

**ALL
WE
CAN**

Partner Church

Spring 2020 Update

In Christ all things
hold together





ALL WE CAN Partner Church

All We Can Partner Churches are a vital part of the All We Can movement – as we've discovered on our journey of partnership already, and as we've learned more about the community of Cherkos in Ethiopia this year, change happens when we all work together.

We now find ourselves in the midst of national lockdown and a global pandemic. Perhaps the arrival of Coronavirus (COVID-19) has brought much change and heartache. Many of us have lost loved ones, we have lived through the frustration of life under lockdown, and we miss gathering together physically as a church.

In times of global crisis, standing together in partnership is more important than ever. We are grateful for your ongoing support – together we are working with talented local organisations in some of the world's poorest

communities to help those most vulnerable to the effects of Coronavirus. You can find out more about that in this update.

In light of the current situation, our Partner Church update looks rather different to normal, and we encourage you to share this material with people who do not normally receive these updates – perhaps by email or by posting it on. That way, these stories of partnership and encouragement continue to find their way into your congregations and communities.



Standing *together* in spirit with the people of Cherkos

These are deeply challenging and uncertain times. Just when we need the company and reassurance of loved ones the most, we must separate to protect each other. While we must physically stay apart, we have discovered the importance of holding together in spirit.

Over the last few months, as a Partner Church, you have been journeying together with the community of Cherkos in rural Ethiopia. Life in Cherkos is deeply communal with several family members living, eating and sleeping in one or two rooms. There is no running water, nor indoor toilet; their income is hand-to-mouth. Making enough to buy soap is a challenge. Families also struggle with transport, meaning access to even basic health care can be difficult. Hopefully, Cherkos' rural location may offer some protection from the worst of the Coronavirus but all the families will find it increasingly challenging to access basics needed to grow and buy food.

This is why your support is so vital to communities like Cherkos. With your support, All We Can is working in partnership with talented local people and organisations, to equip families and communities to prepare and protect themselves from Coronavirus and to rebuild in its aftermath.

In this update, you can join with our global neighbours as they pray and reflect on the strong bonds we have as a global community, which will help us all through these challenging times. **Will you hold together with people around the world during this pandemic?**

Facing this crisis *together*

For 80 years, All We Can has been committed to standing alongside vulnerable communities in times of crisis – and now is no different. Aimee Nott, All We Can's Communications and PR Manager, reflects on her trip to Cherkos in 2018, and speaks to ADHENO's Project Coordinator Isayias Fikre about how the community you have journeyed with over the past year are facing this pandemic.



“If the world outside my front door has transformed beyond recognition, then what is life like for families like Fikerte's, in Cherkos?”

The Coronavirus pandemic has touched every aspect of our lives here in the UK. As I sit here writing, I am intensely aware that all is not as it should be. For starters, I'm in the comfort of my own home, and not the All We Can office. I spend my days in video calls with colleagues, family and friends, trying to maintain a sense of normality as the world outside my front door transforms into something wholly unrecognisable from what it was just a few short months ago.

If the world outside my front door has transformed beyond recognition, then what is life like for families like Fikerte's, in Cherkos? I vividly remember her home – her warm welcome and her lovely family. But to access water, she must walk to the other side of her village. To sell the potatoes she grows, she relies on being able to access local markets – many of which are closing, or soon will. And Cherkos is an hour's drive from the nearest town where medical help is available.

At the time of writing, Ethiopia has 82 confirmed cases and three deaths. The

country is currently in a state of emergency, to help authorities deal with the spread of the virus. But, communities like Cherkos – already vulnerable, already facing incredible challenges at the hands of climate change – are feeling forgotten. 'Rural communities were not addressed by the government' says Isayias ADHENO's Project Coordinator. 'Villagers in Cherkos are facing a lack of food... so we at DHENO are now preparing a response to the virus.'

I urge you to continue to hold the people of Cherkos – Fikerte, Urge, Belyu and their families and friends – in your prayers. All We Can will be continuing to support ADHENO, and all the talented local people we work with in Ethiopia and beyond, through our Emergency Coronavirus Appeal – **your support as a Partner Church is a vital part of that. We know that we will emerge from this crisis stronger, together.**

Holding together

Worship at home

As you 'gather' to meet in a variety of different ways, these materials could form part of your online service or could be used individually for personal reflection time at home. Equally, you might like to ring someone else who has this resource, and work through it together on the phone. You will find here a short liturgy to use with four different focuses – ourselves, our church community, the wider world and thanksgiving.

Resources: salt water, spices/coffee (something to represent the wider world), honey, a Bible

Songs:

- StF 287 – *When I survey the wondrous cross* ([youtube.com/watch?v=DmKSQmhEzwo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DmKSQmhEzwo))
- StF 611 – *Brother, sister, let me serve you*

*'Record my misery; list my tears on your scroll
– are they not in your record?'*

Psalm 56: 8

Taking the bowl of salt water

Lord Jesus, you wept for the friend you loved;
Our tears are your tears.
We thank you for understanding our pain and struggles.
There is so much loss and sadness;
You know we long for healing and an end to separation.

We cry out to you.

We take a moment to acknowledge the fears we have,
The sadness we feel and the tears we have shed.

Each person in your home dips a finger in the bowl of salt water and tastes it. If appropriate to your setting, allow a space for sharing, or just hold a moment of quiet. Then say:

We taste our tears:

For the sick;
The bereaved;
The lonely;
The fearful;
For ourselves.
Compassionate God,
Help us and save us.

'Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.'

Psalm 119: 105

Holding the Bible

God of all that has been, is now and will be;
We thank you that you have woven our lives into your story.

Pass the Bible if you are self-isolating with other people. If appropriate to your setting, allow people space to share the ways they have been connecting with God and one another.

Lord of truth and light,
You have given us your word as a lamp to our feet;
Guide us as we navigate uncertain paths.
We are your people;
We are your church.
Help us to love one another as you have loved us.
Help us to hold together in you when we are dispersed.
Draw us near to one another when we cannot gather in our church buildings.

Taking the spices or coffee

Father of all nations,
We thank you for the beauty and variety of the earth.

As each person smells the spices or coffee, the following words are said:

As we smell the vibrant spices,
Help us to remember the most vulnerable around the world.

Allow space for people to share the countries and people that they are concerned about during this crisis.

Lord of hope:
Fill our hearts with love for those struggling the most;

Protect the weak from more suffering;
Help us to draw closer together;
Stir up unity and compassion as we remember that we are one body.

God of provision,
Bring healing and help.

'...give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.'

1 Thessalonians 5: 18

Taking the honey

Almighty God,
We give you thanks and praise.
In the middle of the storm,
We worship you.
When our hearts are burdened,
We lift up your name.

Each person tastes the honey. Take time to share the things that you are thankful for.

The sweetness of the honey is a balm to our souls.
We thank you for:
your immeasurable love;
the commitment and bravery of our NHS workers and frontline helpers;
the neighbours looking after one another;
the promise that all this shall pass and you will never leave us.

Heavenly Father,
We worship and adore you.
Be with us, we pray.
Amen.

You may wish to bring your time of worship to a close with the Lord's Prayer or a blessing of your choosing.



Emergency Coronavirus Appeal

Can you imagine having to face Coronavirus without access to running water and soap? In cramped and unhygienic conditions, where social distancing simply isn't possible?

This is the reality facing people living in some of the world's poorest communities right now. All We Can, the Methodist Church in Britain and World Development & Relief have launched an Emergency Coronavirus Appeal, to help equip vulnerable communities across the globe to combat Coronavirus (COVID-19).

For communities with weaker healthcare systems, or who lack access to clean water and handwashing facilities, the impact of Coronavirus will be catastrophic. That's why we're asking: please do all that you can to help save lives today.

You can donate online at allwecan.org.uk/coronavirus and encourage your congregation to hold a 'virtual' collection where you all make a donation as part of your Sunday morning devotions or worship.

If you are on Facebook or have access to YouTube, you may like to join us at 1:17pm every day as we reflect on Colossians 1:17 ('In Christ all things hold together'). We are sharing daily uplifting, inspiring and prayerful resources, as well as a number of ideas for how you can get involved in supporting our Emergency Coronavirus Appeal.

Join us as we pray, give and save lives.

 facebook.com/allwecanuk
 youtube.com/allwecanuk

Coming soon – information about All We Can's exciting work in Uganda, where change begins with a bicycle – you can pre-order your resources for this September/October at allwecan.org.uk/cycle



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