

Worship at Home—Sunday 26 September 2021

Harvest Thanksgiving



Call to Worship

Lord of the Harvest
We offer you our worship
We adore you and thank you
For the beauty and the bounty
of the world which you have made.
Lord of the Harvest,
accept our offering of praise.

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, your greatness is all around us.
You are the one who makes the sunshine and the rain fall
It is you who makes the plants grow and
You who gives all creatures life.

Help us to notice all your good gifts
The birds singing in the morning,
The perfume of flowers,
The changing colours of leaves,

The smell of fresh bread baked from harvested grain,
The harvest moon
Our warm breath with the air is cool.

Every time we eat a meal
Remind us of your presence
Every time we drink, remind us of your blessings.
Every time we see a need, give us a sense of sharing.
And when we enjoy your creation
Fill us with thanks and praise
So that when we gather during this harvest season
We shall know that you have sustained us
And remember that we have to, live and to give comes from you.

Help us to be good stewards of this beautiful earth
We give thanks today for all who sow,
nurture and reap, and cultivate crops
All who transport and sell produce
All who prepare and cook
To ensure that we have fresh food to nourish us

On this Harvest Sunday
Let our hearts be glad that you show us the path of life
May the seeds of hopefulness
Be planted in our hearts today
May the fruits of goodness
Blossom and grow within our whole community
For we ask it in Jesus Name and we ask you to hear us as we share in his Prayer:

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors.
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

The Scriptures read by Sandy Harper

Isaiah 55 v1-3; 8-11; and Philippians 4: 1, 4-9

Isaiah 55—Invitation to the Thirsty

V 1-3

“Come, all you who are thirsty,
come to the waters;
and you who have no money,
come, buy and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk

without money and without cost.
Why spend money on what is not bread,
and your labour on what does not satisfy?
Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good,
and you will delight in the richest of fare.
Give ear and come to me;
listen, that you may live.
I will make an everlasting covenant with you,
my faithful love promised to David.

V 8-11

For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways my ways,"
declares the LORD.
"As the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts.
As the rain and the snow
come down from heaven,
and do not return to it
without watering the earth
and making it bud and flourish,
so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater,
so is my word that goes out from my mouth:
It will not return to me empty,
but will accomplish what I desire
and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

Philippians 4: 1—Closing Appeal for Steadfastness and Unity

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends!

Philippians 4: 4-9—Final Exhortations

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

Sermon

The Therapy of Thanks

This Harvest Thanksgiving provides a special opportunity for us to look at the nature of Thanksgiving. We can approach thankfulness at different levels. Sometimes our thanks is a matter of politeness for a small kindness or a favour done that does not need to reflect any deep emotion or feeling. There are other times when we are emotionally and humbly compelled to say thank you for some great service, such as, for example when a doctor's skill has saved a life.

On Radio 4 there is a show called Saturday Live on which people say thank you on the radio to someone who helped them through a difficult situation, but never got the chance to say thank you and it has been nagging at them ever since. The stories are usually fascinating dilemmas but the callers all make clear one thing: We like to be able to thank people.

There may be occasions when we feel awkward about saying thank you. Like when we get that gift we didn't want. My dad once gave my mum a set of bathroom scales! That didn't go down too well. A chap once asked, "How do I say thank you to my mother-in-law for the jumper I don't like". His pal responded, "Maybe you are really saying that you won't wear it because you don't really like your mother-in-law." "Oh, is that obvious he replied?"

I have to say thank you this week because there was an envelope left in my office with the handwritten words, "private and confidential." My heart sank. When you are in my job that can often mean either that someone is in trouble, or that someone has quit or is upset about something or maybe there is a situation. Anyway, this particular envelope was from a good friend who just wanted to share with me some good jokes about Church announcements gone wrong and didn't want people to know they came from him. SO THANK YOU my friend!

If we read through scripture, we begin to understand that thankfulness is an attitude of the heart. We sometimes call it an attitude of gratitude. Thankfulness as a mood can take hold of us as a state of being, one that reflects a sense of joy, a feeling of happiness and wellbeing.

Thankfulness is a gift of the Spirit, a gift of grace. As Christians we are called to be thankful. In Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians, he says to the church, "Rejoice, always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks." (1 Thessalonians 5:) When Paul invites us to pray without ceasing, he does not mean asking God when to get up, what to have for lunch or how long to work. It encourages a state of mind in which words are not always essential. A lady was once asked if she prayed. She answered, "Always and never!" What she meant is that she was aware of the Divine presence of God with her all day long ... she did not just occasionally drag in pleas of prayer when the going was rough, or things didn't go her way. Thanksgiving is the fruit of being in relationship with our living, loving God.

That said, we can be thankful without always making direct reference to God too. An abundance of gratitude is something we may experience without always turning to God in words. Like when we admire a sunset or hold a little baby. Once a man was asked whether, or not, He believed in God. He answered, "I don't know but when something very good happens to me I need someone to whom I can give thanks." Just feeling and sharing and noticing this sense of thanksgiving, this spiritual elevation or sense of abundant thanks for what we have, somehow the presence of Divine love and blessing is present. The theologian Paul Tillich once said, "An unbeliever who is filled with thanks for his very being, has ceased to be a total unbeliever."

I understand that sometimes it can be hard to give thanks—it is not always easy to feel thankful in the face of illness or tragedy or when life gets painful or difficult. But sometimes people of faith can find something to be grateful for even during trouble or tragedy. Sometimes a mature believer will notice a special outpouring of God’s mercy, support, and love . . . people pray for them asking for a double portion of God’s help and strength in the midst of our deepest darkest hour of need.

Going back to those church announcements in the envelope: There was one which read, “Don’t let worry kill you, let the church help!”

Sometimes it is by coming through trials and tribulations that we grow to discover the real meaning of our faith. We look at Saint Paul’s words to the Philippians which Sandy read for us, and we wonder how he could possibly write such beautiful and positive words whilst himself languishing in a Roman Jail.

When we read through the Psalms which reflects every single human concern, betrayal, sin, fear, and yet, amidst all the needs and worries in the Psalms we find that interspersed with all the bad experiences of the Psalmist, the praise of God fills each and every page in the same verses as the misery of all people is drastically described.

Funnily enough I have noticed that this dreadful experience of Covid has made many of us feel more thankful for the little things. A walk outside, the chance to meet with friends or just worship and hear the organ in the church. Boy we are so grateful for things we used to just be able to take for granted. My son Gabe brought his lovely girlfriend to dinner on the same evening as Breanna brought her young male friend over to meet us . . . I got so excited I broke out the champagne, not just because young love was in the air, but because that was the first time, we had guests eating at our table for 18 months! I said a prayer of thanks—I maybe went over the top for these young folk who had only just met me, but I wasn’t going to let them eat without a prayer of thanks for this blessing of food and companionship.

This season of Harvest Thanksgiving also reminds us that in some ways, real thanksgiving is sacrificial too. In Psalm 50 we read, “Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving,” (Psalm 50:4) and at verse 23 we hear, “He who brings thanksgiving as a sacrifice honours me.” This is where the original meaning of our thanks shines through. Giving thanks is a sacrifice of praise. Because it shows our true appreciation. Since the earliest days of the Jewish faith there were not one, two but three Harvest Celebrations during the Spring Summer and Autumn. Behind people’s harvest thanksgiving people often gave a token of the first fruits of the harvest or of their income. Often a tithe or one tenth was set aside to be given to God to ensure that out of each one’s bounty of gifts, some would be shared with those more in need. Behind this sense of sacrificial giving comes the recognition and the conviction that everything we have is first and foremost a gift from God in the first place. When we do stop to think about it, our labours in the fields and on farms produce fruit, but it is the rain the sun and the gifts from God that make them grow. When we stop to think about it, we are not the owners of all great property or wealth . . . we are stewards.

Now more than ever we are being made aware that as stewards who are blessed with roofs over our heads and enough to eat, there are others both locally and across the world who need food, who need clothes and who need some funds. Most certainly there are nations who need our vaccines and commitment to the climate. And of course, there are refugees from Syria and Afghanistan coming to Scotland who have lost everything and need our welcome. Harvest is such an important time to share out our bounty.

That is why Currie Kirk is such a missional church because we knit for refugees, we donate food for the Community Food Project, we donate to the ministries of the Church and we offer them to God, asking for God to bless our gifts so that they may bear fruit, not just for our community but for this loving entity we know as the Kingdom of God.

So, I will end with another few church announcement bloopers that were printed or announced in church bulletins.

One says, "Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands."

Another, "the ladies of the Church have cast of clothing of every kind. They may be seen in the basement on Friday afternoon."

And perhaps the least appropriate or most apt for this National Giving week was about a church stewardship campaign slogan created by the new Assistant minister which read, "I Upped my pledge, so—
—Up yours!"

All in fun. Let us faithfully show our thanks to God for the gifts we have, for the people around us, for the chance to be together and share fellowship once again, and the opportunity to give of what we have for others. Thanks be to God. Amen.

Prayer of Intercession

Heavenly Father, thank you for Your wonderful creation and the many blessings you give us.

You supply our every need, and more.

And yet, because of our neglect, greed, consumerism

We are destroying forests, killing wild animals

Harming the creatures of the sea with pollution

And creating a harmful climate for the human race

Forgive us when our desire for power or economic comfort makes us forget

To be mindful that all that is here is by Your will and not ours

Help us to revere this world and to fight for its climate and wellbeing

Help us and teach us to use resources wisely,

to find solutions and initiatives and scientific answers

to protect this planet, to care for the world you have

Blessed us to live in. Teach us to preserve its beauty and life,

not only for our generation, but for generations to come

We turn our thoughts to the needs of others.

We think of the many children living in homes who have no one special to really care

For those coming from broken homes

We think of children who are sick
We think of refugees separated from loved ones
For families just yearning for a safe place to call home.
We remember the lonely, the elderly and the bereaved.
Give them a fresh understanding of Your love for them
And lighten their heavy hearts with your comfort and peace

Lord God we pray for ourselves
That your Holy Spirit will fill our hearts, enabling us to be more thoughtful
And kind to others
That you will fill us with your love and goodness so that others can see you in our lives and will want to know you in the personal way that you know us.

We pray these things, grateful that you can know and hear our prayers even before they are spoken
Amen.

Communion

The Gracious Invitation

'Come to me'

said Jesus

'if you are tired from carrying heavy burdens and I will give you rest.

Take the yoke I give you.

Put it on your shoulders and learn from me.

I am gentle and humble, and you will find rest. This yoke is easy to bear, and this burden is light.'

He also said:

'I am the bread that gives life! No one who comes to me will ever be hungry. No one who has faith in me will ever be thirsty.... I shall not turn any one away.'

'I am the true vine and you are the branches.

If you stay joined to me, and I stay joined to you, then you will produced lots of fruit.'

So Come!

Not because I invite you

but because God invites all of us.

It is God's will that in the mysteries of this Holy Sacrament, our lives may be transformed and given back to us made whole, infused with God's spirit, that we might go from here to love and serve in God's name.

We Remember why we do this

What we do here,

we do in imitation of what Christ first did.

To his followers in every age,

Christ gave an example and command

rooted in the experience
he shared with his disciples.
On the night he was betrayed,
and as he and his disciples were sitting at a meal,
Jesus took some bread and broke it.
He gave it to his disciples saying:

***'This is my body. It is broken for you.
Do this to remember me.'***

Later, after they had eaten, he took a cup of wine and said,

***This cup is the new relationship with God made possible because of my death.
Drink from it all of you, to remember me.'***

So now we do as Jesus did.

We take this bread and wine,
the produce of the earth and fruit of human labour.
In these, Christ has promised to be present:
through these, Christ can make us whole

Prayer of thanksgiving and consecration

The lord be with you ***and also with you***
Lift up your hearts ***We lift them up to God***
Let us give thanks to God.
It is right to give God thanks and praise

Let us pray

It is indeed right, for you made us, O God
and before us, you made the world we inhabit;
all that is spectacular,
all that is plain have their origin in you;
all that is lovely, and all who are loving
point to you as their fulfilment.

And grateful as we are for the world we know
and the universe beyond our knowing,
we particularly praise you,
whom eternity cannot contain,
for coming to earth and entering time in Jesus.

For his life which informs our living,
for his compassion which changes our hearts,
for his clear speaking which contradicts our harmless generalities,

for his disturbing presence,
his innocent suffering,
his dying breathing forgiveness,
his rising to life breathing peace,
we praise you and worship him.

Therefore we gladly join our voices to the song of the church on earth and in heaven:

***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***

and now, lest we believe that our praise alone fulfils your purpose, we fall silent and remember him who came because words weren't enough.

(silence)

Generous God, send now your Holy Spirit to settle on this bread and wine and fill them with the fullness of Christ and let that same spirit rest on us, filling us with the fullness of Christ's love that we might share with others what we receive here.

Therefore in fellowship with your whole church in heaven and on earth we offer ourselves to you all that we are and have and ask you to strengthen us that, being fed at your Table, we may become better servants of Christ Jesus,

The taking of the bread and the wine

**Among friends, gathered round a table,
Jesus took bread, and broke it, and said,**

***'this is my body—broken for you.
Take it and eat it'***

Later he took a cup of wine and said,

***'this is the new relationship with God made possible because of my death.
Drink from it all of you'***

Take this bread, the bread of life and eat it.
Take this wine, the true vine and drink it.
Remember Christ Jesus and be thankful.

***Lamb of God have mercy upon on us
lamb of God have mercy upon on us
Jesus, saviour of the world; give us your peace.***

The sharing of the bread and wine

This is the Bread of life
This is the True vine

May the peace of Christ be with you

And also with you

Let us pray

In gratitude, in deep gratitude for this time, this meal, these people, we give ourselves to you.

Take us out to live as people strengthened for your service because we have shared the living bread.

Ask much of us, expect much from us, enable much by us, encourage many through us.

So, God, may we live to your glory,
both as inhabitants of earth and citizens of the commonwealth of heaven.

Amen.

Blessing

The words of this blessing from Guatemala (hymn CH4 798)

The peace of the earth be with you
The peace of the heavens too;
The peace of the rivers be with you,
The peace of the oceans too.
Deep peace falling over you;
God's peace growing in you.

Kirk Contacts

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Website: [//www.curriekirk.org/](http://www.curriekirk.org/) or [//www.facebook.com/CurrieKirk/](https://www.facebook.com/CurrieKirk/)

All sermons from Currie Kirk can be found on the Kirk's website and on YouTube—search Currie Kirk

NO BOOKING REQUIRED FOR SUNDAY WORSHIP

LOOKING FORWARD TO WELCOMING YOU ON SUNDAY

Current regulations require:

- ◆ face masks must still be worn.
- ◆ worship still requires that we stick to the one-metre social distance rule.
- ◆ There will be sanitizing stations.

HARVEST THANKSGIVING APPEAL

This year we are collecting non-perishable items for the local Food Bank donations can be handed into the Kirk Office—Tuesday—Thursday 10—12.30 pm
Please call ahead to let Nina know—and ... remember your mask!!

CHURCH CLEANING ROTA

Are you able to help, once more, with the cleaning of the Kirk?

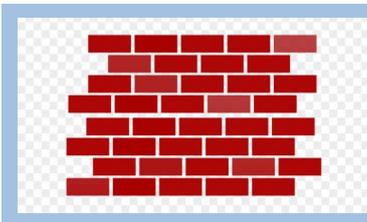
At present—with no teas/coffees being served it is only the Church that requires to be cleaned, along with the entrance hall and toilets.

Can you spare an hour once a week, if so, please contact Nina.

National Giving Weekend—25—26 September

Over the weekend of 25th and 26th September we are running events to help rebuild Currie Kirk in the community. This is part of the Church of Scotland National Giving Day.

Saturday morning will be a fun event for families with the magician Tricky Ricky then in the afternoon we'll be serving tea and cakes whilst being entertained by the Currie Community Choir and our very own comedian Ronnie Moyes. There will also be a few stalls, raffle and a hamper to be won.



Currie Kirk Buy a Brick Appeal
Buy a brick for £10 in your name
or in memory of someone.

On Sunday afternoon the Kirk will be open to look round or enjoy a tour with Louise or Hamish. There will also be a treasure hunt for the children. All events are free but due to Covid restrictions tickets need to be booked in advance through Nina in the Kirk office. Throughout the weekend we are offering the opportunity to buy a brick (or part of a brick) for £10 in your name or in memory of someone.

Simple ways to donate:

Donate by Cash or Cheque (payable to Currie Kirk – write National Giving Day on envelope)

Donate at the events on 25 and 26 September – Buy a Brick at £10 in your name or in memory of someone

Donate by Bank Transfer for which the details are:

Account Name	Currie Kirk
Sort Code	80 – 06 – 20
Account Number	00336407

We're looking forward to a dry and sunny weekend and being able to meet again in person.

If you want any further information, please contact Nina at the office or Fiona Pigott on 466 1459.