

## CHURCH ACTION GUIDE

Fairtrade Fortnight 2020 continues to focus on cocoa farmers, and the difference choosing Fairtrade can make for those we rely on to produce the chocolate we enjoy. You may remember our petition to the UK government in 2019 calling for political action – in 2020 we are focusing back on the power we have both as consumers to choose Fairtrade, and as citizens to share the powerful stories of farmers with our friends, neighbours and communities.

Fairtrade Fortnight 2020 coincides with the beginning of lent – a time of self-discipline and observance reflecting Jesus' time in the wilderness. It is an important moment in the church calendar, which also gives us opportunities to reflect and re-commit to Fairtrade.

Read on to find some notes to help relate lectionary readings to Fairtrade Fortnight, and the simple actions we can all take in support of Fairtrade. Outside Sunday services, why not fill pancakes with Fairtrade items before lent begins, or add a Fairtrade angle to your lent reflections by watching a short Fairtrade film (there are some suggestions below)?

In 2020 we are also calling on churches – whether previous Fairtrade churches or not – to commit (or re-commit) to being a Fairtrade Church. There's a brand new, simple online process to register your commitment, and we'll send a new certificate and poster to display. This can happen at any time during the year, but Fairtrade Fortnight is an ideal time to engage the wider congregation in your commitment as a church.

## MORE LINKS AND INFORMATION

- Find out more about recommitting (or committing) to your Fairtrade Church status at [\*\*fairtrade.org.uk/faiths\*\*](https://fairtrade.org.uk/faiths)
- Order an event pack, leaflets and more from [\*\*shop.fairtrade.org.uk\*\*](https://shop.fairtrade.org.uk)
- Visit [\*\*fairtrade.org.uk/fortnight\*\*](https://fairtrade.org.uk/fortnight) for more activity ideas and resources to get involved in Fairtrade Fortnight, including an all age worship presentation.
- Visit [\*\*youtube.com/fairtradefoundation\*\*](https://youtube.com/fairtradefoundation) for short films to use for reflections (try cocoa farmer [Ebrottié's](#) interview, [Fairtrade Matters](#) (and [this reflection](#)), or for younger age groups – the brand new '[Guardians of the Rainforest](#)').

## LECTIONARY READINGS

### SUNDAY 23 FEBRUARY (TRANSFIGURATION SUNDAY AND THE EVE OF FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT)

- **Exodus 24:12-18**; Moses goes up Mount Sinai for 40 days and 40 nights, into the presence of the glory of the Lord.
- **Psalms 2 or 99**; The Lord Reigns and calls for justice! Praise the God of justice, the one who will bring deliverance to his people.
- **2 Peter 1:16-21**; The message of the Good News is true! Hold onto this truth
- **Matthew 17:1-9**; The transfiguration of Jesus, the glory of Jesus.

#### Injustice is everywhere

We live in a world where injustice is found in every corner of the globe. It may feel at times as if there is no end to the injustice and poverty we see around us. Life for many appears hopeless despite their best efforts at changing their situations. Yet people living in poor communities cling to the hope of a better life ahead and work hard to make it a reality.

#### Fairtrade can make a difference

Fairtrade offers hope for many. Buying Fairtrade products means that farmers in developing countries are given a fair price for their products as well as an additional premium which they can choose to invest as they see fit. This could be in community projects to provide healthcare or education, or in their business to increase capacity, improve efficiency and create a more sustainable and secure livelihood. Through Fairtrade, farmers and workers can escape the chains of poverty and can begin to see an end to the injustice that traps the lives of so many!

#### God loves justice

Psalms 99 pronounces that 'God loves justice'. Buying Fairtrade products and campaigning to make trade fair allows us all to be part of bringing justice to this world. As disciples of Christ we are called to live the way of Christ – to stand with the marginalised, to give food to the poor, drink to the thirsty, clothes to the naked. Our involvement in the Fairtrade movement is an expression of our discipleship as we make intentional choices about how we shop, donate money, campaign for change and serve others in practical ways.

## SUNDAY 1 MARCH (FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT)

- **Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7**; God gives Adam and Eve their first command 'you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil'. This gave them their first choice, to obey or disobey. They ate from the tree and thus disobeyed God- they made the wrong choice, separating them from God.
- **Psalms 32**; God is forgiving, although we sin, God is graceful and gives us grace and mercy. Remain faithful to God in all your decisions, look to God for guidance. 'I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go' (V. 8).
- **Romans 5:12-19**; We have been given the gift of grace through Jesus Christ. The disobedience of one has been redeemed by the obedience of one – Jesus. Let us remain obedient to God, so that justice may reign.
- **Matthew 4:1-11**; Jesus tested by the devil, yet didn't make the wrong choice, he remained obedient to God, an example for us.

### We all have choices – or do we?

Every minute of every day we are faced with choices, they may be big, they may be small, but I'm sure you can think of many decisions you have already made today!

However, there are many people who are so marginalised or disenfranchised that they don't have a choice in many areas of their life. They don't have enough money to choose where to spend it, to choose a holiday or what they are going to have for dinner. They don't face many of the choices that we might have.

### Our choices can make a difference

The choice Adam and Eve made in the Garden of Eden – their disobedience – led to a terrible consequence for them and for the rest of humanity.

Our decisions, and many of our most important choices, are the one which have the greatest effect on those around us. Making the right choice can mean freedom and a way out of poverty for the farmers and producers in developing countries! We can make a difference through every action we make! Through Fairtrade, farmers receive a better price for their goods, and also receive an additional premium which they can choose to spend where they feel they need to. This premium gives them a choice that they otherwise would not have: choosing the best way to invest in their community or business for a brighter future.

In this Fairtrade Fortnight, and beyond, may we take more care with our choices, and choose Fairtrade! 'And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.' Micah 6:8