kingdom of righteousness, peace, and everlasting joy.

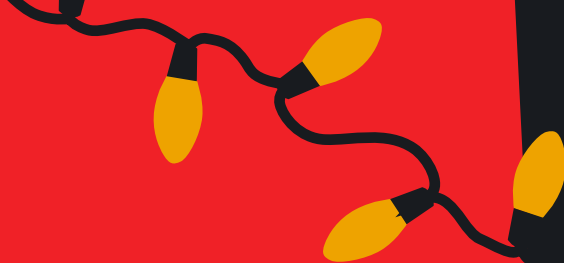
In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Collect:

God of peace, strengthen our hearts to act in service of those living through violence and conflict.

Amen.





Week 3:

Sunday 14 December, 2025

Theme:

Joy





Wilhermine supports women who've been victims of sexual violence.

Story focus:

Wilhermine's joy in her vocation

Wilhermine is a farmer, mother of eight, and a community-based psychological support worker. With funding from Christian Aid's partner SARCAF, she offers care to survivors of rape and gender-based violence. Her work is emotionally demanding, yet she speaks of it with deep joy and purpose:

'I truly love helping people. Most go and inform other survivors, directing them here to get help.'

During one intense period of conflict, Wilhermine supported 47 survivors without taking a single day off. Her commitment is

rooted in compassion and faith. She listens, consoles, and walks alongside women as they begin to heal.

Wilhermine's joy is not superficial – it is the joy of seeing lives restored, dignity reclaimed, and hope renewed. In her own words:

'I see that women and couples can definitely find peace. And with encouragement, shame will reduce, and pride will increase.'

This Advent, we give thanks for those whose joy is expressed through service. Their work reflects the joy proclaimed by the angels at Christ's birth: 'Good news of great joy for all people.'

Prayer:

Our prayer for this week, on the theme of joy, comes to us from Christian Aid colleague Liam Maguire.

Creator God,

You made us to find joy in our work. As Christmas comes near, we're reminded of the angels' message that Jesus living among us would bring great joy to all the earth.

Loving God, help us find renewed joy in our service of others – following Wilhermine's example to love without expectations, offer

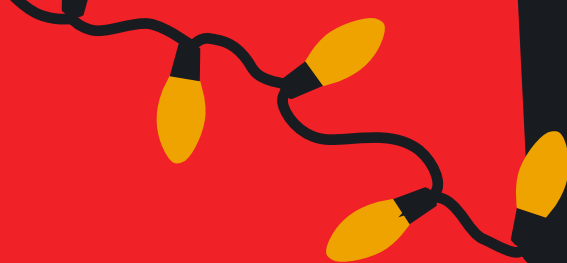
hope without conditions, and bring blessing in both speech and action.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Collect:

God of joy, strengthen our hearts to act in service of those who grieve.
Amen.





Week 4:

Sunday 21 December, 2025

Theme:

Love





Story focus:

Obed Buhendwa's reflection on love

Obed Buhendwa (Senior Programme Officer, Christian Aid DRC) works with communities affected by conflict, displacement, and poverty. His role involves coordinating emergency responses, supporting survivors of violence, and building peace through partnership. Despite the challenges, Obed finds strength in love:

'Love is a Christian Aid value that really inspires me in my work. The people we work with need our assistance; they need our love. All of us are created in the image

of God, so we must support one another. Whenever I meet people in crisis, I feel compassion. I embody love and turn it into action.'

Obed's words reflect the heart of Christian Aid's mission: to love our global neighbours through practical support, advocacy, and solidarity. His work is a living expression of Advent love: compassionate, courageous, and committed.

This week, we give thanks for those who embody love in their daily work. Their actions remind us that love is not passive; it is active, sacrificial, and transformative.

Prayer:

Our prayer for this week, on the theme of hope, comes to us from Christian Aid colleague Obed Buhendwa.

God,

At Christmas, we thank you for the gift of Jesus, born of your love for the world. We remember that you created every one of us in your image. We pledge to follow your commandment to love our neighbour as we love ourselves. Help us to love each other in word and deed, through actions that make a difference. As we celebrate the love that came down at Christmas, open our eyes and

hearts to those who need our support. We beseech you to bring your peace to us, especially in the Democratic Republic of Congo and in Gaza. May the love and light of your Spirit transform and heal the brokenness of the world.

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Collect:

God of love, strengthen our hearts to act in service of those whose lives have been damaged by hatred.

Amen.





If you've been moved by the stories
you've prayed for this Advent, please
donate to our 2025 Christmas Appeal
at **caid.org.uk/ChristmasDonation**

Here's what the money your church raises could
help us to do:



£14

could buy a pair of solar
lamps that comfort
frightened children at night.



£36

could fund personal hygiene
kits for a family of six.



£68

could fund pots, cups,
bowls, plates and spoons
for a family who've lost
everything.