

# Renewed pressure on Tent of Nations

Longstanding Church of Scotland partner calls for support



THE owners of the Tent of Nations have appealed for support after a legal hearing to register ownership of their family land was cancelled.

The Tent of Nations is an educational and environmental farm on a hill top southwest of Bethlehem, in the West Bank. The land has been farmed by the Nassars, a family of Palestinian Christians, since 1916, and has been turned into a centre for peace building and non-violent resistance. At the entrance to the farm, a sign by the road reads 'We refuse to be enemies'. It is supported by many churches around the world, including the Church of Scotland.

The land has been occupied by Israel since 1967, and is under pressure from Israeli settlers, a new road through the land and individuals from the local Palestinian village. In 2014, 1500 fruit trees were bulldozed by the Israeli Defence Force.

After more than 30 years of legal battles

to confirm the Nassar family's ownership of the land, a sitting of the court scheduled to hear their case on July 2 was cancelled the day before.

Writing to supporters on Facebook, Daoud Nassar said: "Clearly, the Land Registration Committee is aware that there is no legal basis to prevent the re-registration of the Nassar family land, and therefore it simply chose to cancel the session after we have been waiting for nearly a year. No new date has been given yet."

He urged friends of the Tent of Nations to urge their elected representatives to contact the Israeli authorities on their behalf, to demand a new date for the court hearing and protect the farm from Israeli settlers, and appealed for international volunteers to support the farm.

Read the full statement on the [Tent of Nations' Facebook page](#). ▣

**Welcome** to the Life and Work monthly newsletter, a free resource helping Church of Scotland members stay up-to-date with everything going on in the Church and its partners.

Each month there will be exclusive features, news and updates from Church organisations.

The newsletter is free to download from [www.lifeandwork.org/newsletter](http://www.lifeandwork.org/newsletter). Feel free to share with church members, friends and family, and get in touch if you have any comments or suggestions.

## **Inside this month**

### **Page 2**

Christian Aid Harvest Appeal

### **Page 3**

Updates from the Faith Action Programme, CrossReach, Interfaith Scotland and more  
What's On

### **Page 4**

This month's Life and Work.  
The Big Picture.

# Harvest of Hope

Christian Aid introduce their harvest campaign, which focuses on helping people to adapt to the climate crisis.



Nyarai Zirugo. Picture: David Brazier

*‘The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree.’* Mark 4: 30–32.

NEVER is the story of the mustard seed more relevant than at harvest time when, as Christians, we celebrate nature’s provision and consider how we can fulfil our responsibility to care for the planet.

Around the world, extreme weather, often attributed to climate change, is causing billions of pounds of damage to homes, communities and livelihoods. And until more is done to move away from fossil fuels and to support lower-income countries to cope with climate disasters, vulnerable communities are left counting the cost.

This harvest time, many thousands of families are praying for relief from endless drought, devastating floods or severe storms.

**But there is hope.**

Alongside its local partners, Christian Aid is working to find the most sustainable ways – from installing new equipment, to planting smaller, hardier crops – to support people facing the climate crisis.

People like Nyarai Zirugo, from Zimbabwe. She and her family are farmers but they faced a complex battle to make a living – or even grow enough

food to feed themselves - often living hand to mouth after years of drought decimated crops.

Traditional agricultural practices are becoming increasingly ineffective in the face of extreme weather events and changing climates, and experienced and resilient farmers like Nyarai are finding they need to learn new skills and even consider other avenues of creating a livelihood.

Nyarai’s determination to provide a secure future for her family led her to undertake a programme, funded by Christian Aid, and run by local partners.

Nyarai learnt how to sustainably harvest many of the wild plants which grow in the hills and forests surrounding her home. Some of these improve her family’s nutrition, while others are dried in a special machine, ready for sale at market.

With the profits, the family bought goats for their farm, as well as groceries, crockery and blankets. Nyarai also learnt about climate smart agriculture, helping her family to grow a wider range of grains and legumes.

Nyarai summed up the impact of the project saying: “We’ve seen our livelihoods, diet and farming methods improve greatly; we are better able to sustain ourselves even when droughts hit.”

Nyarai said she also saw changes in her community. “People adapted by using the climate-smart farming

methods, and have food and economic security,” she explained. “Women are becoming more independent and incidences of gender-based violence have been reduced.

“Working in groups also brought the community together, helping us learn how to work together. The community has been empowered through knowledge.”

**Programmes like this are only possible with the help of supporters.**

This harvest time, Christian Aid is asking people to give, act and pray so that more long-term projects around the world can be set up.

Christian Aid’s Harvest of Hope is all about coming together to celebrate the joy of creation and stand in solidarity with vulnerable communities.

All kinds of online resources are available to enable supporters to hold church services or harvest suppers. You could also organise a church collection – either in-person or digitally, or plan a fundraising challenge.

Money raised will help fund the kind of programmes which offer specialist training to people like Nyarai: £60 could pay for sessions which support a family to adapt their farming practice and grow a crop which survives extreme weather, and £100 could be the investment someone needs to start a new climate-resilient farming business.

[www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/key-appeals/harvest-appeal](http://www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/key-appeals/harvest-appeal) ■

### Creation Time

September is Creation Time and this year's theme is "To Hope and Act with Creation". Eco Congregation Scotland have produced worship resources including prayers, reflections, and videos to help inspire and engage us with Creation and the action we can take on environmental issues. These are available at [www.ecocongregationscotland.org/creation-2024/](http://www.ecocongregationscotland.org/creation-2024/) Churches Together in Britain and Ireland also publish Season of Creation resources available at [ctbi.org.uk/season-of-creation-2024/](http://ctbi.org.uk/season-of-creation-2024/)

### Much to Celebrate

Pupils at CrossReach's Erskine Waterfront Campus (EWC) were celebrated last month (June) for the "brilliant beginnings and excellent endings" to their academic journeys at this year's award ceremonies. The school held three special awards ceremonies to celebrate the achievements of this year's pupils. Kyle Fleming, headteacher at EWC, said: "From brilliant beginnings to excellent endings, this year's prizegiving at EWC was full of pride for the great work carried out by staff to allow pupils to reach their full potential. All six classes had examples of pupils reaching for, and exceeding expectations both in personal development and academic achievement." Class 1 saw Carson awarded with the Clyde Cup for "Outstanding Personal Progress", while Class 6 said goodbye to Liam who has secured a place at college. In total 53 personal awards, 54 HI5/DYAs, 82 NAT2s, 24 NAT3s, 7 NAT4s and 1 NAT5 awards/stand alone units were handed out.

### Eric Liddell Resources

This year marks the 100th anniversary of Eric Liddell's victory in the 400m at the 1924 Olympics in Paris, after he refused to run the 100m as the heats were held on a Sunday.

In recognising the importance of faith to his story, The Eric Liddell 100 has worked with a range of faith organisations to develop a variety of ideas and resources for people in churches to draw from, to use to explore and celebrate Eric Liddell's legacy. There are materials that can be included for congregational worship as well as with small groups and different ages.

[ericliddell.org/faith-resources/](http://ericliddell.org/faith-resources/)

### Interfaith Week

Scottish Interfaith Week will celebrate its 20th anniversary this year with a programme of events on the theme of 'Discovery'.

The event takes place from November 11-18, including a National Interfaith Conference in Dundee on November 12. Local organisations throughout Scotland are encouraged to hold their own events, which they can register through the organisers and have listed on the Interfaith Week website.

Interfaith Scotland this week launched a digital toolkit, including advice on holding and promoting events, and graphics to use on social media. There are also resources for schools

[scottishinterfaithweek.org/](http://scottishinterfaithweek.org/)

### General Assembly Supplement

Life and Work has a special supplement to this year's Assembly, available from [www.lifeandwork.org/resources/general-assembly-2024-special-supplement](http://www.lifeandwork.org/resources/general-assembly-2024-special-supplement)

## What's On

### Iona Community Care for Creation Week

August 17-23, over three or six nights Iona

The week, formerly known as 'Superpower your climate action' will be facilitated by Val King and Melanie Nazareth of Christian Climate Action, with guest speakers Mitzi Jonelle Tan and the Rev Israel Olofinjana. Immersed in the natural beauty of Iona, the group will take time together to think about people and planet. Moving from lament to hope, exploring how each of us can love and care for a world in peril. You will also have the opportunity to participate in pilgrimage around Iona and an optional boat trip to Staffa. 50% discount to UK based students, people living on benefits or paid below the living wage, the homeless, refugees and asylum seekers. There is also a 15% discount for families of four or more.

[iona.org.uk/event/superpower/](http://iona.org.uk/event/superpower/)

### Growth Fund Webinar

Monday September 2, 7pm  
Zoom

Free webinars are to be held to help people wishing to apply to the Church of Scotland's Seeds for Growth fund. Seeds for Growth supports projects aimed at church growth. Grants are available at four levels, with a maximum award of £100,000 per annum for three to five years.

Project ideas must be based around new church communities, young people or 'fostering discipleship and revitalisation within established congregations'. The webinars will help guide anyone interested through the application process.

To register, email [grants@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:grants@churchofscotland.org.uk)



## In August's Life and Work

### Singing Spirits and Soaring Hearts

Three contributors tell us what makes their hearts sing

### Italian Love

The surprising roots of a long-standing link with Italy

### A Place of Rugged Beauty

New life for a retreat on the Ardnamurchan Peninsula

### Moderator

In his first column, the Rt Rev Dr Shaw Paterson urges the Church to step out confidently in faith

### 'There is Always Hope'

The Rev Neil Glover outlines the premise of his new book, Finding Our Voice



By purchasing Life and Work you keep up-to-date with all the latest news on the Church in Scotland and throughout the world, and help to support the Church's work.

From just £2.99 for an electronic copy or £9 for a three-month print subscription at [www.lifeandwork.org/subscribe](http://www.lifeandwork.org/subscribe) or speak to your church's promoter.

Gift subscriptions are available. New elders and communicants are eligible for three free issues.

[www.lifeandwork.org](http://www.lifeandwork.org)  
[facebook.com/lifeandwork](https://facebook.com/lifeandwork)

Twitter: [@cofslifeandwork](https://twitter.com/cofslifeandwork)  
Instagram: [@cofslifeandwork](https://www.instagram.com/cofslifeandwork)

## The Big Picture

Leith Hall, Aberdeenshire by Robert W Fisher



**Editor:** Lynne McNeil. **Deputy Editor:** Thomas Baldwin. **Features Writer:** Jackie Macadam

**Business Manager:** Dianne Sanderson. **Administrator:** Melissa Grimley

Life and Work, Church of Scotland, 121 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 4YN. Scottish charity number SC011353