

Share the load this harvest.

Harvest Appeal

Service outline

This is a suggested outline for a Tearfund service during Harvest 2021. The prayers, readings etc may all be used independently, and the outline may be adapted to suit the congregation.

For online services: all website links can be added into the chat facility for people to link to.

For face-to-face services: put website links up on the screen for people to look up during the service or copy down to take home and look up later.

Thank you for helping to Share the load with people like Loyara this harvest time.

Welcome and opening prayer

Welcome everyone to the service and to this time of harvest, and open with the [Harvest prayer](#)

Song

Introduction/all age talk

For online services: show the following items, in turn, to the camera.

For face-to-face services: take the following items out of a bag one by one (or show a photo of one).

- A trowel
- A calculator
- A set of weighing scales
- A smartphone/tablet
- An alarm clock

Ask for ideas (either spoken or in the chat facility) for the common link between these items.

All of these items help people to do a job (including getting up on time!) A trowel might be an obvious tool to help someone farm. But did you know that a smartphone is too? We'll come back to that later...

SHOW LORAYA ON SCREEN [PowerPoint slide 3]

Loyara, a mother from Burkina Faso, has seen her land turn barren due to the prolonged drought made worse by the climate crisis.

Her crops have died, her family is hungry.

'We have no other source of income than agriculture,' Loyara says. 'We know what it means to go without.'

The climate crisis is hitting people in poverty the hardest – the ones who have done the least to cause it. It's causing more frequent and more severe disasters.

The climate crisis isn't a future risk.

It's on Loyara's doorstep, today.

Your church can help before it is too late.



Loyara is a farmer in Burkina Faso, West Africa.

To farm, Loyara needs seeds, she needs tools such as a trowel and a rake, she needs soil – and she needs sun and rain. But over the past few years, the land in Burkina Faso has become drier and drier as the rain has failed to come. Loyara's crops haven't grown, and her family is hungry.

The climate in Burkina Faso, and around the world, is changing. Droughts are becoming more common. And it's the people who have done the least to cause the changes in our climate, like Loyara and her family, who are being the worst affected by it.

In Matthew 22:37-40, Jesus tells us that God's greatest commandments are to love God and to love our neighbours. And, as the parable Jesus told about the Samaritan shows us (Luke 10:25-37), we are called to be good neighbours to anyone who needs our help – whether they live next door or across the world. As those who have contributed the most to the problem of climate change, we can help *Share the load* of the climate crisis with our global neighbours this harvest.

We can pray, and we'll be doing this later in the service. We can give financially so that Tearfund partners can help farmers like Loyara adapt to the changing climate. But we can also take action to stop climate change from becoming even more devastating. And we can do this right now. From the comfort of our own living room, or church pew.

And this is where a smartphone becomes a very handy tool for farming!

Sign the declaration

Tearfund has joined with The Climate Coalition to call on our governments in the UK to help build a fairer, more sustainable recovery from the pandemic for our world and everyone in it – including farmers like Loyara.

By adding our name to The Climate Coalition's declaration, we're joining with thousands of others, calling for greater support for people in poverty who are the most vulnerable to climate change, and for more investment in renewable energy around the world. We are at a turning point in history, and the decisions we make now will affect our economy, society and the climate for decades to come.

I'm going to give us all a minute, if we haven't already done it, to get out our phones and sign the declaration, together, right now. And, if you're not quite at the age yet to be signing online petitions, you can still get involved. After the service, click on the Wave of Hope link on tearfund.org/reboot find out how you can add a message of hope to the call for a better future for everyone.

For online services: Put the link in the chat.

For face-to-face services: Ask people to get out their phones and go to tearfund.org/reboot or, if they don't have their phones with them, they can note down the URL to visit later.

Prayers

A prayer for our neighbours
See *Harvest Appeal Prayers* PDF page 2

Song

Scripture reading 1

Psalm 104:1-23

Song

Scripture reading 2

Matthew 22:37-40

Main talk

This talk is in four distinct parts: God's love for his creation, how we've damaged creation, the hope we find in Jesus, and an invitation to respond. You don't need to give these headings but they are a good way to break down the message of the climate crisis.

God's love for his creation

At harvest, we make time to be thankful for all that God provides us with through the natural world.

For many of us in the UK, it can be hard to link the food we eat with the land around us – more often than not, we link our food with the local supermarket. For people like Loyara, though – a farmer in Burkina Faso – the surrounding land is everything.

The psalmist in our reading today also clearly has a huge appreciation and understanding of creation: where the birds nest, where the mountain goats live, the skill of a lion as it hunts its prey, and the vast array of creatures living in the water.

As a result of how nature fits together, the psalmist is inspired to worship the creator God. And, in verse 31 of the psalm, we read that God too rejoices in his creation – in all things being as they were meant to be. The beauty and variety of all he's made brings God joy!

But it's not just that nature is glorious to behold. Verses 10-18 of Psalm 104 describe how God provides through nature – for plants, for animals, and for humankind. Verses 13 and 14 declare that he 'waters the mountains from his upper chambers; the land is satisfied by the fruit of his work. He makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for people to cultivate—bringing forth food from the earth'.

God thinks so much of his creation that he even became a part of it when he sent his Son to earth in human form. During his time on earth, Jesus immersed himself in creation – using it to illustrate God's kingdom (Matthew 13:3-9, Luke 12:24), benefitting from its provision (John 21:5-9) and living and teaching within it, including from mountains, shorelines and lakes.

Nature is designed to work in harmony – land and water, earth and sky, humans and animals – all have their part to play in the natural order of things. And all is held together by a creator God who is happy with the world he has created.

How we've damaged creation, and how that is impacting people in poverty

But we don't have to look very hard at the world today to see that this perfect balance that God created is out of kilter. Too often, the land isn't satisfied but is parched or flooded. Grass is sparse and dried out, and plants do not grow.

Rather than taking care of the earth, as God instructs us in Genesis 2:15, the way we live, work and consume has pushed creation to breaking point.

Whether it's plastic pollution littering the seas and the poorest communities, or species going extinct at record rates, or the climate crisis causing more droughts, floods and storms, we've damaged this beautiful world which is a gift from God. We're feeling some of the effects in the UK, but it's people living in poverty – who have done the least to cause the problems – who are being hit the hardest.

Take Loyara.

If you'd like to use a video: Watch and download the video of Loyara here: tearfund.org/harvest

If you're telling Loyara's story: This is Loyara [show Powerpoint slides 3 and 4].

Loyara, a mother from Burkina Faso, has seen her land turn barren due to the prolonged drought made worse by the climate crisis.

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One in ten people are facing hunger


Before the coronavirus pandemic, an estimated **1 million people** didn't have access to basic healthcare


More than 80 per cent of the population depend on agriculture to make a living



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Loyara is a farmer in Burkina Faso, West Africa. For years, drought has ravaged her land, which lies barren and empty. This is the effect of the climate crisis, which is already hitting people in poverty the hardest. It has led to more frequent and more severe disasters, such as prolonged drought.

For Loyara and so many others, the harvest will be empty again this year. Another season of hunger looms. And, as the climate crisis worsens, it can mean life or death for many families like Loyara's.

'We have no other source of income than agriculture. We know what it means to go without,' says Loyara.

Around the world, millions of people like Loyara are being pushed back into poverty because of climate change. In 2016, world hunger started to increase for the first time in a decade and has continued to increase every year since. And that's because of climate change, conflict and disease – with climate change exacerbating the risk of conflict.

The science is clear: the climate crisis is being caused by us, especially us in developed nations, and the impacts are accelerating. We are running out of time to prevent the worst effects. We have to act fast and change the way we live, and governments have to be much more ambitious.

Right now, we have a unique window of opportunity. This year, the UK is hosting the UN climate talks in Glasgow in November. How our governments throughout the UK choose to rebuild after the pandemic will not only shape our own economies, but also influence other nations as we host these talks. This is a crucial moment for our leaders to take climate change seriously.

In the Bible, Jesus tells us the most important commandments are to love God and to love our neighbours (Matthew 22:37-40). Tackling the climate crisis is vital to both of these – honouring God by protecting his creation and loving our global neighbours who are hit first and worst by what is now a climate emergency.

The hope we find in Jesus

Colossians 1:19-20 says: 'For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him [Jesus], and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.'

Because of Jesus' death on the cross, all things can be made new; everything sin has broken and corrupted is being restored and reconciled to God. That includes us as well as the rest of creation.

What's more, we're invited to be a part of God's ministry of reconciliation – inviting people to be reconciled to God through Jesus, but also reconciling people to the creation we've been given to care for, and seeing it restored. This is the fullness of the gospel.

If you would like to use the animation: Watch this video about the brokenness in our world and God's mission to bring restoration and reconciliation, watch and download it here: <https://vimeo.com/451780056/841556a0a7>

An invitation to respond

So how can we respond?

You may already have added your name to The Climate Coalition's declaration, which calls on our governments to build a fairer, healthier recovery from the pandemic. But there's more we can do.

Just as Esther in the Old Testament speaks up against injustice – even at great risk to herself – so we are called to respond when we see injustice in our world.

We have already responded through our actions (if you haven't, please do visit tearfund.org/reboot and sign the declaration). But we can also give – enabling Tearfund partners that live and work alongside families like Loyara's to help the poorest people adapt to the changing climate around them.

- **£38** could provide a woman with the materials and training needed to start her own sustainable poultry farm to help feed her family and earn an income.
- **£57** could help towards training an entire village on how they can protect themselves against disease and illness through sustainable waste management.
- **£200** could contribute towards the cost of installing a solar water pump in a community vegetable garden to increase the chances of a successful harvest.

You can be a part of the solution through donating online at tearfund.org/donate or by giving to the collection for Tearfund at the end of this service. Together, let's do all we can to come alongside our global neighbours and help *Share the load* this Harvest time.

As we come to the end of our harvest service, I'd like to close with a prayer for the climate. And to encourage you, as you take practical action to care for this wonderful world we live in, to continue praying for it too. Tearfund has some great prayer resources to help you pray, alone or with others, for our climate at tearfund.org/PrayForClimate

Prayers

A prayer for the climate crisis
See *Harvest Appeal Prayers* PDF page 3

Reflection

[Play the video](#) of Andy Flannagan singing *Reconciled*

Close service

To the church leader

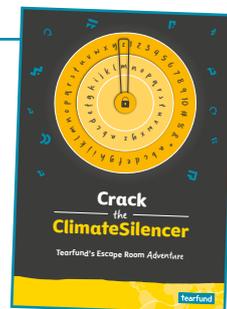
Thank you for taking the time to share Loyara's story, and the importance of taking action on the climate emergency, with your congregation. We hope that, together, you have been moved to act. As always, we're right here if we can help with any further information. You can reach us by email at info@tearfund.org

Crack the ClimateSilencer

The Bible teaches that we should give with a cheerful heart – and Tearfund has come up with a great way to help us do just that!

Crack the ClimateSilencer is an online escape room where groups of between three and ten people join together to solve a mysterious plot surrounding the climate crisis. You'll laugh, you'll learn and, through each person donating to play the game, you'll be raising vital funds to help Tearfund's work.

Watch the *Crack the ClimateSilencer* trailer: tearfund.org/campaigns/crack-the-climatesilencer



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