



Sunday 4th October Harvest Sunday

PREPARATION

Welcome

Opening Acclamation (from Psalm 65)

Leader: The earth has yielded its harvest;
All: God, our God, has blessed us.
Leader: You visit the earth and water it;
All: you make it very plenteous.
Leader: You soften the ground with showers;
All: and bless the increase of it.
Leader: You crown the year with your goodness;
All: and your paths overflow with plenty.
Leader: The meadows are clothed with sheep;
**All: the valleys stand so thick with corn,
they shout for joy and sing.**
Leader: The earth has yielded its harvest;
All: God, our God, has blessed us.



Hymn **106 Come ye thankful people come**

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!

All the world is God's own field,
Fruits 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 –
Grant O harvest Lord, that we
wholesome grain and pure may be.

For the Lord our God shall come
and shall take His harvest home;
From his field shall purge away
All that doth offend, that day,
Give His angels charge at last
in the fire the tares to cast,
but the fruitful ears to store
in His garner evermore.

Even so, Lord, quickly come –
bring thy final harvest home!
gather thou thy people in
free from sorrow, free from sin,
there forever purified,

In thy garner to abide –
come, with all thine angels, come,
Raise the glorious harvest home!

Words by Henry Alford
Music by George Job Elvey

Opening activity ~ DIY SOS

Confession

Leader In a world of amazing harvest ...

All Merciful God, we confess to you that we enjoy the fruits of the harvest but we often forget that you have provided them for us.

Leader Lord, have mercy

All Lord, have mercy.

Leader In a world of hurts and hunger ...

All Merciful God, we confess to you that we belong to a people who are full and satisfied but often ignore the cry of the hungry.

Leader Lord, have mercy

All Lord, have mercy.

Leader In a world of hope ...

All Loving God, we confess to you our selfishness in not sharing the earth's resources fairly. We pray for new hope and strength for those who are suffering and for new life and growth out of barrenness.

Trusting in your never-ending love, we ask for your forgiveness, and the strength to lead a new life.

Assurance of pardon

Leader May God almighty have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and
Bring us to everlasting life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen.

Collect (Harvest)

Leader Creator God, you made the goodness of the land,
the riches of the sea and the rhythm of the seasons;
as we thank you for the harvest,
may we cherish and respect
this planet and its peoples,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

My harvest – Louise Morales – St Peter's

Hymn **153 For the fruits of his creation**

For the fruits of His creation,
thanks be to God!

For His gifts to every nation,
thanks be to God!

For the ploughing, sowing, reaping,
silent growth while we are sleeping;
future needs in earth's safe
keeping,
thanks be to God!

In the just reward of labour,
God's will is done;
in the help we give our neighbour,
God's will is done;

in our world-wide task of caring
for the hungry and despairing;
in the harvests we are sharing,
God's will is done.

For the harvests of the Spirit,
thanks be to God!

For the good we all inherit,
thanks be to God!

For the wonders that astound us,
for the truths that still confound us;
most of all, that love has found us,
thanks be to God!

Words by Fred Pratt Green
Music by Francis Jackson

Bible readings

Deuteronomy 24:19-22 – Mary Angus (St Peter's)

¹⁹When you are harvesting in your field and you overlook a sheaf, do not go back to get it. Leave it for the alien, the fatherless and the widow, so that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.

²⁰When you beat the olives from your trees, do not go over the branches a second time. Leave what remains for the alien, the fatherless and the widow. ²¹When you harvest the grapes in your vineyard, do not go over the vines again. Leave what remains for the alien, the fatherless and the widow. ²²Remember that you were slaves in Egypt. That is why I command you to do this.

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God

2 Corinthians 9:6-15 – Kirsty Angus (St Peter's)

⁶Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. ⁷Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

⁹As it is written: "He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures forever."

¹⁰Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also

supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. ¹¹You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. ¹²This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. ¹³Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. ¹⁴And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. ¹⁵Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God

Sermon Jenny Jones

Good morning, if you don't know me, my name is Jenny and I am one of the occasional preachers in the parish. It's wonderful to be able to be with you this morning to celebrate the festival of harvest, a time when we thank God for all that he has given us & when we bless others. We saw some wonderful examples earlier of people generously blessing others in the clips from DIY SOS, and we've seen many other examples of generosity during this pandemic, from people donating to the Coronavirus Support Fund to help others, to people volunteering to go shopping for other people who couldn't go out, to the opportunity we have today to give harvest gifts of food or donations to our local foodbanks.

So, why do we bless others? Why do we give, whether to this church or to other people or charities?

Is it because you think that's what you should be doing? Is it because you feel that you owe something to someone? Is it because it makes you feel good? Is it because want to make a difference to someone else's life?

My job is a Fundraising Officer for a charity called Music in Hospitals & Care. So, I write applications to funders (everyone from Children in Need, to big companies, to local family trusts) to tell them about our charity and to ask them to give money to our charity. So, this means that I spend a fair amount of time thinking about what motivates people to be generous. What pushes them to give, and how can I convince them to give their money to this charity?

A survey found that 96% of people give money because they feel a sense of duty to give back to society, 75% give because they are passionate about

a specific cause, and 61% give because of a single life-changing experience.

Maybe one of these reasons strikes a chord for you, but in the passage, we read earlier from 2 Corinthians, Paul calls us as Christians to be generous for a much greater reason.

Over the past few months, we've been exploring different characters from the early Church, and more recently we've been focusing upon Paul – looking at different events in his life. And this reading comes from one of his letters to the church of Corinth, one of the churches he had visited. In his letters, Paul talks about all kinds of topics, but today we're particularly looking at what he wrote about generosity. The passage explores what generosity is, what it looks like and why generosity is so important.

This passage begins by saying:

“Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each one of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”

And from this we can see two important features of generosity. Firstly, generosity is stated as the counterpart to giving sparingly, the two are opposed to one another. Paul doesn't say, “whoever sows £10 a month will reap generously”, or “whoever sows to 20 different charities will reap generously”. Instead, he evaluates our generosity based on whether we give sparingly or give freely. It is not about how much we give necessarily, but about how tightly we are gripping onto what we have – are we holding onto our money tightly so that we don't lose any, or willing to share it freely where we see it is needed, openhanded.

The second thing that we can see about what makes someone generous, is this direction that God loves a cheerful giver. Not in a put on a grin and bear it kind of way, but as people who are giving from a place of joy and actively want to give. We'll come onto what this might look like in a bit.

So, why should we be generous?

The first reason that Paul gives us is that God has provided for us so that we can be generous.

Have you ever been given something, and had absolutely no idea what it's for or how to use it? Or perhaps you've tried to use it only to discover you're using it for entirely the wrong purpose?

My favourite sport is orienteering, which is basically cross-country running with a map, and we did this quite a lot as a family growing up, competing in different events. And when I was in Primary school, my dad ran an orienteering club at the school. At one of the sessions, he was teaching the group about the controls and how you prove that you've gone to the right control. At big events, you use an electronic timing device, but for a small after-school club we were sticking to the traditional pin punches – where you had a crocodile shaped device, like a pair of tongs, with a pattern of small pins in one side – you would put your piece of paper into the device, and punch a set of holes into the paper and that would prove you had been to the right control. But anyway, Dad was explaining this to the group, and set up a relay game. So, he told them, just run up to the controls laid out, find the right one, punch the right control and run back again. Well one of the younger girls that was there, maybe in year 2 or 3, took my dad's instructions very literally, so she ran up to the controls, found the right one, took her fist, punched the control as hard as she could, and ran back. Which left my dad slightly speechless for a few minutes.

But that's kind of what it's like when we take the things that God has provided for us and aren't then generous with those things. When we cling onto it or use it simply to help ourselves, we are using it in the wrong way. God's generosity to us, should lead to our generosity to others around us.

The second reason that Paul gives us to be generous, is that giving our money, our time, our energy, our resources, is an act of faith in response to God's grace. Being generous is an act of trusting in God, it shows that we have faith in him. And we should be careful not to get confused here – we're not being generous now so that God will give us more in the future, which leads us towards the prosperity gospel. And we're also not being generous now in response to what God has given us in the past, gathering up all of these things that we have been given over the years, and then giving away a portion of it like a tax. Instead Paul calls us to trust in God's ability to meet our needs right now so that we can give to the needs of others.

I think this goes back to the idea of giving freely that we explored earlier. If we have faith in God to provide for our needs now, we have no reason to cling onto the good things he is giving us but can part with them freely in order to help someone else. This also shows us how we can be cheerful givers, because when we are sure in our faith of God, we aren't giving

reluctantly, full of worry or resentment, instead we are giving from a place of joy because we have seen the wonderful grace that God has shown us.

And the third reason that Paul gives us to be generous, is that our generosity will lead to thanksgiving, praise and glory to God.

Verse 12 of our passage said, “This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord’s people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.” And verse 13 says: “Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, others will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else”.

When we are generous, when we minister to other people, God uses that to reveal his glory to other people. People see the surpassing, overflowing grace that God has given to us, and through that they see God’s goodness – so they praise him and thank him.

So, God through his grace, provides for us in every way; so that because of our faith in his grace we can cheerfully and freely give and minister to others; so that God’s glory will be known, and he will be praised. So, this harvest, when we hear the calls to donate food or money, or bless those around us – let us not get lost in worrying about how much to give, how much to keep for ourselves, or what other people are giving; but let’s focus upon the grace that God shows to us each day and freely give from a place of faith and joy.

Hymn **Cornerstone**

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and
righteousness
I dare not trust the sweetest frame
But wholly trust in Jesus' name

*Christ alone, Cornerstone
Weak made strong in the Saviour's love
Through the storm He is Lord
Lord of all*

When darkness seems to hide His
face
I rest on His unchanging grace
In every high and stormy gale
My anchor holds within the veil

When he shall come with trumpet
sound
Oh may I then in Him be found
Dressed in His righteousness alone
Faultless stand before the throne

Words and music by Jonas Myrin,
Reuben Morgan & Eric Liliero

Harvest affirmation of faith

All By faith
I gaze up to the heavens
and know
within its vastness
that this is your creation
planned and effected within eternity

By faith
I pluck an ear of corn
and know
within its symmetry
lies the chemistry of life
the potential of creation within my hand

By faith
I listen for your voice
and know
the whisper that I hear
breathed a world into existence
yet listens to the prayer within my soul

By faith
I strive to do your will
and know
the door that I approach
may lead me to shadows
where my role is to become your light

By faith
I cling to your word
and know
the strength that I receive
has its source within the love
that is at the centre of all things



Prayers ~ Nicola Cadet de Fontenay

What vegetable does this flower belong to?

Answer: Onion

The onion has historically represented eternal life so we pray:
for those who are ill and their families: Eileen & Peter Bliss John Hunter
Catherine McCormack (Doreen McKinnon's daughter) Olive Park and Joy
Storkey

We also remember all those who are ill who are known to us. We pray for all
who care for them. Give skill and understanding to all who work for their
well-being.

Lord of all compassion:

hear our prayer.

We remember those who have died, Graham Daborn, Frances Daborn's
son, Tricia Wright and Alexander Howie. We entrust them to your eternal
love in the hope of resurrection to new life.

Lord of all peace:

hear our prayer.



What fruit does this flower belong to?

Strawberry

The strawberry can remind us of a heart and so
we pray:

for governments and aid agencies, and those
areas of the world where there is disaster,

drought and starvation.

By the grace of your Spirit, touch our hearts and the hearts of all who live
in comfortable plenty, and make us wise stewards of your gifts.

Lord of all justice:

hear our prayer.



What fruit which is eaten as a vegetable does this
flower belong to?

Courgette

The courgette being a fruit can remind us of the spread of the good news of the gospel and the gifts that can give:

We offer ourselves to your service,
asking that by the Spirit at work in us
others may receive a rich harvest of love and joy and peace.

Lord of all faithfulness:

hear our prayer.



What vegetable does this flower belong to?

Potato

The potato is a vegetable that gives us much sustenance so we are reminded of the providence of God:

God, the beginning and end of all things, in your providence and care you watch unceasingly over all creation;

We pray for all through whom we receive sustenance and life; for farmers and agricultural workers, for packers, distributors and company boards; as you have so ordered our life that we depend upon each other, enable us by your grace to seek the well-being of others before our own.

Lord of all life:

hear our prayer



What fruit does this flower belong to?

Orange

An orange can remind us of our world so we finish our prayers by saying to God:

In a year of such devastating difficulty we are still learning what we may be harvesting but we know you are a God of grace ever at work in your creation, so fulfil your wise and loving purpose in us and in all for whom we pray, that with them and in all that you have made, your glory may be revealed and the whole earth give praise to you, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us conclude our time of prayer with the prayer that Jesus taught us:

All 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

Notices (See Notes & News)

Hymn **732 We plough the fields and scatter**

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.*

He only is the maker
of all things near and far;
He paints the wayside flower,
He lights the evening star;

the wind and waves obey Him,
by Him the birds are fed;
much more to us, His children,
He gives our daily bread.

All good gifts . . .

We thank You 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 Your love imparts;
we come now, Lord, to give You
our humble, thankful hearts.

All good gifts . . .

Words by Matthias Claudius
Words tr. by Jane Montgomery Campbell
Words altered by Peter Horrobin
Words altered by Greg Leavers
Music by Jonathan Abraham Peter Schulz

The dismissal

Leader Bless to us, O 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.

All **Amen.**

May God who has made us, who loves us and who gives us
life bless and keep us, now and always.
Amen.

All

Worshipping ▶ Loving ▶ Sharing ▶ Growing

