

SUNDAY WORSHIP 27th September
HARVEST FESTIVAL CELEBRATION



*The land yielded its harvest; God, our God,
has blessed us (Psalm 67.6)*

LET'S PRAISE GOD with hearts and voices

1. For the fruit of all creation, thanks be to God.

For gifts bestowed on every nation,
thanks be to God.

For the ploughing, sowing, reaping,
silent growth while we are sleeping,
future needs in earth's safekeeping,
thanks be to God.

2. In the just reward of labour, God's will be done.
In the help we give our neighbour, God's will be
done. In our worldwide task of caring for the
hungry and despairing, in the harvests we are
sharing, God's will is done.

3. For the harvests of the Spirit, thanks be to God.
For the good we all inherit, thanks be to God. For
the wonders that astound us, for the truths that
still confound us, most of all that love has found us,
Thanks be to God.

LET US PRAY together.....

We see signs of summer's passing in golden leaves,
shortening days, misty mornings, autumn glow.
We sense its passing in rain that dampens, morning
chill, Harvest's bounty placed on show.
Creator God, you brings forth both green shoot and
frost, sunrise and sunset, we bring our thanks for
seeds that have grown, harvests gathered,
storehouses filled, mouths fed. And, as your good
earth rests through winter's cold embrace, we look
forward to its re-awakening when kissed by Spring's
first touch.

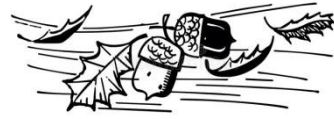
We confess though that we are not always generous
in helping others to meet their need, not always
generous in the harvest of your grace, not always
generous in our thanks to you, not always generous
in our love, forgiveness and compassion. We are
sorry Lord.....

The Lord says, "you are forgiven, be filled with my
Spirit and show the harvest of my love in your words
and ways". Thank you Merciful God. AMEN

Our offering - Creator God, the ultimate divine
energy of the universe, of life, death and
resurrection, we offer our gifts, laid aside and

given, and ask that they will bring new life to those
in physical, emotional and spiritual need. **AMEN**

OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN.....



Psalm 19

The heavens declare the glory of God; the
skies proclaim the work of his hands.

² Day after day they pour forth speech;
night after night they reveal knowledge.

³ They have no speech, they use no words;
no sound is heard from them.

⁴ Yet their voice goes out into all the earth,
their words to the ends of the world.

In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun.

⁵ It is like a bridegroom coming out of his
chamber, like a champion rejoicing to run his
course. ⁶ It rises at one end of the heavens

and makes its circuit to the other;
nothing is deprived of its warmth.

A reflection I have childhood memories of Autumn
harvests. Dad grew produce, and Mum would
preserve, bottle, and store. The annual horticultural
show was a great event where dad would exhibit
dozens of items including 12 runner beans, 6
tomatoes, chrysanthemums, and Mum cooked
beetroot, sponge cakes & scones. I would always
make a bowl full of floating flowers. On the Sunday
of harvest dad would prepare a basket of fresh
vegetables for us to take to church and offer them
with all the other fresh produce people had grown.

There is still an element of this at Harvest but we
also bring non-perishable gifts for foodbank, and
offerings for wateraid etc. Years ago farms were
full of labourers, today one man and a tractor can
do the work of dozens, times change. During
lockdown there has been an increased interest in
growing vegetables and fruit at home. The
Gardeners World web site quadrupled its visits,
thousands of Brits have grown some of their own
vegetables during lockdown. This 'Backyard
cultivation' as it's called is very satisfying and
rewarding, and it has made people consider the
miracle of growth.

We often think we have no control over the world
over creation described in Psalm 19. Of course we

cannot control everything, but certainly we have a huge role to play in working with creation so that it is preserved for future generations. The fruit and vegetables we enjoyed as children were all 'seasonal', and were not available at any other time of year unless stored properly - unlike now where millions of tons of food is imported from other countries, and up to 40% wasted. I recently watched David Attenborough's programme "Extinction" which talks about the destruction of biodiversity (the variety of plants and animal life in the world), of how everything is part of a chain of events, and of its destruction by wants and greed, large scale farming and industry. We have a chance to reverse this to give creatures & plants a chance to regenerate, and we are prompted to carefully consider whether the food we eat, and the things we buy come from sustainable sources, and decide if we can eat less variety & change buying habits.

The birth of Jesus Christ at Bethlehem shows us God using our humanity to teach his truths to us all. Think how often in Jesus' teaching and parables use nature and growth to grasp our attention - the flowers of the fields, the sowing of the seed, the harvesting of the crops, the sun and the rain sent by a generous God on good and bad.

We are to share our gifts and talents, we are workers together in God's own harvest and the startling fact is that God needs us, to make actual and real His plans. From a tiny seed grow pounds of tomatoes; we may feel unimportant, we may wonder what use changing our shopping habits will be but we are all part of God's design and plan, we all have a role to play, if the great world theatre is to carry through the long and amazing drama set for our human race into the future.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

-We pray for everyone involved in the food chain, growers, harvesters & packers, lorry drivers, transport workers, distributors, shop workers.

-Eternal God, we give thanks this day for the beauty of the earth and the wonder of our lives.

-We give thanks for the changing of the seasons and the movement of the stars.

-We give thanks for Jesus, our rock and our friend.

-Bless your world this day, we pray, and use us to do acts of discipleship in it.

-Be with those who are hungry and do not know the luxury of three square meals, complete with snacks in between, and as many hot drinks as we like. Help us to give not what's left, but our best

-Be with those who are fighting Covid 19, other illnesses, and are fearful about their health.

-Be with those are fighting addictions and help us to be wary of things by which we can fall addicted.

-Be with those who are facing violence on a battle field or in their own homes.

-Bless every human being, we pray, with grace enough and faith enough, to bring them home to you now and forevermore.

-For we say it, and mean it, in Jesus name who taught us to pray saying....

***Often I look up, smile and say,
"God I know that's you, thank you!"***

LET'S OUR HEARTS AND VOICE SING OUT -

We plough the fields and scatter

The good seed on the land,

But it is fed and watered by God's almighty hand;

He sends the snow in winter,

The warmth to swell the grain,

The breezes and the sunshine,

and soft refreshing rain.

*All good gifts around us are sent from heaven above;
Then thank the Lord, O thank the Lord,
For all His love.*

He only is the Maker of all things near and far;

He paints the wayside flower,

He lights the evening star;

The winds and waves obey Him,

By Him the birds are fed;

Much more to us, His children,

He gives our daily bread.

We thank Thee, then, O Father,

For all things bright and good;

The seedtime and the harvest,

Our life, our health, our food.

No gifts have we to offer for all Thy love imparts,

But that which Thou desirest,

Our humble, thankful hearts.

A prayer of blessing

Bless us Lord as we seek to see that which is beautiful in the changing seasons, and seek to do that which is faithful in the passing of time. **Amen**