

tearfund ACTION



# PRAY FOR THE CLIMATE



# INTRODUCTION

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**This is your prayer-fuelled, fact-filled, action-packed resource to help you set up a 24-7 Prayer Room for the climate during 2020. You can use this guide whether you are hosting a prayer room for a week, or wanting to pray at church, with a group or on your own. We hope the ideas and stories in it will help you draw near to God and cry out for those affected by the climate crisis.**

Throughout scripture we see God's love for this world. 'The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it,' declares the psalmist (Psalm 24:1). But with record-breaking storms, severe droughts and rising temperatures, we're seeing creation being knocked out of balance – and people being pushed back into poverty as a result. If we are to truly love our global neighbours, we have to tackle the climate crisis.

In November 2020, world leaders will be gathering in Glasgow for the United Nations' climate talks (called COP26). Along with Christians around the world, and in partnership with CAFOD and Christian Aid, we have set ourselves the ambitious goal of seeing the year filled with passionate prayer for justice and for climate solutions. That will mean people the world over crying out for change, celebrating the beauty of God's world, repenting for the damage we've done and seeking God's heart for a just and sustainable future.

## 24-7 PRAYER ROOMS

**24-7 Prayer Rooms help people learn to pray by praying. Any space can be turned into a prayer room: it's a place for your community to focus on prayer in an intentional way, and generally people are invited to sign up for a particular time slot of, for example, an hour. With 24 people committing to pray for an hour a day, you'll be able to plan non-stop prayer for a week!**

You will find it helpful to read through each of the stations before you start, so you know how much space you'll need and can decide if you are going to use all of the stations or just a few.

Scatter paper and pens around so people can write down prayers, thoughts or pictures that they receive from God as they pray. If you have the space, you may even want to stick a large piece of paper up on one wall, make pens and paints available, and invite people to share some of the things they feel God is saying.

Our friends at 24-7 Prayer have lots more info about how to run a prayer room, and how to motivate people to pray, plus inspiring stories of faithful and continual prayer from around the world. If you're running a 24-7 Prayer Room for the Climate, they'd love you to register it (and you'll receive some handy practical tips too). Do check out their website for more ideas, resources and advice:

[www.24-7prayer.com/prayerrooms](http://www.24-7prayer.com/prayerrooms)



Photo: Emma Boyd/Tearfund

# HOW TO BUILD YOUR PRAYER STATIONS

Ideally, build your prayer stations where there is enough space for more than one person at a time to use them. If you can, use throws, cushions and fairy lights to decorate and create a calm atmosphere.

Gather the items suggested on page 5 for each prayer station and print out the instructions (pages 6–19). Position each of the pages, and the items for that station, around the room to create a series of interactive spaces for people to pray. You might like to have the story of Fabiano and Takondwa near the entrance as the first station, where people begin, and close to 'Take a step' so people can respond to the story.

For the 'Take a step' station, place the chair or stool inside the paddling pool/large box so people can easily step onto it. Consider how to make this safe for people to participate in. For the 'Worship' station, if you're using a laptop with the headphones, cue up the song so it's ready to play.

Once you're set up, spend some time praying, focusing on Jesus and asking the Holy Spirit to meet with each person who uses the space.



Photo: Emma Boyd/Tearfund

# KIT LIST

## FOR THE PRAYER ROOM GENERALLY:

- coloured pencils, pens and possibly paints
- paper for people to write/draw their prayers
- Bibles, perhaps a few translations
- prayer station print-outs (page 6–19)
- throws, cushions and fairy lights to decorate

## FOR THE PRAYER STATIONS:

### Take a step

- paddling pool/large water-tight box
- stool/chair

### Saying sorry

- toy cars and/or planes
- a lamp
- knife, fork and plate with printed pictures of meat & two veg on the plate

- a t-shirt
- chocolate bar wrapper/crisp packet
- pens, paper and a place to leave prayers eg a pinboard/box

### Renew Our World

- flipchart paper and pens, or a roll of paper

### Home

- suitcase
- pile of clothing or printed images of coats/shoes
- luggage tags

### Leaders

- a world map (A3 or bigger)
- Post-it notes

### Very good

- leaves, twigs, stones, shells, plants etc
- Cut up the included verses to scatter among the objects

### Rising tide

- flipchart paper and pens, or a roll of paper
- Stick the included examples onto the paper, or write them out

### Worship

- headphones (and ideally a laptop)

## WE CLIMBED AN ANTHILL: FABIANO AND TAKONDWA

Hunger had never been an issue for grandparents Fabiano and Takondwa\*. Living near the banks of a river in Chikwawa, Malawi, they and their family cultivated crops such as maize and beans on their two-and-a-half acres of land. Then Cyclone Idai hit – bringing heavy rains, strong winds and flooding.

On the night of 9 March 2019, Fabiano noticed water was starting to enter his house. 'I called to my wife and we tried to figure out what was happening,' he says. 'We could see the roof of our house being blown off.

'Just outside our house there was an anthill and we decided to run there as it was on a higher ground.

'Takondwa held onto me the whole night as we heard screams and shouts from other villagers, but we were not sure what was happening.'

Thankfully, their two grandsons and families had travelled to another part of the country before the floods came. Fabiano and Takondwa found themselves stranded on a tiny 'island', surrounded by churning waters all night.

In the morning, a man paddling a canoe came looking for people who needed rescuing. Fabiano shouted for help. After reaching safer ground, they joined many others seeking shelter in a makeshift camp at a primary school.



Photo: Serena Suen/Tearfund

It was an extremely traumatic ordeal for Fabiano and Takondwa. 'All our things were destroyed and swept away by the raging waters,' he recalls. 'We survived with only the clothes on our backs. I felt so distressed and realised that death was very near.'

**We've always had extreme weather events, but climate change makes disasters like this much more dangerous and intense. Hotter temperatures in Malawi meant more water evaporated and was sucked into the storm, and a whole year's worth of rain fell in just a few days.**

**Cyclone Idai ripped apart roads, bridges, houses, schools and health facilities and left vast areas of farmland under water.**

**This prayer space helps us to connect the impacts of climate change and the people most affected – people like Fabiano and Takondwa. Let's pray about the climate chaos that's already claiming lives and ruining livelihoods across the world.**

\*Name changed

## TAKE A STEP

- Read Fabiano and Takondwa's story.
- Step over the water onto the higher ground in the middle.
- Take some time now to imagine being in Fabiano and Takondwa's shoes that day, as water comes under the door.
- Write down your own prayers for Fabiano, Takondwa and their family, and others like them whose homes and livelihoods are being ruined by climate-related disasters.

**Talk to God about the connection between people's carbon-emitting lifestyles, the way the global economy works, and the way natural disasters in poorer countries are made more dangerous and more intense because of climate change.**

# THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S

*'The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for he founded it on the seas and established it on the waters...'*

Psalm 24:1-2

**Spend some time in wonder at how big these statements are.**

**What and who is included?**

**Picture in your mind a few of the people and places you've encountered that are included in 'everything'.**

**As you pray you might like to:**

- open your Bible and read the rest of the psalm
- read it again in a different translation
- rewrite the passage in your own words
- read the passage as a blessing to a particular country or leader whom God has placed on your heart
- memorise it

## THE WISDOM OF THE WORD

*'For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God...'*

Romans 8:19–21

When you are eagerly expecting something, what does that feel like? Is there anticipation, giddiness, joy? Is there fear or trepidation?

What would it be like to see creation liberated and experiencing freedom and glory?

Creation waits for the children of God. How can we play our part, as the children of God?

As you pray you might like to:

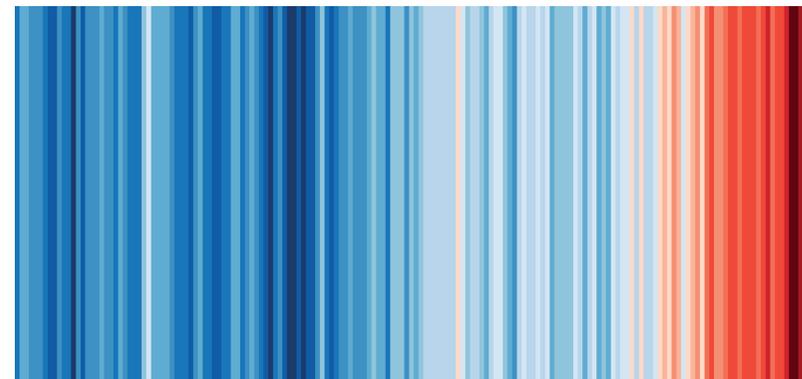
- rewrite the passage in your own words
- read it again in a different translation
- read the passage as a call to action to a particular leader, community or country on your heart.

# FACTS AND STATS

- The 20 warmest years on record have all occurred in the past 22 years.<sup>1</sup>
- After years of progress, world hunger began to increase again in 2016 due to climate change and conflict. It has continued to climb each year since.<sup>2</sup>
- Climate change could push more than 100 million people back into poverty by 2030.<sup>3</sup>
- Scientists advise that we should do all we can to limit warming to 1.5°C to avoid the worst effects of climate change, and minimise the risk of runaway climate breakdown.<sup>4</sup>
- Global temperatures have risen by 1.1°C since 1850, and climate change is accelerating: temperatures increased by 0.2°C between 2011 and 2015 alone.<sup>5</sup>
- Globally, we are currently heading for 3–5°C of warming by 2100 – which would be catastrophic.<sup>6</sup>

## Warming stripes

Each stripe in the diagram below uses colour to represent the average global temperature of a single year, from 1850 to now, using data from the UK Met Office. Together, they paint a striking picture of our changing climate:



1. BBC (2018) 'What is climate change?'
2. New Scientist (2017) 'World hunger is on the rise again due to climate change and war'
3. World Bank Group (2016) *Shock waves: managing the impacts of climate change on poverty*
4. BBC (2018) 'Five things we have learned from the IPCC report'
5. BBC (2019) 'Climate change: impacts "accelerating" as leaders gather for UN talks'
6. Sustainable(ish) (2019) *A beginner's guide to climate change*
7. #ShowYourStripes (2019) [showyourstripes.info](http://showyourstripes.info)

## SAYING SORRY

Hold one of the objects at the station in your hands. Consider how it represents human progress – electricity, travel, light, comfort, enough food for billions of people.

Now consider how it represents – at the same time – the ways we've damaged God's creation through how our society works. Relying on fossil fuels for power and travel, unsustainable meat farming practices, deforestation, fast fashion and plastic pollution.

**Talk to God about how you feel. If it helps, take some paper and write down your prayers and reflections.**

**When you're ready, fold over the paper you've written on and thank God that he forgives, sets free and transforms us.**

## RENEW OUR WORLD

*'So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering... Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out...'*

Romans 12:1–2 (MSG)

In what ways could you worship God, with everyday decisions and habits that help to care for his creation? Write down some of the ways you think of, ones that you're already doing or ones you can commit to try going forward. If others have already visited this station, reflect on their ideas and add some of your own too.

In what ways does the system we live in – the ways our businesses and governments work – make this hard to do? Ask God to help you speak up to decision-makers in business and government and ask him to renew their minds as well, so that the way our society works no longer causes harm to people or planet.

# HOME

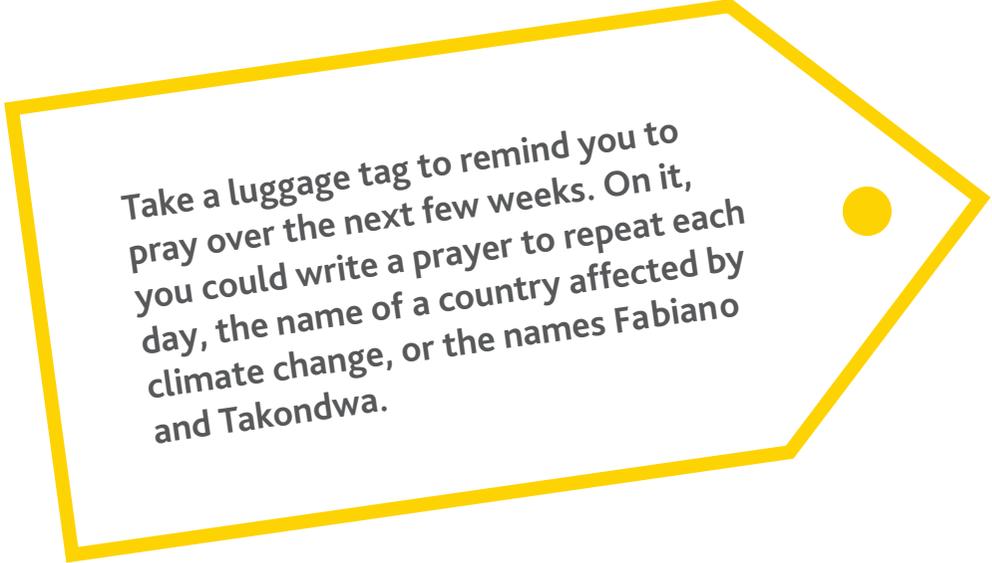
*'You have been a refuge for the poor,  
a refuge for the needy in their distress,  
a shelter from the storm and a shade  
from the heat.'*

Isaiah 25:4

Every second, someone has to leave their home because of droughts, floods and rising sea levels.<sup>8</sup>

Pick up an item from the pile and slowly place it into the suitcase. As you do, pray for people who have to flee their homes because of climate change.

8. Friends of the Earth (2017) 'Climate refugees'



Take a luggage tag to remind you to pray over the next few weeks. On it, you could write a prayer to repeat each day, the name of a country affected by climate change, or the names Fabiano and Takondwa.

# WORLD LEADERS

*'I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people – for kings and all those in authority.'*

1 Timothy 2:1–2

**Climate change is already having a big impact on people who are the least responsible for causing it, including people living in poverty. The climate crisis is accelerating, but we still have a small window of time to limit some of the worst effects.**

**In November 2020 world leaders will gather in Glasgow for the United Nations' climate talks (called COP26). Let's pray for world leaders, that these meetings will result in ambitious commitments and concrete actions.**

## STEP 1

Take a Post-it note and write a prayer for the leaders of a country which is already suffering the effects of climate change. Pray that they have wisdom about how to adapt to a changing world, and that they would hear the cries of the most vulnerable. Place your Post-it prayer on or beside the map. Some ideas of who to pray for:

- Malawi and Mozambique devastated by Cyclone Idai in 2019
- India, which is suffering increasingly regular and extreme droughts and floods
- Ecuador, Vietnam or island nations which are fast losing ground to rising sea levels

## STEP 2

Take another Post-it note and write a prayer for the leaders of a country which has contributed a lot to climate change. Pray for them to be ambitious in their commitments and actions, and to prioritise justice and equality. Place your Post-it prayer on or beside the map. Some ideas of who to pray for:

- the UK, the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution and our carbon-intensive world
- the USA, where most of the world's emissions have come from since the 1800s
- China, the biggest generator of carbon emissions today

## VERY GOOD

*'God saw all that he had made,  
and it was very good.'*

Genesis 1:31

Throughout scripture we see God's people meet with their creator and worship him through the beauty of the world. As we lift up prayers and requests about these issues, injustices and difficulties, we must also remember to give thanks and praise for the wonders of the world that we're part of.

As you look at some of God's creation in front of you, can you notice patterns, details and beauty? Spend time admiring God's handiwork.

**Consider the Bible verses around you and allow his 'very good' creation to draw you into worship.**

Verses to print and scatter at the 'Very good' station:

'The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies  
proclaim the work of his hands.'

Psalm 19:1

'See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not  
labour or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in  
all his splendour was dressed like one of these.'

Matthew 6:28–29

'Before the mountains were born or you brought forth  
the whole world, from everlasting to everlasting you  
are God.'

Psalm 90:2

'Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth  
and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in  
them, saying: "To him who sits on the throne and to  
the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power,  
for ever and ever!"'

Revelation 5:13

'For since the creation of the world God's invisible  
qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have  
been clearly seen, being understood from what has  
been made, so that people are without excuse.'

Romans 1:20

'For in him all things were created: things in heaven  
and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or  
powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been  
created through him and for him.'

Colossians 1:16

## RISING TIDE

As temperatures and sea levels rise, people are rising up too. Millions of people around the world are tired of waiting for change. There's a groundswell of activists, pioneers, innovators and ordinary people who are speaking truth to power and pushing for a more sustainable future. And young people are taking the lead.

**Take a moment to celebrate and thank God for those with a passion and conviction to take action.**

**If you have people, organisations, movements or milestones that you are thankful for, add them to the paper at this station.**

Stick these examples onto the paper, or write them out, at the 'Rising tide' station:

<p>For Greta Thunberg and the global school strike movement – and the amazing young Christians at the heart of that movement in the UK and around the world</p>	<p>For the Green Anglicans movement across southern and eastern Africa, for the huge success of young Christians' campaigning for renewable energy, plastic bans and other environmental action</p>
<p>For community groups winning campaigns all around the world to stop fracking, open-cast coal mines, oil pipelines and other new fossil fuel infrastructure</p>	<p>For leaders seeking more sustainable ways to run an economy, such as Jacinda Ardern in New Zealand, or leaders shifting to 100 per cent renewable energy to power the local grid, such as Republican Mayor Dale Ross of Georgetown, Texas. And for leaders speaking up with increasing boldness, such as Archbishop Justin Welby</p>
<p>For companies genuinely seeking to be part of the solution, by building more renewable energy infrastructure, phasing out plastics, or making their operations sustainable – from Ecotricity to Boston Tea Party to Bates Wells</p>	<p>For the diverse groups of people coming together to speak up on this unifying issue – from indigenous communities, to racial justice activists, refugee campaigns and disability groups</p>

Note: By mentioning companies and organisations in these lists we are not endorsing them, but simply attempting to list some of the many people and organisations who have been making significant changes in the past couple of years. We thank God for all of those on this list, and those not here, who are helping to restore the damage we've done to God's creation and are doing so in a way that champions those on the margins and those living in poverty.

# WORSHIP

*'Sing to the LORD a new song;  
sing to the LORD, all the earth.'*

Psalm 96:1

Take the headphones and stand or sit comfortably.

If there's a laptop with the song cued up, click 'play' and worship our glorious God through the words and music.

To find the song on your own device, search 'Renew our World' by Dawn Faith on your music app, or type: <http://bit.ly/ROWSong> into your browser.

When you've finished, reflect on the words of the prayer below, a prayer of renewing and refocusing on God's love for all he has made:

*Creator God,  
Renew our spirits and cleanse our hearts.  
Renew our minds and transform our lives.  
Renew our cities and rebuild our ruins.  
Renew our world, in your name we pray,  
Amen*

A prayer from the global prayer and justice movement Renew Our World

## NEXT STEPS

Prayer is a crucial part of our response, and the more we pray, the more passionate we become about joining in with what God is doing and taking action ourselves. That's why we've created this page, full of practical ways you can live differently, speak up to decision-makers and continue learning to inform your prayers and actions.

For lots more tips, head to [www.tearfund.org/action](http://www.tearfund.org/action) or email [campaigns@tearfund.org](mailto:campaigns@tearfund.org)

### HERE ARE SOME SUGGESTIONS TO TAKE ACTION IN YOUR OWN LIFE:

- **Living differently:** Think and pray about steps you could take to live more sustainably and reduce your own carbon footprint. Check out the resources on the next page to find more ideas.
- **Travel:** Could you walk or cycle more? Or use public transport, where available? If you fly regularly, could you consider other transport options and pledge to fly less? Any flights you have to take could be offset by Christian charity Climate Stewards: [www.climatestewards.org/offset](http://www.climatestewards.org/offset)

- **Food:** What impact does the food you eat have? Could you reduce how much meat you eat, try Meat-Free Monday or go vegan one day a week?
- **Energy:** What type of energy powers your appliances at home, work and church? Could you switch to renewable electricity? Find out more here: [www.bigcleanswitch.org/tearfund](http://www.bigcleanswitch.org/tearfund)
- **Speaking up for change:** In 2015, after years of negotiations, 195 nations committed to work together to tackle climate change and keep the earth's temperature rise below 2 degrees. This deal is known as the Paris Agreement. This is a brilliant step, but we are a long way off track from fulfilling those commitments. We need to keep the pressure on leaders to go much further and faster. Could you write to your politicians and representatives, support children who join school strikes, and attend climate marches yourself? Find out more here: [www.tearfund.org/action](http://www.tearfund.org/action)

As the climate crisis accelerates, people living in poverty are facing the worst effects. Tearfund is committed to working in these communities, responding to disasters and supporting local churches to be the hope of the world. You can join us in this mission by supporting our work on a regular basis at: [www.tearfund.org/give](http://www.tearfund.org/give)

- **Pray and Fast for the Climate:** Sign up to receive an email at the beginning of each month to help inform your prayers and remind you to pray – and perhaps fast – for the climate. [www.prayandfastfortheclimate.org.uk](http://www.prayandfastfortheclimate.org.uk)

# TOP RESOURCES

## LEARN MORE:

- **A beginner's guide to climate change:**  
visit [www.tearfund.org/climate](http://www.tearfund.org/climate) or [www.theclimatecoalition.org/whats-affected](http://www.theclimatecoalition.org/whats-affected)
- **Latest news:**  
most news outlets will report on impacts of climate change. Try *The Guardian*, the BBC, or Carbon Brief for more in-depth reporting.
- **The science:**  
for an authoritative version of events, search for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). For a personal take from a Christian working on climate science, try Katharine Hayhoe's website: [www.katharinehayhoe.com](http://www.katharinehayhoe.com)
- **Theology:**  
for theological reflection on creation care, justice and other related issues, you could read John Stott's *The Radical Disciple*, Ruth Valerio's *Just Living*, or Dave Bookless's *Planetwise*.

## RESOURCES FOR CHURCHES:

- **'What is poverty?'**  
a short introduction to poverty and injustice and how we respond as Christians:  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=U5qig9HIJ7k&t](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U5qig9HIJ7k&t)
- **'Restoration story'**  
a short film and discussion guide to help people consider their response to climate change: [www.tearfund.org/jointhestory](http://www.tearfund.org/jointhestory)
- **Live Justly**  
a ten-part Bible study on justice, consumerism and creation care:  
[www.tearfund.org/livejustly](http://www.tearfund.org/livejustly)
- **Eco Church**  
a brilliant scheme to help churches in England and Wales become more sustainable: [ecochurch.arochoa.org.uk](http://ecochurch.arochoa.org.uk)

# PARTNERS IN PRAYER

## 24-7 PRAYER

24-7 Prayer is an international movement made up of communities of prayer, missional projects and countless individuals in prayer rooms all over the world. For nearly two decades, 24-7 Prayer have helped millions of people in countless locations to encounter God and engage with the needs of the world. The movement began in 1999 when a simple, student-led prayer vigil went viral, spreading into tens of thousands of locations and denominations. Find out more: [www.24-7prayer.com](http://www.24-7prayer.com)

## RENEW OUR WORLD

Renew Our World unites a global movement of Christians calling for a more just and sustainable planet for all. In our prayers, and through our actions, together we are shaping a world that reflects God's love for all creation so that all people in every nation can enjoy fullness of life. Right now, we are tackling the critical issues of climate change and plastic pollution because of their impacts on the poorest people who are hit first and hardest. Find out more: [www.renewourworld.net](http://www.renewourworld.net)

## TEARFUND

Tearfund is a Christian charity called to follow Jesus wherever the need is greatest. We work alongside local churches and organisations in over 50 countries to help communities overcome the worst effects of poverty. As the climate crisis accelerates, so does our work to equip the church to take action – by speaking up to world leaders, living sustainably and adapting to a changing world. If we take action together, we can see the worst of the climate crisis averted. Find out more:

[www.tearfund.org/action](http://www.tearfund.org/action)

## CHRISTIAN AID

Christian Aid is a partnership of people, churches and local organisations committed to ending poverty worldwide. For over 70 years, we've been standing with the poorest of our neighbours. We work with people of all faiths and none, to stand up for dignity, equality and justice. The climate crisis is already hitting the poor communities the hardest, but if we act together, we can build a better world where everyone can flourish.

Find out more: [www.christianaid.org.uk/campaigns](http://www.christianaid.org.uk/campaigns)

## CAFOD

CAFOD is an international development charity and the official aid agency of the Catholic Church in England and Wales. We reach out to people living in poverty with practical help, whatever their religion or culture. Through our global Church network, one of the largest in the world, we have the potential to reach everyone. Together we Catholics can turn the tide on the climate crisis. We can treat our home with respect by forging new habits and we can call on politicians to go further and faster. Find out more: [www.cafod.org.uk](http://www.cafod.org.uk)