



**The Benefice of
Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth, Denholme
Sunday 11 October 2020 HARVEST FESTIVAL**

Preparation

The Greeting

The earth has yielded its increase;
God, our God, has blessed us.
May God continue to bless us;
Let all the ends of the earth revere him.

Silence is kept

All Rejoice in the Lord always
and again I say, "Rejoice!"

Blessed are you, Lord God, King of the Universe.
All **Your word calls forth the light of the dawn.**

Your wisdom creates both day and night
All **You determine the cycles of time.**

You arrange the succession of seasons
All **And establish the stars in their heavenly courses.**

Living and eternal God, rule over us always.
All **Blessed be the Lord, whose Word is the light of the world**

God of our days and years,
We set this time apart for you.
Form us in the likeness of Christ
So that our lives may glorify you. **Amen.**

We come to God the creator
To ask for his forgiveness for our failure
In stewarding his mighty and wonderful creation.

We confess to you
Our lack of care for the world you have given us
Lord, have mercy: **Lord, have mercy.**

We confess to you
Our selfishness in not
Sharing the earth's bounty fairly
Christ, have mercy: **Christ, have mercy.**

We confess to you
Our failure to protect resources for others.
Lord, have mercy: **Lord, have mercy.**

May the God of all mercies
Cleanse us from our sins,
And restore us in his image
To the praise and glory of his name,
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Praise Response from Psalm 66

Let the praises of God ring out.

All He is the source of our life.

Let all creation rejoice in God.

All Sing the glory of his name.

Come and see the work of God

All How wonderful he is to all people.

He turned the sea into dry land

All So his people went through the water on foot

There we rejoiced in him

All In his might he rules for ever.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

All Let the praises of God ring out

He is the source of our life.

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 for ever. **Amen.**

First Reading. Psalm 65: 9-13

You visit the earth and water it,
you greatly enrich it;
the river of God is full of water;
you provide the people with grain,
for so you have prepared it.
You water its furrows abundantly,
settling its ridges,
softening it with showers,
and blessing its growth.
You crown the year with your bounty;
your wagon tracks overflow with richness.
The pastures of the wilderness overflow,
the hills gird themselves with joy,
the meadows clothe themselves with flocks,
the valleys deck themselves with grain,
they shout and sing together for joy.

This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God

Gospel reading **Matthew 9: 35-38**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

All **Glory to you, O Lord**

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Reflection by Janice

When I realised that I would be doing the reflection for this service, arguably the second most popular service of the year, I decided to do a straw poll amongst friends and family asking what they understood by the word "Harvest".

Responses included "To gather in"; "bounty"; "collect and share"; "Festival"; "something about the gathering in of the fruits of your labour" and "collecting human organs" ... yes, I was surprised by that one as well but more about that later.

This year, with the food shortages experienced in the early days of lockdown, we were reminded how fragile the supply chain can be. Some people became aware, maybe for the first time, of the vital role our farmers play in feeding us. With a marked increase in home cooking, baking and the growing fruit and vegetables for the first time there seems to be an increased knowledge and appreciation of the food we eat and where it has come from.

To me, Harvest Festivals have always been celebrations and a reminder for us to be grateful to the Creator God and all those who work so hard to enable us to have food on the table. However, we also need to remind ourselves of those who suffer from poverty and malnutrition (and there are those who live far closer to our comfortable homes than you may imagine) and those whose lives are a daily challenge to survive.

There seems no end to the indignities suffered by some and, going back to the beginning of this reflection, the barbaric act of forced organ harvesting. Among those killed, it has been alleged, are members of religious minorities. This isn't

the time to go into any further detail but I am grateful to the individual who supplied that unexpected definition of Harvest and raising my awareness. Sometimes we need to be shocked into realising just what dire circumstances exist in the world and maybe pulling ourselves out of a rose tinted nostalgia. So ... going back to another friend's definition of Harvest; what do we, as individuals, do about our own "... gathering in of the fruits of your labour" and I don't mean in a physical sense. We need the physical bread to nourish our bodies but we can't create a harvest in our spiritual lives without getting back to the basics. Jesus declared "I am the bread of life ...".

The Fruits of the Spirit set out in Paul's letter to the Galatians - love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control need cultivating, just like crops in the fields. If not they will wither and die and at a time when the world is crying out for those fruits of the Spirit let's do everything we can to make sure that when we gather in the fruits of our labour we have a bumper Harvest!

May we all be blessed with an awareness and knowledge of the living Lord Jesus Christ through his Holy Spirit. Amen

Affirmation of faith

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,
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.**

A prayer for the Corona Virus situation

Merciful God, we pray for the many people who have contracted Corona Virus in many parts of the world. Bring comfort to those who are fearful and uncertain as the virus spreads again, to any whose loved ones are being treated in hospital and all who are grieving those who have died. We also pray for governments and medical advisors who are devising strategies to contain and deal with the virus, and all in the health service who may be putting their own lives at risk to care for patients.

(A moment of quiet)

Lord in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer.

Lord of the harvest, we thank you for your amazing provision that we enjoy. We pray for farming families and communities as they work to feed the nation in the face of challenges posed by climate change. We also pray for fishing communities adapting to massive change, for an end to the rivalry within the European Community and that sustainable policies will be agreed to sustain fish stocks and the viability of the fishing industry.

We pray for those who go hungry and for the food banks and relief agencies who endeavour to provide them with food.

(A moment of quiet)

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Loving God, we hold the needs of our sisters and brothers as dearly as our own needs. Help us to love you with all our hearts and with all our souls and with all our minds and to love our neighbours as ourselves. With these commandments before us we offer our thanksgivings and our petitions on behalf of the church in our benefice and throughout the world. We pray for our benefice ministry team as they work to keep us together as a worshipping community in this time of restrictions. We pray for the worldwide church, that it will continue to be a steadfast place of quiet encouragement in your name to all who are in any of kind need.

(A moment of quiet)

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Creator God, we pray for our planet Earth and all who live on it. May the peoples of the world enjoy justice so they can equally share in your bounteous provision. Where there is corruption, war and inequality, may those who seek power through violence and terror, change and pursue all that makes for peace. We pray for migrants seeking a safe haven, leaving their families and friends in desperately dangerous situations.

(A moment of quiet)

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Loving God, we thank you for the lovely environment in which we live. We pray for all the people in our villages. May we as your Church demonstrate your love, grace and peace. We pray for the pupils, teachers and staff of our village schools as they educate the children in difficult circumstances. We pray for our shopkeepers and all who serve the community.

(A moment of quiet)

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

God of healing, we pray for all who bear the burdens of pain, anxiety and depression. We pray that they may have an awareness of your presence and an understanding that you are bearing those burdens with them. We pray for those whose treatment has been delayed due to the current pandemic and that they will receive treatment soon. May we be a source of comfort to them in your name.

(A moment of quiet)

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Merciful God, your Son Jesus was moved to tears at the grave of Lazarus his friend. Look with compassion on those bereaved and grieving at the loss of loved ones. Give to them comfort in your abiding love and compassion. We especially pray today for the family and friends of June Waddington who passed away this last week.

In a moment of quiet let us each bring before God any known to us who are grieving at this time. (A moment of quiet)

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

In this time of fear and uncertainty let us remember a poem by Minnie Louise Haskins that was handed by the 13 year old Princess Elizabeth in 1939 to her father at the outbreak of World War Two. It reads: ***I said to the man at the gate of the future 'Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown.' And he replied, 'Go out into the darkness, and put your hand in the hand of God. That shall be to you better than a light, and safer than a known way.'*** May we Lord have the same, simple trust in you.

Merciful father: accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

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.**

Closing prayer

**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**

Blessing

**May God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ
Who is the source of all goodness and growth,
Pour his blessings 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 Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit
be with us all, today and always. Amen.**

Sending Out

All Go in peace to love and serve the Lord:
in the name of Christ. Amen.