

Welcome

Beloved, we have come together
to worship the God who provides,
the God who nurtures, the God who brings growth.
We come to celebrate God's gifts

We come to praise the God of Love.

We come to worship an inventive God,
whose hand has touched every particle of our planet.
We come to marvel at the rhythm and beauty of his works, from the
incoming tide to the setting sun, from the wind playing in the
cornfield to the rainbow following the storm.

We come to praise the God of Creation.

**Almighty God, from whom all life and health comes, hear us now
as we bring our harvest praise to you.**

**Still our hearts, deepen our listening,
and touch our restless, hungry lives, we pray,
in Jesus' name. Amen**

Hymn Come ye thankful people come.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t3n7IUCdqAM>

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.

All the world is 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 his garner evermore.

Even so, Lord, quickly come,
Bring thy final harvest home;
gather thou thy people in,
free from sorrow, free from sin,
there, forever purified,
in thy garner to abide;
come, with all thine angels come,
raise the glorious harvest home.

Confession

**In a world whose web of life is intricate and beautiful,
save us, Lord, from carelessness and blindness,**

**In a world whose creatures are so varied and vulnerable,
save us, Lord, from plundering and cruelty.**

**In a world where waters are fresh and whose oceans
should cleanse,
save us Lord from wanton pollution.**

**In a world where forests protect our air and wildlife,
save us, Lord, from systems that drive us to destroy them.**

**In a world whose fruits are rich and plentiful,
save us, Lord, from waste and greed**

May God who loved the world so much
that he sent his Son to be our Saviour,
forgive us our sins
and make us holy to serve him in the world,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Psalm 126

When the Lord blessed our land,
we were like people made new:

Rejoice, for the Lord has done great things.

Our mouths were full of laughter,
and our tongues sang aloud for joy:

Rejoice, for the Lord has done great things.

You restored our fortunes, and it was like rainfall in a dry land:

Rejoice, for the Lord has done great things.

Let those who sowed in tears, reap with shouts of joy:

Rejoice, for the Lord has done great things.

Those who went out weeping, carrying seed for sowing:

Rejoice, for the Lord has done great things.

You shall come home rejoicing, carrying your harvest high:

Rejoice, for the Lord has done great things.

Harvest Collect

Eternal God, you crown the year with your goodness
And you give us the fruits of the earth in their season:
Grant that we may use them to your glory,
For the relief of those in need
And for our own wellbeing; through Jesus Christ
your son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
One God, now and forever. Amen

Reading: Old Testament

Joel 2.21-27

Do not fear, O soil;
 be glad and rejoice,
 for the Lord has done great things!
Do not fear, you animals of the field,
 for the pastures of the wilderness are green;
the tree bears its fruit,
 the fig tree and vine give their full yield.

O children of Zion, be glad
 and rejoice in the Lord your God;
for he has given the early rain for your vindication,
 he has poured down for you abundant rain,
 the early and the later rain, as before.
The threshing-floors shall be full of grain,
 the vats shall overflow with wine and oil.

I will repay you for the years
 that the swarming locust has eaten,
the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter,
 my great army, which I sent against you.

You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied,
and praise the name of the Lord your God,
who has dealt wondrously with you. And my people shall never
again be put to shame.

You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel,
and that I, the Lord, am your God and there is no other.

And my people shall never again
be put to shame.

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Hymn To thee O Lord our hearts we raise

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jojxfc96eNQ>

To thee, O Lord, our hearts we raise
in hymns of adoration,
to thee bring sacrifice of praise
with shouts of exultation.
Bright robes of gold the fields adorn,
the hills with joy are ringing,
the valleys stand so thick with corn
that even they are singing.

And now, on this our festal day,
thy bounteous hand confessing.
Before thee thankfully we we lay
the first fruits of thy blessing.
By thee the souls of men are fed
with gifts of grace supernal;
thou, who dost give us earthly bread,
give us the bread eternal.

We bear the burden of the day,
and often toil seems dreary;
but labour ends with sunset ray,
and rest comes for the weary.
May we, the angel reaping over,
stand at the last accepted,
Christ's golden sheaves, forevermore
to garner bright elected.

O blessèd is that land of God
where saints abide forever,
where golden fields spread far and broad,
where flows the crystal river;
the strains of all its holy throng
with ours today are blending;
thrice blessèd is that harvest song
which never hath an ending.

Reading: New Testament

1 Timothy 6.6-10

There is great gain in godliness combined with contentment; for we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it; but if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these.

But those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains.

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Hymn For the fruits of his creation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B3TGM4RAZhU>

For the fruits of his creation,
thanks be to God.

For his gifts to every nation,
thanks be to God.

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

In the just reward of labour,
God's will is done.

In the help we give our neighbour,
God's will is done.

In our world-wide task of caring
for the hungry and despairing,
in the harvests we are sharing,
God's will is done.

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!

Reading: Gospel

Matthew 6.25-33

Jesus said to his disciples:

‘I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, 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, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith?

Therefore do not worry, saying, “What will we eat?” or “What will we drink?” or “What will we wear?” For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Address

I guess we’ve all been reading and hearing that anxiety and worry have dramatically increased in almost all parts of society during the last year of Lockdowns and Coronavirus. Children are really struggling at school through heightened anxiety. Vulnerable people are worried about going out and catching the virus. Some people are so anxious about being vaccinated that they keep putting it off.

Families who missed out on furlough payments are incredibly anxious about being made homeless because they can't afford to pay their rent. Parents are worried about their young children not having enough socialising and normal contact with friends and neighbours and becoming anxious when they go out. Some people have felt desperate because they have been unable to go to funerals to say farewell to their loved ones. People in care homes have been struggling because their families can't visit. Those awaiting operations which are repeatedly put off, are suffering painful and anxious sleepless nights. And so on, and so on. Almost everyone has had to learn how to live with more anxiety, and how to overcome the fear of what twists and turns might happen next in their lives.

All of us have been having to learn to cope with uncertainty and worry.

And the farmers amongst us might well be thinking – “About time too!”

For the farming year has always been fraught with uncertainty and anxiety: Will the rain ever come? Will the rain ever stop? Will the TB tests at last be negative? Will the price of beef or lamb hold up? Will the cost of straw or fertiliser ever stop rising? Will the government support be enough? Will I get this field cut before darkness comes? Will the contractor actually turn up today to bale the hay? And so on, and so on.

Worry is not only very tiring, but also can lead to real mental health issues and even suicidal thoughts. So Jesus' instruction “not to worry about your life” can ring rather hollow.

And yet his message is vital. Worry and anxiety can feed on themselves, making us miserable. And if they go on and on, they can be completely debilitating. So what can we do about it?

Firstly, Jesus says, get our priorities right. So long as we have something to eat and something to drink, we'll be fine. We don't need any more. Any clothes to wear will do to keep us warm and decent – being fashionable comes a distant second.

Then, be more trusting of God's care for us – turn to him for his constant love and reassurance.

Stop and think “Does worry make any difference? It can't make me taller. It can't make me richer. It can't make me happier. Why am I wasting my energy on worry?” Which is not to say we can just sit back and do nothing – rather we can decide to face up to doing things we're putting off, and working out how to get round problems rather than giving up.

But above all, says Jesus, we need to get our priorities right. It's not me that really matters – it's other people. It's caring about them, helping them, working with them to strive to bring in God's Kingdom all around us.

How can I possibly be happy if I've finally got everything I want, and other people around me are going without?

Worrying about ourselves is being self-centred; instead we need to look around and look up, setting aside any temptation to selfishness.

After all, farmers, at the end of the day, are not growing food for themselves, they are growing food for us. Year on year farmers manage the ups and downs of the farming life in order to keep us fed. That's their bit for the Kingdom of God – thank you farmers.

And we can join them in giving thanks today.

We can give thanks for other sorts of harvest that we can see around us – harvests of goodwill, good community support and good neighbours.

Thanking God that rather than being anxious, we can simply be grateful. Thanking God for all good gifts around us! Amen.

Hymn We plough the fields and scatter

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YQ8dEkjmEMg>

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.

*Refrain: 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.

Refrain

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.

Refrain

Prayers

Lord God, we thank you for the land that surrounds us, the fields and moorland, the ploughland and the grazing, the rivers and the hills. Thank you for the men and women who work on the farms, caring for the livestock and the crops. We pray for a fair return on their labours, and safety and well-being for them and their families:

Lord of the Harvest, hear our prayer

Loving God, We thank you for the plenty and variety of our food in this country. We pray for justice in the food chain, both at home and abroad. Especially at this time we pray for our sheep and cattle farmers and the particular pressures they face with low prices for wool, with TB and other diseases. We also pray for those who process, prepare and pack our food; those who transport and sell it, those who cook and serve it for us, day by day:

Lord of the Harvest, hear our prayer

Lord God we thank you for the bio-diversity on our farmland; we pray for a love of creation in farm policy and practice. We thank you for the contribution to sustainable energies that our farms are making. Give us wisdom and discernment in our care and stewardship of the land in this way:

Lord of the Harvest, hear our prayer

Father God. We thank you for our gardens and allotments, our greenhouses and potting sheds, and the joys of raising our own food. Help us to be good neighbours and share our harvest with those who have less.

In a land of plenty help us to remember those
whose crops have failed, those who are hungry, and
give us generous hearts:

Lord of the Harvest, hear our prayer

Father God, you who clothe the lilies and feed the
birds of the sky, who lead the lambs to pasture and the
deer to water, who multiplied loaves and fishes and
changed water into wine, lead us, feed us, multiply us,
and change us to reflect the glory of our Creator :

Lord of the Harvest, hear our prayer

God of all places and this place:
you promised a new earth
where the hungry will feast
and the oppressed go free.

Come Lord, build that place among us.

God of all times and this time:
you promised a new day
when the fearful will laugh
and the sick find healing.

Come Lord, speed that time among us.

God of all people, our God:
take what we have and what we hope for
make this a world where the poor find good news.

**We come Lord, to share in the work of your kingdom until the new
earth is created among us.**

In Jesus' name.

Amen.

Gathering our prayers into one, we pray as our Lord Jesus taught us:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.**

Hymn All things bright and beautiful

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IPMA5I3-0Jw>

*All things bright and beautiful,
all creatures great and small,
all things wise and wonderful,
the Lord God made them all.*

Each little flower that opens,
each little bird that sings,
he made their glowing colours,
he made their tiny wings.

(Refrain)

The cold wind in the winter,
the pleasant summer sun,
the ripe fruits in the garden,
he made them every one.

(Refrain)

He gave us eyes to see them,
and lips that we might tell
how great is God Almighty,
who has made all things well.

(Refrain)

The Blessing

May God the Father bless us,
who first sowed the seed of eternal life
in our hearts.

May God the Son bless us,
who nurtures us
with the rain and sunshine of love.

May God the Spirit bless us,
who brings all things to fruition;

and may the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
be among us and remain with us always.

Amen