

## **SERMON Friends of Creation 3: Climate and Economy**

“Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these... you did it to me.” Matthew 25:40

Today’s readings are clearly focused on action.

In our opening Psalm, it is God’s who acts, lifting the poor, raising the weak and the low.

In Micah 6, in answer to the question of what we might bring to God, the response is clear: to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.

In the portion of Matthew 25 we heard today, the ones who come before God have evidently lived with such humility. These were people who had entered the joy of their master without even knowing it. They had answered God’s call to an obedience that is not prescription or law or sacrifice but living in mercy without calculation. They had experienced that the way of the cross takes them to the place of God’s suffering in the world.

Our Friends of Creation theme today, Climate and Economy, focuses on one place of suffering and acts of mercy that are already underway among the people most affected.

When we hear the word “economy,” we might think of big companies and global markets. But in the Lake Chad region, the economy looks very different. It’s made up of small farms, family businesses, and local trades that keep communities going. People fish, farm, and raise livestock—activities passed down for generations. These aren’t just jobs—they’re lifelines.

But as the climate changes, these livelihoods are being lost. Rain no longer falls when it’s expected. The lake is shrinking. The soil is drying out. Floods come without warning. Crops fail. Fish stocks decline. When the land suffers, so does the economy—and so do the people.

Farmers in Lake Chad grow millet, sorghum, and plantains. Fishermen catch what they can from increasingly shallow waters. Herders move their cattle in search of grass. But as the land becomes more fragile, each of these ways of life is at risk. Harvests shrink. Markets become emptier. Families have less to sell, less to trade, and less to eat.

And when income disappears, hard choices follow. Children are pulled from school to help at home. People migrate in search of work, leaving behind family and community. Some resort to risky or unsustainable methods—like overfishing or overgrazing—just to get by.

What begins as an environmental crisis becomes a human one.

Women, in particular, carry a heavy burden. Many run small businesses, sell produce, or make goods for income. But they face extra barriers: less access to land, less access to credit, fewer chances to recover. As the local economy suffers, it’s often women who are pushed even further to the margins.

Migration, too, plays a major role. As livelihoods collapse, people move. And when they do, they carry the pain of displacement with them—while also straining the resources of the communities that receive them. This creates even more economic and social pressure, often leading to tension and unrest.

And yet, into all of this, Christ speaks: “I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink.”

In Matthew’s gospel, Jesus tells his followers that acts of love—feeding the hungry, welcoming the stranger, caring for the poor—are not just good deeds. They are acts of faith. They are offerings to Christ himself. They are how we live out our call to love God and love our neighbour.

That calling may feel overwhelming at times. The world is large, and the challenges are real. But we are not expected to solve everything on our own.

God invites us into this work as a community—each person doing what they can, each small action multiplied when we work together. We begin with prayer—asking God to show us how our time, our resources, and our choices can be part of the healing. And when we hear the Spirit’s call, we respond.

Through the Friends of Creation project, CLWR is working in the Lake Chad Basin to strengthen local economies by helping communities adapt to the changing climate.

The project supports conservation agriculture, which helps farmers grow more food while protecting the soil. It promotes sustainable fishing and livestock practices to ensure long-term stability. It creates new economic opportunities, especially for women. And it helps people rebuild what was lost—so they don’t just survive, but thrive. Let’s hear Amina’s story.

Amina’s Story – read by Carolyn E  
[on screen throughout story – Amina’s photo]



Amina, a single mother of six, lives in the 9th district of Chad, where life has not been easy. Years ago, her husband left the family, and Amina has carried the full responsibility of raising her children ever since. In 2022, things got even harder when a devastating flood destroyed her home, forcing her to start again with even fewer resources than before.

But Amina is not one to give up.

Today, she is part of a Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) supported by CLWR's Nature Based Solutions project, implemented in partnership with the Lutheran World Federation. Her group meets once a week, where its 30 members contribute to their savings fund, a community emergency fund, and even a small penalty fund collected when someone is late or misses a rule. These funds support one another through life's challenges—whether it's illness, a death in the family, or an urgent home repair.

The savings are stored securely in a lockbox with three separate locks, each key held by a different person, and the box itself is kept by the group's president. After each weekly meeting, members can apply for small loans to grow their businesses or cover essential needs.

Amina used her loan to set up a small food stall in front of her home, where she sells a variety of goods to her neighbours—including dried fish, a local favourite. Her daughters help run the stall, turning it into a true family business. With the income from her sales, Amina is slowly repairing her flood-damaged home and keeping her children in school.

In an economy where women often face greater barriers to land ownership and credit, savings groups like Amina's provide more than financial tools—they offer solidarity and support. They help women weather climate shocks, rebuild their livelihoods, and regain control of their futures.

Amina's journey shows the power of a small investment, made possible by her community, her resilience, and a program that puts women's leadership at the centre of economic recovery.

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When we support this work—through prayer, through giving, through learning and sharing—we are taking part in Christ's vision of a more just and loving world. We are offering food to the hungry, water to the thirsty, dignity to the poor. We are responding to grace with gratitude.

We are loving our neighbour.  
We are building the kingdom.

Let us pray.

God of Hope, we lift up those whose harvests have thinned, whose nets return empty—where one unravelling basket leaves many hands empty. Bless those restoring work that feeds and sustains many, growing crops that endure uncertain climes, sharing skills and trades that leave the land whole. Strengthen women shaping new futures with their own hands. Let these

efforts spark renewal that is steady against the storms to come. Guide us in this challenge, to honour your creation and help rebuild what the shifting seasons have undone. Amen.