

WEEKLY SERMON

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Love the neighbour we do not see

Over the year and a bit of the pandemic so far much of our energy has gone into 'getting through', adjusting to a strange way of life, and helping those in our neighbourhoods and local communities who have needed assistance or fallen on hard times. The dreadful scenes of suffering in India at the moment are a reminder of the worldwide challenge of Covid and a reminder that the call to love our neighbour, which starts locally, also extends more widely.

That same call to love the neighbour whom we do not see has been at the heart of the work of Christian Aid since it was founded in 1945 to help the massive numbers of refugees in the wake of the Second World War. Christian Aid is the British and Irish Churches' own aid agency, helping bring both relief and aid long term development in needy parts of our world. It does this through partnering with local churches and organisations so that money isn't lost in grandiose projects or corruption, but makes a real and a lasting difference. This week is Christian Aid week, when churches up and down the country will be focussing on the work of Christian Aid and raising funds for its work. Traditionally many have collected door to door by dropping off and calling back for envelopes. Maybe you are used to such an envelope or perhaps you are or were a collector. Increasingly, and especially with covid, other ways of raising funds are coming to the fore. Reading this might inspire you to give something to Christian Aid - you can do so at <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/key-appeals/christian-aid-week>

This year's Christian Aid Week focus is on helping those who are already being dramatically impacted by climate change. From drought to flooding, climate change robs people of control over their lives. Extreme weather means many are struggling to survive without a reliable source of water. Money raised could help a community build an earth dam, so when the rains do come, they will have the water they need to live. A reliable source of water will help families withstand long drought or relentless rainstorms.

This Christian Aid week, let's look beyond our own selves, families and localities, and even beyond covid. Let's help make a difference through an act of generosity. Let's help be part of bigger changes to address ongoing global warming. And let's remember that this whole world and everyone in it is God's precious creation and that we have a responsibility to him for our care of his world and our fellow men and women.

Rev Toby Webber

Vicar of Clayton-le-Moors and Altham

HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES