# YOUR NEIGHBOUR IS THIRSTY
## Campaign Overview

## ABOUT THIS CAMPAIGN

This year, Tearfund Scotland is launching a new campaign called *Your Neighbour is Thirsty*. This campaign highlights the extreme poverty brought on, in part, by the impacts of climate change. It will focus on the people in north-east Ethiopia, whose access to water has been severely reduced due to the changing climate.

## YOUR NEIGHBOUR IS THIRSTY

Tearfund is committed to following Jesus where the need is greatest. So we are calling on the church to join us. Together we will ease the suffering of those impacted the most by climate change, through providing abundant, safe drinking water for families who struggle every day to get enough.

In Matthew 22:39, Jesus calls us to 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' As the impacts of climate change intensify globally, it is becoming alarmingly clear that the way in which we live, and have lived in our western society. has contributed greatly towards climate change. It is now having a devastating impact on the lives of our neighbours living in developing countries (the 'global south'), even though they have contributed the least to climate change.

One of the most extreme examples of this is the prevalence of drought – exacerbated and prolonged by climate change – in places like Ethiopia. Many communities are witnessing dependable sources of water drying up, leaving them in a desperate situation, with few options and no idea why this change has happened.

When asked 'Who is my neighbour?' Jesus responded with the story of the Good Samaritan. This showed that our neighbour is anyone in need, even if they live in different countries. Just a few chapters later in Matthew 25:35, Jesus says these words '...I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in.'

We are inviting the church in Scotland to join us in loving our neighbour. Not just our close neighbour, but neighbours far away, strangers who share the same planet, and who are suffering because of the damage we have played a part in causing. We are inviting the church to step in and provide fresh, abundant, water for families suffering from thirst and, in doing so, bring hope, opportunities and joy to families in their time of crisis.

## WELCOME TO AFAR, ETHIOPIA

Afar is a vast region in north-east Ethiopia, where 1.4 million people live. The majority are pastoralists, meaning they keep livestock such as camels, goats and cows.

Although the land is arid, the people of Afar have, until recent years, relied on it to provide enough to support their livestock and their families.

However, the region has seen a dramatic change in rainfall in recent years, with the duration of the rainy season reducing from four months a year, down to around one month. This has led to a situation where river beds and other water sources remain dry for most of the year. This means that around 65 per cent of the population don't have access to safe drinking water.

People in these communities have to go to extreme measures to survive, often walking up to ten hours per day on perilous journeys to collect water. On their way, vulnerable women are at risk of attacks by wild animals such as crocodiles and hyenas. Communities have to stay where their livestock graze, so can't move closer to water.

Even after making such journeys for water, the water that is collected and taken home is not enough to meet household needs, with families often going thirsty as a result. The water they collect is often contaminated, or has a high salt content, leading to an increased risk of water-borne diseases such as cholera, which has broken out in several communities in Afar recently.

This is the main challenge in a region where people are already vulnerable, with more than 92 per cent of the population currently are at risk because they don't have enough food, and more than 60 per cent living without access to healthcare.

## INTRODUCING ORBISA

Orbisa and her family live in the village of Asbehari in the Afar region of north-east Ethiopia. Climate change has contributed to a massive decrease in rainfall in recent years, and local sources of water have dried up. Now, Orbisa has no choice but to walk up to ten hours each day to collect water for her family – but it's still not enough. They often have to get by with less than half the water they need just to meet their basic needs, and it means Orbisa's children often go to bed thirsty.

## A SOLUTION

Tearfund are partnering with an organisation called Friendship Support Association (FSA) who are committed to showing the love of Jesus to the people of Afar by providing safe, abundant drinking water. So far, Tearfund is in the process of providing wells to two communities in the region, but we would like to expand this work to reach many more people in desperate need of water.

These wells – or solar-powered water borehole systems – are large water projects that provide an abundant long-term source of local safe drinking water for up to 3,000 households at each location. The system accesses water from 150 metres below ground, and uses solar power over a two week period to draw it up to fill a large tank with enough to last six months. The process then repeats itself.

**As this work continues in the Afar region, Tearfund has recommended that a gift of just £12 per month has the potential to provide water for 12 families per year.**

## MEET THE PARTNER

Friendship Support Association is a Christian relief and development organisation focused on providing support to communities in the Afar region of Ethiopia. Their mission is to see communities in Afar become literate, healthy, self-reliant and productive, capable of solving economic, social and environmental problems in the region. FSA shares Tearfund's vision of showing the love of Jesus to communities in Afar through responding directly to immediate needs in times of crisis, while also empowering communities to become self-sufficient in the longer term. It is Tearfund's desire to see self-help groups started in the region, a strategy that has seen great success in helping people to be released from poverty in other regions of Ethiopia.



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# KEY BIBLE VERSES

**Matthew 22:39**
'...Love your neighbour as yourself.'

**Matthew 25:35**
'For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat,
I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink,
I was a stranger and you invited me in.'

**Isaiah 44:1-5**
'But now listen, Jacob, my servant,
Israel, whom I have chosen.
This is what the Lord says –
he who made you, who formed you in the womb,
and who will help you:
Do not be afraid, Jacob, my servant,
Jeshurun, whom I have chosen.
For I will pour water on the thirsty land,
and streams on the dry ground;
I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring,
and my blessing on your descendants.
They will spring up like grass in a meadow,
like poplar trees by flowing streams.
Some will say, "I belong to the Lord";
others will call themselves by the name of Jacob;
Still others will write on their hand, "The Lord's,"
and will take the name Israel.'

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