

Worship at Home 18th October 2020
Circuit Harvest Celebration

Welcome to worship. Wherever you are celebrating this Circuit Harvest service, may you know God near.

'Praise the LORD! How good it is to sing praises to our God; for he is gracious, and a song of praise is fitting.' Psalm 147:1-2

StF N°122

1. **God, whose farm is all creation,**
take the gratitude we give;
take the finest of our harvest,
crops we grow that all may live.
2. Take our ploughing, seeding, reaping,
hopes and fears of sun and rain,
all our thinking, planning, waiting,
ripened in this fruit and grain.
3. All our labour, all our watching,
all our calendar of care,
in these crops of your creation,
take, O God: they are our prayer.

Leslie Thomas John Arlott (1914-1991)

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This year farmers across this country have been faced with floods, draughts and wet weather for bringing in the harvest, which due to the poor conditions as meant crops have been affected and the harvest reduced.

A further difficulty has been farming during the Pandemic of 2020. Many people have come to appreciate what working in isolation can feel like, empathising with farmers who spend hours and days lone working. The pandemic as seen many harvest festivals cancelled or dramatically downsized to small gatherings looking and feeling vastly different.

This year the Circuit Harvest Service invites churches to make a harvest donation by collecting for The Farming Community Network (FCN). All donations will go to support the great mission and ministry work of FCN which they carry out across the country.

'The Farming Community Network is a Christian ecumenical voluntary organisation, which has a countrywide network of volunteers who view it as their mission to help farming people through difficult times in their lives.' [fcn.org.uk] More information available online.

Prayer of Praise & Thanksgiving

God of all goodness, as we pause and look at all that is good.

We thank and praise you.

For food full of flavour, colour and goodness.
For farmers, producers and shops.

We thank and praise you.

For the beauty of creation, the wonders of wildlife and the great depths of the sea.

We thank and praise you.

For gifts that are shared, and skills used to serve. For humanity held in your love.

We thank and praise you.

For the air that we breath and magnificent trees. For the fields, hills and mountains that meet the sky.

We thank and praise you.

For all that we have, enjoy and we share.

We thank and praise you. Amen.

Reading Galatians, chapter 6, verse 9

'So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up.'

A reflection by Revd. Gareth

This verse which sits within the final chapter of Paul's letter to the Galatians is urging the church to bear one another's burdens. It also follows on from Paul speaking about the Fruit of the Spirit which comes through living by the Spirit.

The above verse feels especially pertinent with all that has and is happening this year, not least with a difficult harvest time.

Of course, Paul is using the imagery of harvest to refer to matters of faith, pointing directly to God, Holy Spirit. We too can draw upon that

same imagery and consider what it is we are sowing in our own lives. Are we seeking to sow and grow in the Spirit of God?

This one verse does not sit alone, and I encourage you to read the whole chapter if not the whole letter in its six chapters. This verse does give us a taste of the hope which comes from life lived by the Spirit. Of life lived for and with God. Paul reminded the churches in Galatia of this hope, encouraging them not to give up doing what is right, that a harvest would come. The point being that you reap whatever you sow.

Now is the time, just like yesteryear for doing what is right. With all the struggles in life we face, let us not abandon Our God who sustains us, let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up. Let us keep going with God who does not and will not abandon us, and may God keep growing in us the fruit of the Spirit.

Amen.

StF N°51

1. **Great is thy faithfulness**, O God my Father
there is no shadow of turning with thee;
thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail
not;
as thou hast been thou for ever wilt be:

*Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
all I have needed thy hand hath provided.
Great is thy faithfulness, Lord unto me.*

2. Summer and winter, and springtime and
harvest,
sun, moon and stars in their courses above,
join with all nature in manifold witness
to thy great faithfulness, mercy and love:
3. Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
thine own dear presence to cheer and to
guide;
strength for today and bright hope for
tomorrow,
blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

Thomas O. Chisholm (1866-1960)
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A prayer exercise: Think about the journey of a loaf of bread, from farm, to baker, shop and consumer. Pray for everyone involved.

Prayers for others

God of all creation, we pray for the world,

We pray for relief for all those who are struggling with hunger and poverty.

We pray for the healing and restoration of the earth. May humanity be guided by Your Spirit into ways of love and care for each other and of the environment we call home.

Take time to offer your prayers to God.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayers.

Amen.

StF N°128

1. **The harvest is here:
earth's bounty we bring!**
And as we draw near,
God's mercies we sing.
From greenhouse and garden,
allotment and store:
These love-gifts we offer
and praises outpour.
2. A harvest we bear –
our talents and time.
A calling to share:
such in God's design.
As people of Jesus
we honour his name;
through our love for neighbour
his love we proclaim.
3. God's harvest shall come,
when all is fulfilled:
death's forces succumb,
and violence be stilled.
Then all that has breath
in Creation restored
shall bow down in worship:
one Harvest, one Lord!

Dominic Grant (b. 1970)
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A Blessing provided by The Farming Community Network.

*Bless to us, God
The sun that shines above us
The rain that falls upon us
The earth that sustains us
The air that surrounds us
The love that binds us
Amen.*