



## Sunday 18th October - HARVEST CELEBRATION

*compiled by Rev Liz Singleton, Angela Banfield & Vicki Brown, with artwork from Hatherleigh Sunday Club*

*This service has been prepared for you to use at home. We pray that as we join together, wherever we are, we will be united through words, music and images as we celebrate our blessings at harvest time.*

May the nations praise you, O God.  
Yes, may all the nations praise you.  
Then the earth will yield its harvests,  
And God, our God, will richly bless us.

*Psalm 67: 5 – 6*



### **Hymn: Come, ye thankful people, come** (StF 123 / H&P 355)

1] 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!

2] 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;  
Lord of harvest, grant that we  
Wholesome grain and pure may be.

3] For the Lord or God shall come,  
And shall take his harvest home;  
From his field shall in that day  
All offences purge away;  
Give his angels charge at last  
In the fire the tares to cast,  
But the fruitful ears to store  
In his garner evermore.

4] Even so, Lord, quickly come;  
Bring thy final harvest home;  
Gather thou thy people in,  
Free from sorrow, free from sin,  
There for ever purified,  
In thy garner to abide:  
Come, with all thine angels come,  
Raise the glorious harvest-home!

*Henry Alford ( 1810 -71)*

### **Prayer of thanksgiving**

Creator God, at whose word the world was formed, however we understand creation to have begun, and however long this took; we see around us a world of infinite beauty, and amazing complexity that takes our breath away and fills us with joy. We gather together in mind and spirit to thank you, and to worship you. Creator and sustainer of our world and all within it.

Beautiful God, you are present in each sunset and heard in each bird's song.

All the colours of the rainbow are found in you, all the depths of the oceans reveal your vast and endless power and mercy. Each ear of corn pledges your promise to sustain us all.

Amazing God, you looked at everything you made and saw it was good, yet you are prepared to welcome those who have misused and spoilt your creation. You forgive our greed and unwillingness to share what is not ours to hoard. You see your creation battered and abused, yet lovingly re-create new and wonderful things as you lovingly, re-create us through your Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus.

Forgiving and merciful God, we see your beauty and love perfectly revealed in Jesus. Forgive us and restore us to newness of life, through him who died to save our world. In Jesus's name we pray. Amen



**Song: Autumn Days (StF 121)**

1] Autumn days when the grass is jewelled,  
and the silk inside a chestnut shell,  
jet planes meeting in the air to get refuelled,  
all these things I love so well,

*So I mustn't forget.....*

*No, I mustn't forget*

*To say a great big thank-you,*

*I mustn't forget.*

2] Clouds that look like familiar faces,  
And a winter's moon with frosted rings,  
Smell of bacon as I fasten up my laces,  
And the song the milkman sings.

*So I mustn't forget.....*

3] Whipped-up spray that is rainbow-scattered,  
and a swallow curving in the sky,  
shoes so comfy though they're worn-out and they're  
battered,

and the taste of apple pie.

*So I mustn't forget.....*

4] Scent of gardens when the rain's been falling,  
And a minnow darting down a stream,  
picked-up engine that's been stuttering and stalling,  
and a win for my home team.

*So I mustn't forget.....*

*Estelle White (b.1925)*

**Reading: John 6: 1 - 13 Jesus Feeds Five Thousand**

..... Jesus crossed over to the far side of the Sea of Galilee, also known as the Sea of Tiberias. A huge crowd kept following him wherever he went, because they saw his miraculous signs as he healed the sick. Then Jesus climbed a hill and sat down with his disciples around him. (It was nearly time for the Jewish Passover celebration.) Jesus soon saw a huge crowd of people coming to look for him. Turning to Philip, he asked, "Where can we buy bread to feed all these people?" He was testing Philip, for he already knew what he was going to do.

Philip replied, "Even if we worked for months, we wouldn't have enough money to feed them!"

Then Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up. "There's a young boy here with five barley loaves and two fish. But what good is that with this huge crowd?"

"Tell everyone to sit down," Jesus said. So they all sat down on the grassy slopes. (The men alone numbered about 5,000.) Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks to God, and distributed them to the people. Afterward he did the same with the fish. And they all ate as much as they wanted. After everyone was full, Jesus told his disciples, "Now gather the leftovers, so that nothing is wasted." So they picked up the pieces and filled twelve baskets with scraps left by the people who had eaten from the five barley loaves.



**Poem: 'The more you give' by Helen Steiner Rice**

*The more you give  
The more you get  
The more you laugh  
The less you fret  
The more you do unselfishly  
The more you live abundantly  
The more of everything you share  
The more you'll always have to spare  
The more you love  
The more you'll find  
That life is good  
And friends are kind  
For only what we give away  
Enriches us from day to day*



**Hymn: We plough the fields and scatter** (StF130 / H&P 352)

1] 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*

2] 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:  
*All good gifts around us  
Are sent from heaven above;  
Then thank the Lord, O thank the Lord,  
For all his love*

3] We thank thee then, O Father,  
For all things bright and good:  
The seed-time and the harvest,  
Our life, our health, our food.  
Accept the gifts we offer  
For all thy love imparts,  
And, what thou most desirest,  
Our humble, thankful hearts:

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

*M Claudius (1740-1815)*

### **Reflection**

A man was hiking in a remote part of the world and on the path he noticed a stone – it was an unusual shape and had beautiful striations running through it. The sort of stone you pick up and put in your pocket – and that’s exactly what he did. He walked on, and as the sun began to sink lower in the sky he deviated off the main path and headed for a small village where, at best, he hoped to find a bed for the night, at worst, a place to pitch his tent and maybe be offered some food.

Well, he realised quite quickly that this village wasn’t the friendliest of places. Everyone looked on him with suspicion, no-one welcomed him or even offered him a drink. He began to think this had been a bad mistake. Eventually he managed to strike up a conversation with one of the locals and learned that this had been a bad year for the village. Their crops had failed, and the people were starving. No-one was willing to share what little they had for fear of losing everything and the atmosphere in this little community had become very tense. Being a Christian the man prayed, asking God if there was any way he could help these people. Then he had an idea.

He called the villagers together in the village square and told them the story of Jesus feeding the 5000. He told them how generous God is and how he loves all people. Then he said, “I’m going to feed you by making some stone soup! You’ll love it! It’s delicious!” He took the stone out of his pocket and the villagers laughed. “That’s the most ridiculous thing we’ve ever heard!” they scoffed.

“Just trust me,” replied the man. “Now, I need a cooking pot.” One of the women quickly volunteered her pot. “And I’ll need about two buckets of water.” One of the men, still shaking his head in bemusement, brought the water.

The stone was placed in the pot with the water and placed over a fire. The villagers were getting curious now and gathered around to see what happened. The man began to lick his lips. “You know, stone soup tastes even better with some carrots.” “I’ve got six carrots,” one of the villagers exclaimed, and rushed off to fetch them. The carrots were cut up and placed in the pot. “Mmmm,” said the man, “this smells good, but I think some potatoes would add more flavour.” From pockets and other hiding places about a dozen potatoes were produced and quickly added to the soup. Some people left the group, returning with pieces of celery, onions, and even chunks of meat, all of which were placed in the pot.

An hour later the whole community was gathered around the soup pot, eating together. They had fed each other by sharing what they had, no-one had gone short, everyone had sufficient to meet their needs. Then they remembered the man’s story about Jesus and how he had told them about the God who loves all people and who, in his generosity, has supplied enough for our needs, and reminds us to share what we have so that no-one ever needs to be starved of life’s essentials.



## Prayers

*He brought me to his banqueting house and his banner over me is love. (Song of Solomon 2 v 4)*

Bountiful God, you provide resources for all,  
yet land goes untilled, crops unharvested because of warfare.  
Bring your peace to troubled lands so that swords become ploughshares  
and wastelands become fruitful once more.

**Bring them to your banqueting house underneath your banner of love.**

Lord, where resources are misused, people exploited by greed and selfishness,  
hear the cries of the oppressed.  
May your Holy Spirit move the consciences of those in power,  
inspiring them to work for a fairer and sustainable way to use what you have given.

**Bring them to your banqueting house underneath your banner of love.**

Lord, we hold before you the farmers, who work long and often difficult hours.  
We pray that you will provide for their needs, as through their vocation  
they provide for so many other people.

**Bring them to your banqueting house underneath your banner of love.**

Lord, we pray for those we know who especially need your strength at this time.  
Those who are struggling with ill health, physically or mentally.  
Those who are grieving the loss of a loved one.  
May they be nourished by your grace and peace.

**Bring them to your banqueting house underneath your banner of love.**

Looking forward to that day when Jesus calls us all to his eternal banquet in glory,  
the ultimate harvest of souls safely gathered in. Amen



**Poem: 'When we see harvest' by Susan Y Nikitenko**

*A harvest of apples, a harvest of corn;  
A harvest of plenty, an autumn adorned.  
With bright coloured leaves, a full festive blend;  
A wonderful time for families and friends.  
A harvest of marrows, a harvest of grain;  
A harvest of bounty, and cool autumn rains.  
A big harvest moon – way up in the sky;  
A harvest of blessing that God has supplied.  
Be grateful, be humble, give thanks to the Lord;  
He has showered his blessing here in our world.  
But have we been faithful, and have we been true?  
Have we put God first in all that we do?*

*A harvest that God sees is not food or crop;  
Not marrows, or grain, not apples that drop.  
God sees the harvest of souls needing him;  
A harvest of people being saved from their sin.  
A harvest of souls and a harvest of love;  
A harvest of mercy from our Father above.  
When we see the harvest, let's see through God's eyes;  
And share with all people the life he supplies.*

**Hymn: Yes, God is good** (H&P 363)

1] Yes, God is good – in earth and sky,  
From ocean-depths and spreading wood,  
Ten thousand voices seem to cry:  
'God made us all, and God is good'.

2] The sun that keeps his trackless way  
And downward pours his golden flood,  
Night's sparkling hosts, all seem to say  
In accents clear that God is good.

3] The merry birds prolong the strain,  
Their song with every spring renewed;  
And balmy air and falling rain,  
Each softly whispers: 'God is good'.

4] We hear it in the rushing breeze;  
The hills that have for ages stood,  
The echoing sky and roaring seas,  
All swell the chorus: 'God is good'.

5] For all thy gifts we bless thee, Lord,  
But chiefly for our heavenly food,  
Thy pardoning grace, thy quickening word,  
These prompt our song, that God is good.

*John Hampden Gurney (1802-62)*

**Blessing**

Lord of the harvest who has given us so much;  
help us to be generous like you,  
that the world may know your goodness and blessing.  
And may the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
remain on us, and be made known through us,  
now and always. Amen

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Youtube - a recording of this week's service is at: <https://youtu.be/jBPNfrmmAL0>