

Service of the Word – 14th Sunday after Trinity  
Harvest Festival



**Gathering to worship God**

Let us worship God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.  
The Lord be with us all.

This is the day that the Lord has made.  
We will rejoice and be glad in it.

*Words of welcome –*

Good morning and welcome to our harvest festival service from Rev Mark! Today we thank God for his provision and goodness – for the food we eat each day, for the farmers and workers who grow and enable us to buy that food – and in the midst of lockdown, especially for the many delivery drivers who work hard to enable we have that food on our doorsteps. Harvest is also a time to be mindful of those in need, those who have not enough to eat, who we can support through our donations and through our local foodbanks. As we worship God this morning, let us be grateful for all he has provided for us, and let us say sorry for times when we have misused or wasted the gifts of food we are given and damaged the planet we are called to steward.

Lord, direct our thoughts, and teach us to pray.  
Lift up our hearts to worship you in spirit and in truth,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

***Collect, the prayer of the week is said.***

Creator God,  
you made the goodness of the land,  
the riches of the sea  
and the rhythm of the seasons;  
as we thank you for the harvest,  
may we cherish and respect  
this planet and its peoples,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

**Saying sorry to God**

***Confession***

God our Father,  
we come to you in sorrow for our sins.  
For turning away from you,  
and ignoring your will for our lives;  
Father, forgive us:  
save us and help us.

For behaving just as we wish,  
without thinking of you;  
Father, forgive us:  
save us and help us

For failing you by what we do  
and think and say;  
Father, forgive us:  
save us and help us.

For letting ourselves be drawn away from you  
by temptations in the world about us;  
Father, forgive us:  
save us and help us.

For living as if we were ashamed to belong to your Son;  
Father, forgive us:  
save us and help us.

## *We say these words*

Blessed is the Lord for he has heard the voice of our prayer; therefore shall our hearts dance for joy and in our song we will praise our God.

## **Hearing and responding to the Word of God**

Alleluia, alleluia.

Lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are ripe for harvesting.

Gather the fruit for eternal life.

cf John 4.35,36

Alleluia..

## **Gospel Luke 12.16-30**

Then he told them a parable: 'The land of a rich man produced abundantly. And he thought to himself, "What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?" Then he said, "I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry." But God said to him, "You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?" So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich towards God.'

He said to his disciples, 'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? If then you are not able to do so small a thing as that, why do you worry about the rest? Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith! And do not keep striving for

what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not keep worrying. For it is the nations of the world that strive after all these things, and your Father knows that you need them.

### *Talk* – Rev Mark

Earlier this week I was watching the news, when there was an item from the World Wildlife Fund, about the Living Planet report. In this article, the president of the fund explained that our planet's wildlife populations have plummeted by 68% since 1970. The impact of climate change, of cutting down rainforest to graze cattle, and intensive nature of our crop farming has a far reaching impact. We see all around us the consequences of the misuse of our environment and wildlife – the rise of diseases such as the Covid-19 virus, the melting of the ice caps, and the extreme weather conditions which cause flooding and drought around the world.

When I was a boy at church we used to sing regularly the hymn, “Come, ye thankful people come”, a song of thanks for the God's provision of the harvest and the farmers who gather it in. Growing up in rural Lincolnshire, the line “all is safely gathered in – ere the winter storms begin” was visible all around. One day, walking through the fields, we would see the corn standing proud, tall and golden. The next, it was cut short and the hay bails were carefully stacked at the edge of the field. But we also had a farmer in our congregation, who would grumble when the weather had meant that the crops were bad this year, or when the storms had prevented the harvest from being safely gathered year.

I understand that this year has been particularly bad for the grain harvest, another misfortune when combined with the impact of economic recession and those who have suffered or experienced loss from the Covid-19 virus. It is hard to sing “all is safely gathered in” and be thankful for the gifts of the harvest when in the midst of crisis.

But this harvesttime can be a wake up call, a sobering reminder of the importance of carefully stewarding the gifts which God gives us in creation. We cannot allow our planet to merely be burned up and to exploit the earth's resources in the way we have done. 2020 has been a year when we have experienced the devastating consequences of what happens when things don't go to plan, when we don't care for the environment we live in. The things we face today are not random "Acts of God" as they used to be called. They are a result of how we, as humans, have treated or mistreated our planet.

One of the effects of lockdown, despite all its challenges and difficulties, has been a renewed appreciation of the things we take for granted. When we were wary about going out to the shops to buy food, or ordering takeaways, we adapted. We were more careful about not wasting our produce. Some people, including many members of this congregation took pride in growing vegetables, baking cakes, making jams and even buying chickens not only as a means to pass the time but as an opportunity to safeguard God's creation in our small part of the world.

In our Bible reading today, we hear of a man I used to call "Mr Bigger Barns". This was someone who tried to safeguard his own future, by storing up his wealth, and his grain, for some future occasion. We might call it today "saving up for a rainy day". He thought he had worked hard in the past, so he could rest on his laurels. But this man was not mindful of the fact that the security he took for granted could be whisked away at any point. He hadn't thought of the consequences of his actions. He hadn't thought about the people who were doubtless starving around him. And he didn't seem to care about God either. He put all his faith in the wrong things, in the hope that this would guarantee him a bright and rosy future.

The sad fact was, that all these things he tried to hoard and store for himself didn't do him any good.

He was unable to hold on to his life and health, and his wealth was worthless to him because it hadn't been used. The Covid-19 virus has had a sobering effect on us. Like the harvestmouse whose home is cut down by the farmer, we are reminded that "the best laid plans of mice and men often go awry."

So how can we deal with this situation? How can we remain hopeful when our safety and security is taken from us? This is a scary world we live in. But God gives us an opportunity. In the midst of crisis, we have choices. Choices to make a difference. Instead of resting on our laurels, we can think about how we can change our habits. We can try, instead of pushing decisions about caring for our planet to some point of crisis in the future, to see how we can live to serve God better in the here and now. This isn't going to be easy. If you are anything like me, you might constantly feel that you could do a better job in not wasting food, looking after the planet, and seeking to do the right thing. But the important thing is not being perfect. It is sticking close to God – thinking about what he has given us, what we are called to do today, in the here and now, to look after our world and those around us.

As Gandalf says in the Lord of the Rings, one of my favourite books and films, we may wish that trials never come to us, but "all we have to do is make the most of the time that is given to us." Not just in eating, drinking, and being merry, but in caring for the creation God has given us – in doing his will and seeking to make a difference.

Let us pray. Almighty God, in times of crisis help us to look to you for strength. Help us be mindful of what you have given us, and help us to look out for your creation and those around us in our everyday thoughts and actions.

Amen.

## ***Affirmation of Faith***

We believe and trust in God the Father,  
source of all being and life,  
the one for whom we exist?

We believe and trust in God the Son,  
who took our human nature,  
died for us and rose again?

We believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,  
who gives life to the people of God  
and makes Christ known in the world?

This is the faith of the Church.  
We believe and trust in one God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

## Prayers of Intercession – Rev Mark

Let us offer our prayers to God for the life of the world  
and for all God's people in their daily life and work.  
We pray for our local Community and especially today for  
all those living in Clayton Drive.

God, the beginning and end of all things, in your  
providence and care you watch unceasingly over all  
creation; we offer our prayers that in us and in all your  
people your will may be done, according to your wise and  
loving purpose in Christ our Lord.  
Lord of all life: hear our prayer.

We pray for all through whom we receive sustenance and  
life; for farmers and agricultural workers, for packers,  
distributors and company boards.

We pray for all the foodbanks, and those who distribute  
food to the housebound who are shielding because of  
Covid-19.

You have so ordered our life that we depend upon each  
other, enable us by your grace to seek the well-being of  
others before our own.

Lord of all creation: hear our prayer

We pray for all engaged in research to safeguard crops against disease,  
and to produce abundant life among those who hunger and whose lives are at risk.  
Prosper the work of their hands and the searching of their minds, that their labour may be for the welfare of all.  
Lord of all wisdom: hear our prayer.

We pray for governments and aid agencies,  
and those areas of the world where there is disaster, drought, starvation and economic challenge.  
By the grace of your Spirit, touch our hearts and the hearts of all who live in comfortable plenty,  
and make us wise stewards of your gifts.  
Lord of all justice: hear our prayer.

We pray for those who are ill,  
remembering those in hospital and nursing homes and all who are known to us who are sick or unwell at this time. We pray for all who care for them.  
Give skill and understanding to all who work for their well-being.  
Lord of all compassion: hear our prayer.

We remember those who have died,  
whom we entrust to your eternal love in the hope of resurrection to new life.  
Lord of all peace: hear our prayer.

We offer ourselves to your service,  
asking that by the Spirit at work in us others may receive a rich harvest of love and joy and peace.  
Lord of all faithfulness: Hear our prayer.

God of grace,  
as you are ever at work in your creation,  
so fulfil your wise and loving purpose in us and in all for whom we pray,  
that with them and in all that you have made,  
your glory may be revealed  
and the whole earth give praise to you,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Merciful Father accept these prayers, for the sake of your Son, our saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen

## **We say the Lord's prayer**

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come, your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for ever. Amen.

## **An act of Spiritual Communion**

You may wish to find a space for prayer in front of a cross, a candle, or a special place.

Reflect on the day and on your relationships.

- What good things have come from God today?
- Where have I fallen short?
- What might I do tomorrow?

Give thanks for the saving death and resurrection of Jesus and ask him to be with you now.

Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ, for all the benefits you have given me, for all the pains and insults you have borne for me.

Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, I ask you to come spiritually into my heart.

O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother, may I know you more clearly, love you more dearly,  
and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your disciples, 'I am with you always'. Be with me today, as I offer myself to you. Hear my prayers for others and for myself, and keep me in your care. Amen.

O God, help me to trust you, help me to know that you are with me, help me to believe that nothing can separate me from your love revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lord, in these days of mercy, make us quiet and prayerful;  
in these days of challenge, make us stronger in you;  
in these days of emptiness, take possession of us;  
in these days of waiting, open our hearts to the mystery of  
your cross.

Almighty God, Father of all mercies,  
we your unworthy servants give you most humble and  
hearty thanks for all your goodness and loving kindness.

We bless you for our creation, preservation, and  
all the blessings of this life; but above all for your  
immeasurable love in the redemption of the world by our  
Lord Jesus Christ, for the means of grace, and for the  
hope of glory.

And give us, we pray, such a sense of all your mercies  
that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful, and that we  
show forth your praise, not only with our lips but in our  
lives, by giving up ourselves to your service, and by  
walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our  
days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you  
and the Holy Spirit, be all honour and glory, for ever and  
ever. Amen.

**Hymn      Come ye thankful people come**

Come, ye thankful people, come,  
raise the song of harvest home;  
all is safely gathered in,  
ere the winter storms begin.  
God our Maker doth provide  
for our wants to be supplied;  
come to God's own temple, come,  
raise the song of harvest home.

We ourselves are God's own field,  
fruit unto his praise to yield;  
wheat and tares together sown  
unto joy or sorrow grown;  
first the blade and then the ear,  
then the full corn shall appear;  
grant, O harvest Lord, that we  
wholesome grain and pure may be.

For the Lord our God shall come,  
and shall take his harvest home;  
from his field shall purge away  
all that doth offend, that day;  
give his angels charge at last  
in the fire the tares to cast;  
but the fruitful ears to store  
in the garner evermore.

Then with church triumphant, come,  
Raise the song of harvest home;  
all be safely gathered in,  
free from sorrow, free from sin,  
there, forever purified,  
in God's garner to abide;  
come, ten thousand angels, come,  
raise the glorious harvest home.

Henry Alford (1810-1871)

## **Continue to serve God during this difficult time**

Let us pray:

Lord of the harvest,  
with joy we have offered thanksgiving for your love in  
creation, by your grace plant within us a reverence for all  
that you give us and make us generous and wise  
stewards of the good things we enjoy;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Go now in peace,  
knowing that you have been born again,  
not of perishable seed, but of imperishable,  
through the living and enduring word of God;

Let us bless the Lord:  
Blessing, honour and glory be yours,  
here and everywhere, now and for ever. Amen

Filled with the Spirit's power,  
We go in the light and peace of Christ. Amen.

## **Exit Music** by Martin Bates

I know you may have already heard this but Martin wanted to thank people this week and so here it is used as our online service of the word exit music again x

Martin says EXIT MUSIC for Harvest Festival Bach's Toccata

What an exciting moment folks: on 6th September 2020 we heard our restored organ for the first time at around 10.15. Thanks to everyone for your support over the weeks, months and years leading to now. A particular thank you to the Organ Restoration committee of course and the skilled team from Diss led by Rodney Briscoe. Lets look forward to a rededication service sometime in the future when we can have a full church. Martin

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