

2nd October, 2022

The paper-version Service



To Begin: Find a Bible and a comfortable place. If safe, light a candle and read prayerfully through the service. If you have access to worship music, choose a song and listen to it as you begin or read, or even sing, the song from this Sunday's Service set out



below.

Opening Prayer: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Song:

O Lord my God, When I in awesome wonder
Consider all the worlds Thy Hands have made
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder
Thy power throughout the universe displayed

Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee
How great Thou art, How great Thou art
Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee
How great Thou art, How great Thou art

When through the woods, and forest glades I wander
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees
When I look down, from lofty mountain grandeur
And see the brook, and feel the gentle breeze

Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee ...

And when I think of God, His Son not sparing
Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in
That on the Cross, my burden gladly bearing
He bled and died to take away my sin

Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee ...

When Christ shall come, with shout of acclamation
And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart
Then I shall bow, in humble adoration
And then proclaim: "My God, how great Thou art!"

Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee
How great Thou art, How great Thou art
Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee
How great Thou art, How great Thou art

Sermon by Rev. Howard Wright: Harvest.

Read: Psalm 65.

This week we are stepping aside from our 1 John series to celebrate Harvest.

In this Psalm we are presented with the party in the presence of God to which we are invited. The party, the celebration and its accompanying joy, is because of God answering our prayers.

God answers our prayers.

God forgives us of our failures, releasing us from guilt and shame. He offers us salvation and makes access to him and the party possible. (:2) *‘when we were overwhelmed by sins, you forgave our transgressions.’* He does this for us through Jesus, who pays the price, trading his life for ours

God chooses us. *‘Blessed are those you chose’* (:4). He hand-picks all of us! Chosen to live near to God, and not just near but he lives with us, in us! The Spirit of God in here. Zion (:1) is here! *19 Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 20 you were bought at a price.* 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

And, God supplies all our needs. Those who come enjoy his provisions and are *‘filled with good things.’* (:4). This Harvest we celebrate the provision of God.

In response to God’s answer we bring our sacrifice – fulfilling our vows (:1)

There were ‘rules’ in the Old Testament about what to bring for each festival and sacrifice. The people didn’t come empty handed, but brought to God their proper gifts. There were allowances for the poor, but everyone still had to bring something. And, God loves a cheerful giver. *‘Remember this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.’* (2 Corinthians 9:6-7).

Come with our whole lives. *‘Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship.’* (Romans 12:1). *19 Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 20 you were bought at a price.* (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

As we come with a sacrifice of our whole lives, we are challenged to bring our values, our attitudes, our strengths and weaknesses, and our resources – money, time, house, car, hobbies, all those ‘precious’ things.

And, come generously and recognising the giver. 14 ‘But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand. (1 Chronicles 29:14). God has given so much to us.

God answers us in awesome deeds (:5)

God’s ‘answers’ in creation. God is awesome! He is the creator God who speaks and it comes into being. He is majestic and glorious, all powerful! ‘You answer us with awesome and righteous deeds, God our Saviour,’ (:5)

Even the sea has to be still (:7) when he commands. This verse gives us a hint as to why the disciples were so astounded at Jesus’ calming the storm miracle. The whole earth is in awe at God’s power – and the disciples were stunned by Jesus’ power. How much more should we be?

From dawn to dusk, there is a call for songs of joy at the goodness of God. As Isaiah says the trees of the field clap their hands (Isaiah 55:12).

And God ‘answers’ in abundant provision for all creation. ‘*You care for the land and water it; you enrich it abundantly.*’ (:9).

This summer in the UK has been difficult for vegetable growers and autumn fruit. Many insects and animals have struggled – along with our grass and flowers. But the dry summer has been good news for reptiles, some birds and insects – blue butterflies apparently, and even goat farmers and English winemakers.

The earth is more than able to produce enough food for everyone – but we have to share and be smart. The challenge for us is to play our part.

Shout for Joy and sing – even creation does.

We are called to join in the response of joy. This season is called Harvest Thanksgiving. ‘The whole earth is filled with awe at your wonders; *where morning dawns, where evening fades, you call forth songs of joy.* (:8) and ‘*The meadows are covered with flocks and the valleys are mantled with corn; they shout for joy and sing.*’ (:13)

So this Harvest, we are encouraged to live with an ‘attitude of gratitude’, responding both with generosity to God’s gifts to us – giving our whole life in response to his life given for us. And, with joy, celebrating and enjoying the good gifts God has given.

Prayers: *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.* (Philippians 4:4-6)

- Pray for this day, and the coming week.
- Pray for justice, mercy, peace, and hope.
- Pray for individuals, neighbours, and for family & friends.
- Pray for the Church.



Collect: Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity

O Lord, we beseech you mercifully to hear the prayers of your people who call upon you; and grant that they may both perceive and know what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil them; 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.**

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.*

Blessing to be declared over yourselves, The Good Shepherd, the communities around us and our whole nation. 'The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace.' (Numbers 6:24-26 NIV).

The Notices: We are now holding services in the building on Sundays at 8am and 9.30am, and are live streaming the 9.30 service. This Paper Service will continue for the moment and is generally available the week after the service.

- Tea and Chat & Bowls: Wed. 19th Oct. at 2pm, Church Hall and Church.
- Coffee and Questions: 26th Oct. in Church Hall.
- COGS Tots: 2nd Mondays. COGS Tinytots: Monday mornings.
- Messy Church: Second Sundays of the month.