**Service Plan for Shoebox Launch**

* **Welcome & prayer**
* **First hymn (suggestions below)**

**Ethos of Link to Hope** Link to Hope is a small Christian charity which offers help to people of all backgrounds regardless of race, colour or creed with no qualifying criteria other than that they are poor and marginalised. The work that Link to Hope undertakes is through a known networks of church leaders, pastors, community leaders and mayors who are at the front line of providing help and services to those that need it. Link to Hope is driven by Christian principles and holds Matthew 25 v 35 – 40 at the heart of its work

* **READINGS;** Matthew 25 v 35 - 40

 **2 Corinthians 9.11-13**

* **WATCH** the latest shoebox video on <https://youtu.be/dJBVoxv-d-A>
* **Second Hymn (suggestions below)**

**TALK THOUGHTS**

 **T**he ultimate reason for giving is to glorify God.

### The primary purpose of our generosity, is to witness to our faith, to give evidence of the reality of God’s grace in our lives by the way we handle our money. And the way the first Christians made converts was through the example of their exceedingly generous lifestyle.

The way they gave their money away, the way they welcomed strangers, the way they cared for widows and lepers, the way they rescued infants left to die in the fields- their generous lifestyle- not their doctrine, not their music, not their facilities- is what convinced unbelievers that Christ must be raised from the dead.

 Link to Hope’s aim is to combat poverty and give humanitarian aid and has special concern for the most disadvantaged.

**The poorest *(POWERPPOINT PICTURE)***– especially people struggling to survive in the poor villages that lack basic amenities.

**Most vulnerable** *(POWERPOINT PICTURE)–* especially children and the most marginalised.

**Most exploited** (POWERPOINT PICTURE) – the families and individuals who are at the mercy of authorities and circumstances that they have no control over

The Family & Elderly Shoebox Appeal is our biggest campaign that we run every year before Christmas, where we invite people to fill a shoebox with items for a whole family. Last year we delivered nearly 44,000 shoeboxes! We send out these shoeboxes of gifts to those families who need it most; where a lack of food or fuel makes it a struggle to survive and are a priority above presents. We like to think of each one as a shoebox full of smiles, bringing a little bit of light into families’ lives and letting them know someone is thinking and caring about them.

 **HYMN SUGGESTIONS**

* All to Jesus I surrender
* I will offer up my life
* Freely freely you have received
* Jesus what can I give, what can I bring?

**PRAYERS** (Suggestions)

Let us pray

Oh Lord, we thank you for these amazing Eastern European countries where priests, pastors, and lay people gave up their lives during communist times. For the long history of Christianity in these lands and those who work for democracy and openness in government.

We especially give thanks to all those who help to alleviate the suffering of people due to the conflict in Ukraine and who try to counteract and overcome divisions.

We pray for your guidance as these nations work to reconfigure political and economic structures and for compassion and integrity for all peoples in these nations with such diverse ethnic histories. We ask that you especially watch over the large number of people who now live in poverty, refugees, the unemployed, and also those who suffer from alcoholism, HIV and AIDS, tuberculosis, and other life-threatening diseases.

We also lift up those trying to revitalize churches after decades of official atheism and also those people who continue to suffer persecution for their faith.

All these things we ask in the name of Jesus. Amen.

**OR**

Lord, hear our prayer:
Today we face a season of global crisis.
During this season teach us to understand the love that drove you to give up everything to save us all.
Give us the strength that only comes in weakness;
The renewal that only comes through death and resurrection.
Today many of us feel weakened, burdened, and overwhelmed by the challenges and uncertainties that lie ahead.
We ask that your strength be made perfect in our time of weakness.
While each of us is hurt by hard times, it is the people around the world living on less than $1/day, facing hunger, thirst, and illness, who bear the greatest burden of this crisis.
Just as your weakest hour proved to be the most generous, most life-giving moment in history,
We pray for that out of our own weakness comes a generosity of justice, mercy, and humility for those who bear burdens greater than our own.
Help us to remember that you are the God who, out of nothing, made everything.
The God who still has the power today to remake us.
So let us be remade, not overcome, by our global crisis;
Let us be purified, and not laid low, by injustice, greed, and inequality.

Let us commit ourselves to:
Act justly,
Love mercy,
And walk humbly with you, and with all those who suffer or want.

Brian Swarts – Vote out Poverty

**OTHER RESOURCES**

Link to Hope Website [www.linktohope.co.uk](http://www.linktohope.co.uk)

Song to watch to inspire <https://youtu.be/b_RjndG0IX8>