

Sunday 9 October 2022

Harvest Festival



Sermon © Lucie Reilly.

Liturgy and prayers of intercession © 2000 The Archbishops' Council.

Bible readings © the publishers of the NRSV translation.

The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration appear at the end.

All the hymns are hosted on YouTube. Please click on the links to hear them.

To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page,
<http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources/index.htm>

Introduction and welcome

HYMN 1 [All things bright and beautiful](#) (click on this link to hear the hymn)

The Welcome

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

All Amen.

The Lord be with you

All And also with you.

The Preparation

**All Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, with all your mind,
and with all your strength.’

And the second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

All Amen. Lord, have mercy.

God’s whole creation groans.

The land produces thorns and thistles and longs to be set free.

Our sin affects all around us.

We confess our sins in penitence and faith.

All Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry
and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us,
forgive us all that is past
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name. Amen.

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

The Gloria

This Gloria is sung to the tune of 'Cwm Rhondda'. Click [here](#) for the tune.

All Glory be to God in Heaven,
Songs of joy and peace we bring,
Thankful hearts and voices raising,
To creation's Lord we sing.
Lord we thank you, Lord we praise you,
Glory be to God our King:
Glory be to God our King.

Lamb of God, who on our shoulders,
Bore the load of this world's sin;
Only Son of God the Father,
You have brought us peace within.
Lord, have mercy, Christ have mercy,
Now your glorious reign begin:
Now your glorious reign begin.

**You O Son of God are Holy,
You we praise with one accord.
None in heav'n or earth is like you,
Only you are Christ the Lord.
With the Father and the Spirit,
Ever worshipped and adored:
Ever worshipped and adored.**

The Collect for the Harvest

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 well-being;
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 for ever.

All Amen.

First reading

A reading from the fifth book of Moses called Deuteronomy

When you have come into the land that the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance to possess, and you possess it, and settle in it, you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from the land that the Lord your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place that the Lord your God will choose as a dwelling for his name. You shall go to the priest who is in office at that time, and say to him, 'Today I declare to the Lord your God that I have come into the land that the Lord swore to our ancestors to give us.' When the priest takes the basket from your hand and sets it down before the altar of the Lord your God, you shall make this response before the Lord your God: 'A wandering Aramean was my ancestor; he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien, few in number, and there he became a great nation, mighty and populous. When the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, by imposing hard labour on us, we cried to the Lord, the God of our ancestors; the Lord heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. The Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of

power, and with signs and wonders; and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. So now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground that you, O Lord, have given me.' You shall set it down before the Lord your God and bow down before the Lord your God. Then you, together with the Levites and the aliens who reside among you, shall celebrate with all the bounty that the Lord your God has given to you and to your house. *Deuteronomy 26:1-11*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from St Paul's Letter to the Philippians

Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you. *Philippians 4:5-9*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

**HYMN 2 For the beauty of the earth
For the beauty of the earth**

(traditional tune)
(different tune)

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

All Glory to you O Lord.

When they found Jesus on the other side of the lake, they said to him, 'Rabbi, when did you come here?' Jesus answered them, 'Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal.' Then they said to him, 'What must we do to perform the works of God?' Jesus answered them, 'This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.' So they said to him, 'What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may

see it and believe you? What work are you performing? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, “He gave them bread from heaven to eat”.’

Then Jesus said to them, ‘Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.’ They said to him, ‘Sir, give us this bread always.’

Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. *John 6:25–35*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

May I speak this morning in the name of God, Father Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Harvest Festival can seem like a very straightforward event but, if we allow it to, the deeper meaning of our readings today can transform the way we live and the relationships with have with God, with one another and with those most in need.

So, I am going to suggest today that Harvest can have multiple layers of meaning each of which we need to appreciate, but then peel back to expose a deeper layer before getting close to the heart of the issue. If only there were a multi-layered vegetable that I could use to illustrate that point (an onion maybe).

Of course, the uppermost layer of today is about recognising that all of the gifts we have come ultimately from God, taking some time out from the busy-ness of our lives to recognise that fact and then to say ‘Thank You’.

The reading we had from Deuteronomy, one of the oldest books in the Bible, recalls the time when the Jewish people were first settling in the promised land, a land of milk and honey.

In our reading God told the people of Israel that when the promised land has produced its rich harvest, they are to take the firstfruits—importantly not the left-overs or the windfalls, but the firstfruits—and they are to put them in a basket and present them before God, remembering the hardship from which they came and

... rejoice in all the good things the Lord your God has given you and your household.

How brilliant is that? God commands his people to ‘rejoice’ in all the good things they have been given. How often do we rejoice in the goodness of God? We are so fortunate—simply to have a roof over our heads and food in the cupboard, this makes us truly blessed. But do we ever take the time to rejoice in those blessings

or do we take them for granted or, even worse, do we spend our time being envious of those who seem to be even richer than us?

Godliness with contentment is great gain but today we are commended to contentment with rejoicing!

Although I said that is the surface layer of harvest that doesn't mean it's not important or trivial. Far from it. To truly and deeply, recognise that all we have is a gift from God and to be truly thankful for that, not just at Harvest time but all the time, would be to change our relationship with the material world.

We are invited to go deeper. Although today's reading from Deuteronomy finished at verse 11, I think that verse 12 takes us further into the purpose of today:

When you have finished setting aside a tenth of all your produce in the third year, the year of the tithe, you shall give it to the Levite, the fatherless and the widow.

The Harvest celebrations to which the Israelites were called did not simply involve rejoicing for that what they had been given but they were required to share it with those most in need. They had to give some to the Levites to support the worship of God, but they also had to support foreigners in their midst, orphans and widows. When we think of the Jewish people settling the land of milk and honey it is all too easy for us to think of them simply driving out all foreigners but, actually, time and time again the Old Testament commanded them to look after the outsiders, remembering that they had spent many years as foreigners in Egypt.

Our thankfulness must flow into charity. Here we can express that charity by supporting our local foodbanks, not only at Harvest but throughout the year. But we can always do more to feed the hungry—if each of us here put an extra item in the food bank box each week then it would be overflowing every week—and what better symbol of God's overflowing love for us than us being an overflowing blessing for others.

The proper Christian response to those in need around us is not just to give them stuff but to love them. The current political and social discourse, not only in this country but across World, is turning quite ugly especially in relation to the aliens in our midst. Xenophobia and the hatred of others is never the Christian or the Godly response. At Harvest we are called to remember God's love for us and to respond by loving all those around us.

For purpose of today's harvest celebration, there is one final layer to this onion, the core if you will. In today's Gospel reading Jesus reminds all those around him, which includes us, that we should not be concentrating all our efforts and thoughts on the purely material gifts:

'I tell you the truth, you were looking for me not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you.'

As they often did the people around him at the time completely missed the point and they asked Jesus what further miraculous signs he would show them and, on the subject of loaves, they reminded Jesus that Moses had fed his people in the desert with manna from heaven. They still simply want to eat their fill.

But Jesus reminds them that it was not Moses who gave them bread from heaven, but God himself, and then seeks to move their understanding of bread on:

'For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.'

'Sir', they said 'from now on give us this bread'.

Although one cannot be sure one still gets the impression that they were thinking about real bread, miraculously descended from heaven. Then Jesus brings them to the point:

'I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.'

Jesus is not seeking to ignore real hunger and thirst—after all it's only at the start of this same chapter that Jesus fed the 5000 with real food and drink and, as we know, we are commanded to give real food to the hungry—but he is also seeking to move the people further and deeper into their spiritual needs. He is speaking to the spiritual hungry and thirsty, of those around him and to us, and telling us that when we eat the bread of life our deepest needs are met, and we shall be filled for ever. Not with food that spoils but with eternal food sent from heaven for us and for our salvation. The chapter concludes with Jesus saying that his body is real food, and his blood is real drink and that unless we eat and drink of him, we have no life in us. It's a remarkable journey from the physical feeding of the 5000 to the spiritual feeding of his followers, on him, who is the bread of life.

So, at Harvest but I hope every week, we can and should give thanks and rejoice for all that God has given us, we share our gifts with those around us but most importantly we draw close to Jesus through our worship and through the sharing of his body and blood in bread and wine knowing that through him we are filled and raised to everlasting life.

Amen.

Blessing the Harvest gifts

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation,
you bring forth gifts of food from the fields and the sea,
and give us the fruits of the world in their season.

Accept this food that we bring before you,
made from the harvest of your goodness.

Let it be for us a sign of your fatherly care.

Blessed are you, Lord our God,
worthy of our thanksgiving and praise.

Blessed be God for ever. **Amen.**

The Creed

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

All We believe and trust in him.

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

All We believe and trust in him.

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

All We believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church.

All This is our faith.

**We believe and trust in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

Amen.

Prayers of intercession

The prayers are inspired by the story of creation in Genesis 1.

Let us pray to God the almighty, the King of creation.

God said, 'Let there be light.'

Eternal God, we thank you for your light and your truth.

We praise you for your fatherly care
in creating a universe which proclaims your glory.
Inspire us to worship you, the creator of all,
and let your light shine upon our world.

God of life:

All hear our prayer.

God said, 'Let there be a firmament in the midst of the heavens.'

We thank you for the vastness of the universe
and the mysteries of space.

We pray for all scientists and astronomers
who extend the boundaries of our knowledge.
As we contemplate the wonder of the heavens,
confirm us in the truth that every human being is
known and loved by you.

God of life:

All hear our prayer.

God said, 'Let the waters be gathered together,
and let dry land appear.'

We thank you for the beauty of the earth,
for the diversity of land and sea,
for the resources of the earth.

Give us the will to cherish this planet
and to use its riches for the good and welfare of all.

God of life:

All hear our prayer.

God said, 'Let there be lights in the sky
to separate the day and the night.'

We thank you for the warmth of the sun,
the light of the moon, the glory of the stars.
We praise you for the formations of clouds,
the radiance of dawn and sunset.

Save us from wasting or abusing the energy
on which all life depends.

Open our eyes to behold your beauty,
and our lips to praise your name.

God of life:

All hear our prayer.

God said, 'Let the waters bring forth living creatures,
and let birds fly across the sky.'

We thank you for the teeming life of the seas,
and the flight of the birds.

Help us to protect the environment
so that all life may flourish.

God of life:

All hear our prayer.

God said, 'Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind.'

We rejoice in the variety of animal life.

Grant us grace to treat all animals with respect and care;
to protect endangered species,
to preserve the variety of habitats,
and to honour the delicate balance of nature.

God of life:

All hear our prayer.

God said, 'Let us create human beings in our own image.'

We pray for the human family.

We exult in its diversity and giftedness,
we repent of its sins, divisions and violence.

By the power of your Spirit, restore your image within us,
through Christ who came to remake us
by his death and resurrection.

God of life:

All hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, you have filled the world with beauty:
open our eyes to behold your gracious hand in all your works;
that, rejoicing in your whole creation,
we may learn to serve you with gladness;
for the sake of him through whom all things were made,
your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

Merciful Father,

**All accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

The peace

You shall go out in joy and be led back in peace;
the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song,
and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. *Isaiah 55:12*

The peace of the Lord be always with you,
All And also with you.

HYMN 3 Come ye thankful people come (click on this link to hear the hymn)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below.

The Dismissal

May God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who is the source of all goodness and growth,
pour his blessing upon all things created,
and upon you his children,
that you may use his gifts to his glory
and the welfare of all peoples;
and the blessing of God the Almighty:
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
be with you now and remain with you always.

All Amen.

HYMN 4 We plough the fields and scatter (click on this link to hear the hymn)

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All In the name of Christ. Amen.

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

Eucharistic Prayer (prayer E)

The Lord be with you

All and also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, it is our duty and our joy,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For you have created the heavens and the earth,
and formed us in your own image.

In the fullness of time you sent forth your Son, your eternal Word,
who laid down his life for our salvation
and rose from the grave, the first-fruits of your new creation.

You send forth your holy and life-giving Spirit
to give life to our mortal bodies
and to renew the face of the earth.

Therefore with all the heavenly hosts,
we give voice to everything that you have made,
and sing the eternal hymn of praise.

**All Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;
and as we obey his command,
send your Holy Spirit,
that broken bread and wine outpoured
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends
and, taking bread, he praised you.

He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:
Drink this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross.

Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,
we proclaim his death and resurrection
until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith:

All Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.

Lord of all life,
help us to work together for that day
when your kingdom comes
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,
gather us in your loving arms
and bring us with all the saints
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,
for ever and ever.

All Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

All **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.**

Breaking of the Bread

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

All **Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

All **Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.**

Draw near with faith.

Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ
which he gave for you,
and his blood which he shed for you.

Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you,
and feed on him in your hearts
by faith with thanksgiving.

All We do not presume
to come to this your table, merciful Lord,
trusting in our own righteousness,
but in your manifold and great mercies.
We are not worthy
so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.
But you are the same Lord
whose nature is always to have mercy.
Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ
and to drink his blood,
that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body
and our souls washed through his most precious blood,
and that we may evermore dwell in him,
and he in us. Amen.

Communion is distributed.

Prayer after Communion

Lord of the harvest,
with joy we have offered thanksgiving for your love in creation
and have shared in the bread and the wine of the kingdom:
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.

All Amen

All Almighty God,
we thank you for feeding us
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies
to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out
in the power of your Spirit
to live and work
to your praise and glory.
Amen.