

'Gardens of Life'. USPG Harvest 2021

Script adaptable for All Age Sermon or Primary School Assembly

Gospel reading: Matthew 6: 25 – 33

**Songs: Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.
The Harvest Samba.**

Slide 1 – Opening Slide



Slide 2. Title slide.



'Strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well' – from Matthew 6: 33.

Introduce yourself and your relationship to USPG – if appropriate.

USPG, United Society Partners in the Gospel, is an Anglican Mission agency which supports churches around the world as they try to build the 'Kingdom of God' as Jesus has instructed us.

This year for Harvest, USPG is helping us to focus our prayers and giving on 'Gardens of Life' through the work of the Anglican Church in Zimbabwe.

Slide 3. Map of Africa showing location of Zimbabwe.



I wonder if anyone knows where Zimbabwe is? RESPONSES.

Zimbabwe is a landlocked country in south east Africa – can you see it on the map?

And how many people do you think live there? RESPONSES.

It is home to over 15 million people - that's about a quarter of the number of people who live in Britain.

And how many languages do you think are spoken there? RESPONSES

There are 16 official languages, but there are probably a lot more languages used there as well. How many languages can you speak? RESPONSES

Slide 4.

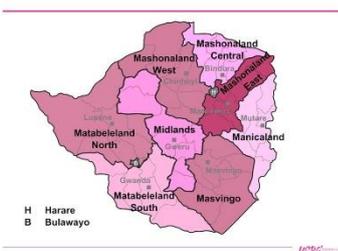


USPG's has been a partner of The Anglican Church in Zimbabwe for a very long time. The first missionaries arrived near there in 1861, and the church has grown and developed a lot since then. USPG's relationship with the Anglican Church in Zimbabwe is deep and well cultivated – a bit like the roots of the produce in the Gardens of Life that we will

be thinking about today!

The picture shows some people from the church worshipping, just like you are now. They are singing. What is your favourite part of worship? RESPONSES

Slide 5. Map of Zimbabwe.



The Anglican Church in Zimbabwe today seeks to do what Jesus commanded: 'to strive for the Kingdom of God and his righteousness'. That means responding to people's needs, in the name of Jesus. At the moment Zimbabwe is facing a lot of problems because there is not enough food to go around. This is made worse because of the effects of climate change and the Covid-19 pandemic. The combination of all

these things has left people struggling to put food on the table and the Church, in the name of Jesus, is responding.

Slide 6.



Some of the people who are most affected by this are people in the community who are living with HIV and Aids. While Zimbabwe is on the way to reducing HIV and AIDS, many people who live with HIV still face stigma, or prejudice. That's a horrible thing and is not fair. And so, to support local people, the Anglican Church of Zimbabwe trains its leaders on issues of HIV and has created 'wellness groups' to provide a support network for people living with HIV and AIDS.

Slide 7.



For people living with HIV and AIDS eating well is really important for keeping healthy. So as well as support groups, the Anglican Church also offers access to food gardens – 'Gardens of Life'. These improve nutrition and also help with developing sustainable livelihoods. 848 people living with HIV are now part of the these really helpful groups, and many of their lives have been transformed.

Slide 8.



Here is one of the 'Gardens of Life' green houses. Here the group members are learning how to overcome the effects of climate change. They learn organic planting methods, how to keep the soil fertile, how to produce healthier crops, even on small pieces of land. The programme is called 'Farming God's way'.

What do you think would be important thing to remember in 'Farming God's way'?
RESPONSES.

Slide 9.



After receiving training in these centres, members go on to put all that they have learned into practice in their homes. Here you can see a group of women in one of the 'Gardens of Life' planting out very small plants which they have nurtured in pots....

Slide 10.



Which they will care for and water regularly.....

Slide 11.



So that in time they will have able to harvest them. They are then able to sell vegetables, tomatoes, herbs, and tree plants to their local communities and receive an income to support their families.

Slide 12



This is a sourplum. The tree – fruit, seed, leaves and roots are all used for food or medicinally.

Everything they plant is done as 'Farming in God's Way'. Trees and hedges are planted to protect crops against strong winds and storms. Trees produce edible fruits, some of which are used to prepare drinks and porridges

which help support healthy eating.

Trees are also given to members of the Gardens of Life to plant at home. Education is provided on reducing tree cutting and the use of coal for cooking, both of which contribute to global warming, along with involvement in waste management, and clean up campaigns organised across the community.

What things are your church/school community doing to protect the environment where you are living? RESPONSES.

Slide 13.



One participant in the programme, Hope, is 48 years old and a mother of four children. She tested positive for HIV five years ago which caused such a negative impact on her family income that some of her children who were in secondary school had to drop out of school.

This was a really difficult time, and at the time she thought that there was really no one who could help.

Slide 14.



So when the Church began the Wellness Programme and the 'Gardens of Life', Hope and others in her community were thrilled. They were helped to set up a nutrition garden where they were able to meet and support each other as they grew vegetables.

The income generating activities that she was taught in the garden enabled Hope to send her secondary aged children back to school. Her health has also improved with the extra healthy foods that she has grown. She now shares her story in her village and many of those who initially shunned her have joined the wellness groups.

Slide 15



And so this is how the Anglican Church in Zimbabwe is showing Jesus' words in action. This is 'seeking the Kingdom of God and his righteousness'. Restoring dignity, physical and mental health to the people who are part of the 'Gardens of Life' programme. They are then able to return to their communities and to share their stories of hope and healing through the wellness groups with others.

And at the same time they are addressing issues of climate change that communities in Zimbabwe are facing so badly.

Slide 16 The costings below

£35 WOULD PAY FOR TOOLS TO MAKE FENCING
 £60 WOULD PAY FOR ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT SUCH AS SHOVELS AND HOSEPIPES
 £140 WOULD PAY FOR GRAFTED TREES
 £350 WOULD PAY FOR SEEDS AND ORGANIC MANURE

We can be a part of this work by supporting the USPG Harvest appeal, 'Gardens of Life' this year. Would your school/church like to be a part of this? If you raised money together this is what it could do to help:

£35 would pay for tools to make fencing

£60 would pay for essential equipment such as shovels and hosepipes

£140 would pay for grafted trees

£350 would pay for seeds and organic manure

By partnering with the Anglican Church in Zimbabwe in this way, we are joining them in doing what Jesus told us to do: 'striving for the Kingdom of God and his righteousness'. Thank you.

Slide 17. The prayer below:

Lord of the harvest, thank you for all you have given us.
 Help us to share our abundance with those across the world this harvest-time,
 And work together to protect the most vulnerable and your creation,
 That all may share in the provision of your gracious harvest. Amen.

Lord of the harvest, thank you for all you have given us.
 Help us to share our abundance with those across the world this harvest-time,
 And work together to protect the most vulnerable and your creation,
 That all may share in the provision of your gracious harvest.

Amen.

Slide 18. Details of how to donate.

