



Christian Aid Week 2022

Yes, we're nearly at this important point of our church's year!

This has always been a good time in the year to be giving to Christian Aid. Very much so over the decades in which we did a house-to-house collection. In terms of the Church Year, Christ is risen and nature has burst forth again in all its freshness and colour. No time is better to celebrate the wonder of life and to share a measure of what we have and enjoy with the most needy. As ever Christian Aid Week is in mid-May, this time from 15 - 21 May. Last year at this time we raised £701.80, over half of it gift-aided.

Christian Aid like to focus our attention each year on a particular country. In 2021 this was Kenya. This year it is Zimbabwe, a country in the spotlight for all the wrong reasons in the last decades of Robert Mugabe, now much less in the news but still with a government sadly short on human rights. So I will repeat what I have said often, that Christian Aid do *not* work through governments but through local committees in which they and the communities they serve have confidence.

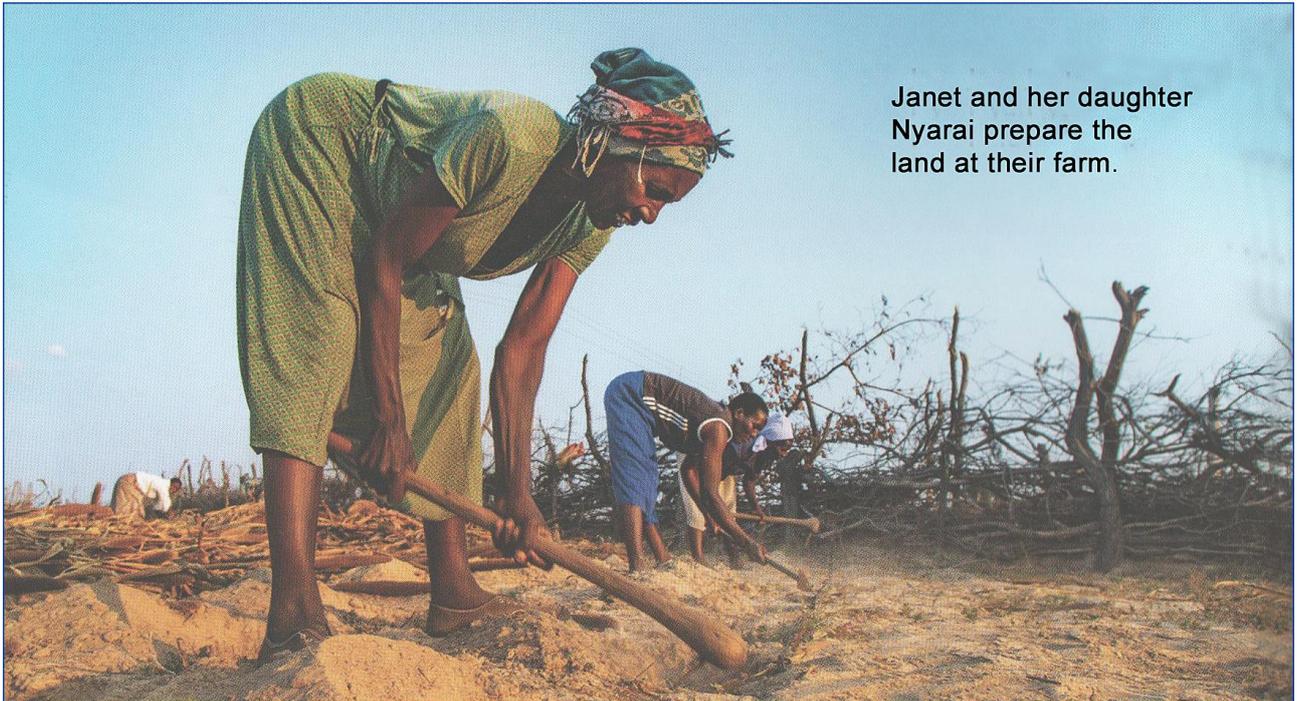
Christian Aid have, I learn, worked in Zimbabwe since the 1980s, the early (and better) years of the Mugabe government. They are regularly caught up in emergencies - they were on the case (so far as they were allowed to be) in Afghanistan and more recently (with the Disasters Emergency Committee) in Ukraine - but a good deal of their investment in Zimbabwe and beyond is in longer-term development. So they currently partner with a body called Silveira House to provide training to young people in skills like welding and leatherwork; with another, Bio-Innovation Zimbabwe to help communities earn an income by harvesting wild indigenous plants, and with another, the Community Technology Development Organisation (CTDO), to train and equip farmers to adapt to the climate crisis.

Christian Aid like to highlight individuals they have helped through their local partners. In rural areas of Zimbabwe seven out of ten women rely on local farming to earn a living, often in the face of drought. Christian Aid tell us of three amazing women who work with Christian Aid's local partners to build their capacity to withstand the adverse turns of the weather and so to lift their families out of hunger. One of these is Janet Zirugo, a great grandmother in the village of Njani. She still works as we see in the picture below.

Janet has known great hardship in her life. Her family once faced unbearable hunger; we can scarcely visualise this though it has been - and is still - an experience of so many of our fellow beings, made worse in many places by global warming. She does, however, see both divine and human aid in her life's journey. In her words 'My life is changing. It makes me happy to see my family are strong and well fed. God gives me the power to plough my field to help my family.'

Not bad for a great-grandmother with a lifetime of really hard work!

Before I set out our arrangements, my thanks go to Helen Anderton for providing Lenten soup lunches in support of the church and of Christian Aid, times of fine fellowship for all concerned.



Janet and her daughter
Nyarai prepare the
land at their farm.

Our arrangements will follow the same pattern as last year. On Sunday 15 May and again on Sunday 22 May Christian Aid envelopes will be available in church for your donations which can be placed in the Christian Aid basket near the West Door.

Just in case that still misses someone, a few spare envelopes and the basket will be in place for the last time on Sunday 29 May. Or, if during this period you are not in church, your donation can be posted through the Parish Door. This can be done any time up till Monday 30 May.

I expect you will be able to donate on line through a link on the Church website should you so wish. As with the envelopes, you can gift-aid if you have paid the requisite tax. However, if you do donate on line could I ask you to let me know what you donated and whether it was gift-aided? I ask this simply so that we record the correct total of our proceeds.

Thank you - the Lord bless you.