

# **GLADE STAGE**

# SUNDAY 25 AUGUST 2025



# **HOPE IN OUR HANDS**

It's said that human beings can survive about five weeks without food, and about five days without water, but we can't survive five minutes without hope.

Of course, hope comes in different shapes and sizes.

I hope the sun shines for the festival weekend.

I hope my team will win on Saturday.

Then there's the altogether more serious stuff.

I hope I can make my money stretch to the end of the month.

I hope she makes it through the night.

I hope it works out this time.

As we gather at Greenbelt this year, it's a fair bet that not many of us are feeling hopeful about the world. We face what has been called a "polycrisis" - climate catastrophe, biodiversity loss, injustice and war and much else besides. So its hard to be hopeful at times. But hope is more than mere optimism - a *glass-half-full* personality trait that comes naturally to some but not to others. In his autobiography, Nelson Mandela urged people to 'Let your choices reflect your hopes, not your fears'. Christian believers are amongst those who *choose* hope, even when cynicism might be a lot easier. We choose to cultivate hope, practice it, and make it a habit of character. On the strength of Jesus' resurrection, and empowered by the promises of God, we choose to orient ourselves towards a future that is good. We choose to live into the best possible future, not the worst one. We choose to build hope with our bare hands - not because we have given up on God, but because we have grasped that our hands are God's implements to bring about the changes we need in order to make our hopes come true.

Former Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks observed that 'optimism is the belief that the world is changing for the better; whereas hope is the belief that, together, we can make the world better'. In our Act of Communion, we will share bread and wine as an act of resistance to despair. We will sing and shout our belief Christ is Lord...which means Caesar is not. We will turn our hands toward making the world better. We will choose to live in the light of the freedom that we choose to believe is coming tomorrow.

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# **SCRIPT**

#### **WELCOME**

MARAL [INTERPRETED]

Welcome to our Greenbelt Act of Communion 2025.

My name is Maral. I am an artist, making jewellery and digital art.

I grew up in Iran.

I became a political refugee because my work challenged the

patriarchal society in Iran.

I have now been granted permanent leave to remain in the UK.

I am also deaf, so I have asked my friend Anna to translate for you,

in case any of you don't know BSL.

The world just now feels pretty hopeless. But in today's gathering we are going to explore hope - hope that is given by God and placed in our hands. Together we will use our hands to build hope.

Please join to sing with me, Great is Thy Faithfulness.

### **SONG**

Great is thy faithfulness now and hereafter, there is no shadow of turning with Thee; Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not; as Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.

Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness! Morning by morning new mercies I see; all I have needed Thy hand hath provided, great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest, sun, moon and stars in their courses above, join with all nature in manifold witness to Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

#### Chorus

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth, Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide; strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow, blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

#### Chorus

MARY-JAYNE

Please sit down. My name is Mary-Jayne.

[INTERPRETED] I am a theatre-maker.

Most of my work involves British Sign Language.

When I was at school, we were taught to pray with hands together and eyes closed. Nothing could be more useless for a person who is deaf! Now, I pray with my hands, and with my eyes open.

BSL is an incredibly rich language. For example we have many different signs for the English word 'hope'. Try them out with me. There's the obvious one - crossing your fingers. One hand or both hands. That's hope, as in 'I hope I win the lottery'.

Then there's another sign for the sort of hope that we wish for and hold onto. Push your right hand diagonally down across your chest, then up into a clenched fist by your shoulder. Holding on to hope.

Then there's a sign that's mostly used by Roman Catholic Christians. Start with your right hand in the shape of a C for Christ. Move it in a circle across your face, ending up with a clenched fist in front of your face. Holding on to hope in Christ. Try out those three signs for different sorts of hope, saying the word as you sign.

[PAUSE]

MARAL

We're going to use that third sign as the response in a prayer now. Start with your right hand in the shape of a C for Christ. Then move it in a circle across your face, ending up with a clenched fist in front of your face. And as you do that, say *Holding on to hope in Christ*. Let's try. Say Holding on to hope in Christ.

ALL

Holding on to hope in Christ.

MARAL

We're going to use those words and that sign as the response, as Ezra leads us in a prayer.

EZRA We are gathered here this morning,

ALL Holding on to hope in Christ.

EZRA Sleepy grown-ups, children yawning,

ALL Holding on to hope in Christ.

EZRA In a world that's lost direction,
ALL Holding on to hope in Christ.

EZRA We are seeking some connection,

ALL Holding on to hope in Christ.

EZRA In our work and in our resting,
ALL Holding on to hope in Christ.

EZRA Through our questions and our testing,

ALL Holding on to hope in Christ.

EZRA In our joys and in our sorrows, ALL Holding on to hope in Christ.

EZRA Trusting God for our tomorrows,
ALL Holding on to hope in Christ.

EZRA Walking out in faith together, ALL Holding on to hope in Christ.

EZRA Trusting in our God forever,
ALL Holding on to hope in Christ.

EZRA Amen

SUE PARFITT If you look in your bag you will find some ribbons. There's one for

each person in your group. Please take one each, and hold it in

your hands. Look at it. Feel it. Own it.

My name is Sue. I'm 83 years old, and I was one of the very first women to be ordained as a priest in the Church of England. Since then I have been arrested about 29 times, mostly for taking action to protect the climate. Last month I was arrested whilst sitting in a camping chair surrounded by other protesters, holding a placard

supporting the group Palestine Action. It was on the day that group was banned by the government. I may still be charged with terrorism.

Like all of the people leading our Act of Communion this morning, I have found myself excluded in one way or another. I have been refused Permission to Officiate by my bishop. But this isn't the Church of England. This is Greenbelt. It may be that you too have felt excluded from others at times or excluded from living life abundantly - in the way God wants for you. So let's include the excluded, and celebrate our Act of Communion with God, and with God's world, and with all of God's diverse people. No one is excluded today!

I have been handcuffed many times. I know what it feels like to have your hands tied. I believe that the hope of the world is in our own hands. But all too often we tie our own hands, and stop ourselves from living out our hope.

Let the ribbon in your hands represent for you all the things that frustrate us; all the things that limit us; the powerlessness that we feel in the face of evil.

So long as you are comfortable to do this, ask someone nearby to take your ribbon and use it to tie your wrists together loosely. Check if they are comfortable for you to do this. And don't tie it too tightly - we're going to untie them in a minute! You may need to help each other....

When your wrists are loosely fastened together, hold them up as a sign of surrender - a sign of when you haven't been able to resist evil and choose what is good.

#### CONFESSION

[RX]

First, we're going to confess our sins.

Please make yourself uncomfortable.

Close your eyes. We are going to a dark place.

Reach down and touch the ground. Feel the grass under your fingers; touch the God-made globe the mud from which God made us the planet on which God holds us

Touch the ground, and feel God touching you in return.

What have we done to **your earth**, oh God? How have we despoiled your planet? Forgive us Lord.

Reach up and touch your face with your fingers.

Feel your skin; the body that is you;

the image of the living God, wrapped in skin and fragile flesh;

the unique beauty of it.

What have we done to our**selves**, oh God?
Wasteful of our gifts, we have tried to shape and sculpt our bodies;
Seeking beauty in sameness Instead of loving what you have given.
Forgive us Lord.

Hold out your hands in front of you, palms facing forward. Now gently, gently push them away.

What have we done to each other, oh God?

Pushed away people in whom you are incarnate.

Made walls to divide and invented differences where there were none, instead of finding you in each other.

Forgive us Lord.

Now, reach out to the others around you as we pray together:

<u>Voices</u> Almighty and most merciful God;

We have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep.

We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts

We have offended against thy holy laws

We have left undone those things which we ought to have done

And we have done those things which we ought not to have done

And there is no health in us.

But thou O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders.

Spare thou those, O God, which confess their faults.

Restore thou those who are penitent;

According to thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord.

And grant, O most merciful God, for Jesus sake,

7

That we may hereafter live a godly, righteous and sober life, To the glory of thy holy Name. Amen.

#### Voice 3 – a child

May almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon us, Pardon and deliver us from all our sins, Confirm and strengthen us in all goodness and keep us in life eternal, Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen

## **SUE PARFITT**

Now, with sins forgiven, please help each other to untie your hands. Take your ribbon back into your own hands.

Let your ribbon represent your hopes for the world. For the planet; for peace between nations and peace between neighbours.

Very carefully, we would like you to tie the end of your ribbon to the end of someone else's ribbon. This time tie it really tight. This time we don't want it to come undone. Link the ribbons together into one long chain. When you have about ten or twelve ribbons in one chain, pass the chain forward toward the stage. Let's see if we can join our ribbons into long chains of hope.

Keep on tying the ribbons and passing them forward as we continue our worship together.

#### SONG

A Touching Place

Christ's is the world in which we move.
Christ's are the folk we're summoned to love,
Christ's is the voice which calls us to care,
and Christ is the One who meets us here.

To the lost Christ shows His face; to the unloved He gives His embrace; to those who cry in pain or disgrace, Christ, makes, with His friends, a touching place.

Feel for the people we most avoid. Strange or bereaved or never employed; Feel for the women and feel for the men who fear that their living is all in vain.

#### Chorus

Feel for the parents who lost their child, feel for the people who others defiled.
Feel for the baby for whom there's no breast, and feel for the weary who find no rest.

#### Chorus

Feel for the lives by life confused. Riddled with doubt, in loving abused; Feel for the lonely heart, conscious of sin, which longs to be pure but fears to begin.

Chorus

#### **BIBLE READING**

ADJOA ANDOH

Please keep passing your ribbon chains forward.

My name is Adjoa. I'm going to read a story from the Bible, about a woman who had all but run out of hope. But when she saw Jesus, she took hope into her own hands...quite literally. The story is from Mark's gospel, chapter five.

A large crowd was following Jesus, and pressed around him. And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, but instead of getting better she just got worse. When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed." Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?"

"You see the people crowding against you," his disciples answered, "and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?'"

But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."

SARAH CORBETT

Loving God, we often feel hopeless and fearful in what can seem like an unravelling world.

Thank you for this story of the perseverance of the woman who touched your son Jesus's coat. Help us always to thread perseverance and hope through our prayers and actions.

You did not want the woman to be alone and private in her joy. Help us to be willing for our faith to be public when appropriate and please let us leave this special weekend with joy in our hearts, hope in our hands, and the vision of everyone here being beautifully unique strands woven together into a powerful tapestry called Greenbelt Festival 2025.

We ask these things in Jesus' name, Amen.

**CREED** [With 4/4 percussion to drive the beat]

BAND We believe that God Creator

Spoke and brought the world to birth.

CROWD Christ has died,

Christ is risen,

Christ will come again.

BAND We believe that Jesus Saviour,

lived and died with us on earth.

CROWD Christ has died.

Christ is risen,

Christ will come again.

BAND We believe the Holy Spirit,

Soaks the world with love and grace.

CROWD Christ has died,

Christ is risen,

Christ will come again.

BAND This we share with every Christian,

throughout time in every place

CROWD Christ has died,

Christ is risen,

Christ will come again.

CHRISSIE Right where we are in our groups, let's lead each other in prayer.

Let the children lead the grown-ups and let the grown-ups lead the children. Pray for the needs of the world. Pray for our homes and our families. Pray for those people whose homes are full of pain. Pray for an end to wars everywhere. Pray for our aching planet. Right where we are in our groups, let's lead each other in prayer

from the heart.

[PAUSE]

CHRISSIE Now let's join our prayers together in the words of the Lord's

Prayer:

CROWD Our Father, who art in heaven,

hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done;

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation;

but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

CHRISSIE Please take the bread and wine from your bag and set them down

in the centre of your circle as we sing together.

**SONG** See what a morning, gloriously bright

With the dawning of hope in Jerusalem;

Folded the grave-clothes, tomb filled with light,

As the angels announce Christ is risen! See God's salvation plan, wrought in love,

Borne in pain, paid in sacrifice,

Fulfilled in Christ, the Man, for He lives,

Christ is risen from the dead!

See Mary weeping: 'Where is He laid?

As in sorrow she turns from the empty tomb; Hears a voice speaking, calling her name: It's the Master, the Lord raised to life again!

The voice that spans the years, Speaking life, stirring hope,

Bringing peace to us,

Will sound till He appears,

For He lives, Christ is risen from the dead!

One with the Father, Ancient of Days,

Through the Spirit

Who clothes faith with certainty,

Honour and blessing, glory and praise

To the King crowned

With power and authority!

And we are raised with Him,

Death is dead, love has won

Christ has conquered;

And we shall reign with Him,

For He lives, Christ is risen from the dead!

EZRA Let's shout out loud.

EZRA The Lord is here

CROWD God's Spirit is with us.

EZRA Lift up your hearts.

CROWD We lift them to the Lord.

EZRA Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

CROWD It is right to give God thanks and praise.

EZRA Sue, will Jesus keep us safe?

SUE PARFITT We do not follow Jesus because we want to be safe.

We follow Jesus because we know ourselves loved.

EZRA Why do we do this with bread and wine?

SUE The bread and the wine in front of us are our offering to him.

And we receive them back from him as signs of his love.

EZRA Am I good enough to follow Jesus?

SUE We do not follow Jesus because we are good enough.

We follow Jesus because we are broken.

EZRA What happens when we eat the bread and drink the juice?

SUE As we take Jesus into our own hands,

we open ourselves to love. Jesus tells us that He changes these gifts into his Body and his Blood, So as we take Jesus into our own

hands, we open ourselves to love.

Then let's sing together with the angels, and with all God's people.

SONG **Holy holy,** holy holy

God almighty, God almighty

Hosanna, Hosanna

In the highest, in the highest

[EVERYONE ON STAGE STANDS UNTIL BREAD AND JUICE IS SHARED]

SUE The night before he died, Jesus met with his friends. He took

some bread in his hands, and gave thanks to you, God. He broke it into pieces, and gave it to everyone saying. "This is my body,"

he said. "Do this, and know that I am with you."

EZRA Jesus is alive

ALL And we are alive in Jesus.

SUE Later, he took a cup of wine and gave thanks to you. He shared it

with them, and said "This is my blood. It brings new life. Do this,

and know that I am with you."

EZRA Jesus is alive

ALL And we are alive in Jesus.

SUE And so, remembering Jesus, who died,

was raised to new life by you,

and is alive forever,

we are glad to share that life and live in him.

EZRA Jesus is alive

ALL And we are alive in Jesus.

SUE Send your Holy Spirit

so that this bread and wine

can be for us the body and blood of Jesus,

and as we feed on you

give us strength to live in hope.

Jesus is alive

ALL And we are alive in Jesus.

SUE Let's share the bread and juice that wine God has given us with

the people God has given us to share it with. Please make sure that nothing is left behind and everything is consumed because

these are holy gifts from God.

[CROWD SHARE BREAD AND JUICE IN GROUPS]

SONG Come, healing of the body (sung by Seth Pinnock)

#### **AFTER COMMUNION**

BELLA Throughout the festival, Christian Aid has been working with

Greenbelters to create this giant Restore Pot. It's inspired by the Japanese tradition of Kintsugi – the art of repairing broken pottery

using gold or silver to fill in the cracks. We've been writing prayers and messages of solidarity for those impacted by the world's brokenness. We've been describing our hopes for a restored world. We join our own strands of hope and confidence with God in taking what is broken and trying to make something better and more beautiful for the future.

[The Christian Aid pot is unveiled. The fly bar with chains of ribbon is slowly lifted.]

Let's sing together the Song of Kingdom Come.

### **SONG**

I have a voice; you have a voice We have a voice and when we sing together A line is drawn; and hope reborn This is the song, the song of Kingdom Come. This is the song, the song of Kingdom Come.

We heard the cries of distant neighbours
The dispossessed, the refugee
And God's command to feed the hungry
And set them free; and set them free
We heard the Word, the New Commandment
And we reclaimed the prophet's call
To love the world without condition
God's love for all; God's love for all

#### Chorus

A reckless love that knows no borders
That speaks the truth to those in power
That shines a light on cruel indifference
This is God's hour; this is God's hour
When we will stand against injustice
With all who live against the grain
Until their poverty is over
And love shall reign; and love shall reign

#### Chorus

We won't stand by while siblings suffer Or turn blind eyes to ruthless wrong Our psalm of praise will be compassion This Kingdom Song; this Kingdom song A song of love and liberation Of healing hope and lasting peace A taste of life in all its fullness God's masterpiece; God's masterpiece.

Chorus

#### **OFFERING**

BEN

My name is Ben and I'm a trustee of Greenbelt. Your generous giving at today's Communion Gathering will be split 50:50.

50% will stay with us at Greenbelt. It's a thank offering – to help us safeguard the future of the festival and ensure we get to do this all again next year.

**EZRA** 

The other 50% will go to projects supporting the people of Gaza – both right now and in the longer term. We'll be channelling your giving through our trusted, longstanding partner Christian Aid. Some of your giving will be used to provide immediate help in any way we can. Some will be ring-fenced to support the longer-term task of rebuilding in Gaza, in the future we hope and believe will come.

**BEN** 

If you are at the back of the crowd, there may be a white collection bucket near you. If you can see one, please pick it up and pass it forward through the crowd toward the stage. You can make a gift by putting cash or a cheque (made out to Greenbelt Festivals Limited) into the bucket. But lots of people don't use cheques or cash. So instead you can make your donation online by credit or debit card. If you'd prefer to do that, please visit the Jesus Arms, The Hope and Anchor or The G-Store any time over the weekend and say you want to contribute to the communion offering. Finally you could make a donation online by visiting www [dot] greenbelt [dot] org [dot] uk [slash] gift. If you are a UK tax payer, please make sure that you also complete a Gift Aid form, which you will find in your communion bag, and put that in the bucket too.

EZRA Whatever you choose to do, THANK YOU for supporting Greenbelt

and this offering.

**SONG** One Day [To be updated]

# ANDREW and BAND ONE DAY

One day, one day, perhaps it will be **SUNDAY**One day we will live in peace and a little child will lead us.

(Repeat with kazoos)

One day wolves will live in the same field as little lambs, and the wolves will look after the lambs and the lambs will teach the wolves how to sing,

One day young goats will lie down to sleep snuggled-up next to big scary leopards, and hungry young lions will share the same feeding trough with tasty calves.

One day cats will offer to take dogs out for walkies and dogs will learn to scratch cats behind the ears.

One day the Jedi and the Sith will join forces to use the Power of the Force for the good of the galaxy, and Draco Malfoy will invite Harry Potter round to his house for Lego and a sleepover.

One day, one day, perhaps it will be **SATURDAY**One day we will live in peace and a little child will lead us.

One day brothers and sisters will share their toys, and not argue over who has to go to bed first or what they want to watch on TV.

One day the biggest bully in the school will walk home hand in hand with the smallest kid and the smallest kid will help the bully do their homework.

One day Superman will shake hands with Lex Luther, and Batman and The Joker will join forces to make Gotham City a really nice neighbourhood to live in.

One day Tom will make friends with Jerry, Sylvester will stop chasing TweetyPie, and Mayor Humdinger and Ryder will become the best of buddies. (Ask a four year old!)

One day, one day, perhaps it will be **FRIDAY**One day we will live in peace and a little child will lead us.

One day the Traitors and the Faithfuls will get round the table together and work out that if they all stopped telling lies to each other and ganging up on each other they could just have a nice fortnight's holiday in Scotland and all share the prize at the end.

One day Noel and Liam Gallagher will sit down together to sort out their differences over a nice cup of tea and talk about how lucky they have been, and Drake will take Kendrick Lamar out for a McDonalds and share a Happy Meal.

One day, Prince Harry and Prince William will throw their arms around each other and remember how to play together like they used to as kids.

One day the last food bank in the UK will close its doors, and no-one will need to go cap in hand to anyone else asking for food.

One day, one day, perhaps it will be **THURSDAY**One day we will live in peace and a little child will lead us.

One day women doctors will be known as "doctors", women bishops will be known as "bishops" and everyone will be able to wear what they like, and nobody will judge us by what we look like because hey, the body you have is God-made and beautiful...and so is mine.

One day the flag of St George will hang from every lamppost in the country, to remind everyone that the patron saint of England was an olive-skinned migrant whose father was from Turkey and whose father was from Palestine.

One day men and women will be paid the same amount for doing the same job. Simple as that. Nothing else to say about that one really. End of. One day people of every colour of the rainbow will share everything from changing rooms to churches without anyone having to prove to anybody else who they really are.

One day, one day, perhaps it will be **WEDNESDAY**One day we will live in peace and a little child will lead us.

One day Nigel Farage will get a nice little retirement job in a park - running the boating lake - while proper politicians from every party sit around in a circle and work together to bring about peace and justice.

One day all the passport booths at ports and airports will be replaced by welcome desks where someone from the Home Office with a smiley face greets you and tells you how glad they are that you're here.

One day there will be a President of the United States who will be famous for wisdom, gentleness and generosity in everything *she* does, and the word Trump can revert to its traditional English meaning.

One day every wall and every checkpoint between Israel and Palestine will be torn down, and all the children of Abraham will live side by side in peace.

One day, one day, perhaps it will be **TUESDAY**One day we will live in peace and a little child will lead us.

One day Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Vladimir Putin will shake hands and agree that all the fighting and bloodshed has to end.

One day the children of Gaza will return to their cities and work together to rebuild their beautiful country.

One day the fact that you are black or white, gay or straight, Sunni or Shia won't stop you from loving your neighbour and being loved.

One day every valley will be exalted, and every mountain and hill will be made low, and the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all of humanity will see it together.

One day, one day, perhaps it will be **MONDAY**One day we will live in peace and a little child will lead us.

[All the days now]
One day, one day, Perhaps it will be

Sunday...Saturday...Friday...Thursday...Wednesday...
Tuesday...Monday...[PAUSE]

[SLOW] One day we will live in peace and a little child will lead us.

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

ANDREW Introduces Sally

SALLY Extemporary prayer for Palestine, and for the world

**SONG** The Lord bless you and keep you

May God's face shine upon you

And be gracious to you

The Lord turn their face toward you

And give you peace

Amen, amen, amen

May God's favour be upon you
And a thousand generations
And your family and your children
And their children, and their children

May God's presence go before you And behind you, and beside you All around you, and within you God is with you, God is with you.

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