**Sunday 6th September 2020**

**With thanks to John Green for this week’s worship material. John is one of our Local Preacher’s based at Berkley Street.**

**Entering God’s presence**

When we are happy when we are full of fun and laughter God welcomes us.

When we are angry when people let us down and make us sad. God welcomes us.

When we are tired, when we need to stop and curl up and rest God welcomes us.

God of welcome, God whose door is always open we are glad to meet you now.

Gather us, O God, that we may come expectant to worship, bringing with us the pain and joy of time that is past. Grant that what we do in your name may be done to your glory, that justice and peace may embrace, love and faith unite.

**Hymn** [**https://www**](https://www)**.youtube.com/watch?v=J2ysvM3pFOY**

May the love of Jesus fill me,  
As the waters fill the sea,  
Christ exalting, self-abasing,  
For this is victory.

May I run the race before me,  
Strong and brave to face the foe,  
Looking only unto Jesus,  
As onward I will go.

May the mind of Christ my Saviour,  
Live in me from day to day,  
By His love and power controlling:  
All I do and all I say,

May the Word of God dwell richly, In my heart from hour to hour,  
So that all may see I triumph,  
Only through God's love and power

May the peace of God my father,  
Rule my life in everything,  
That I may be calm to comfort,  
The sick and sorrowing.

**Prayer**

Spirit hovering over our chaos, help us to acknowledge our sin; lead us to deeper repentance in unity with Christ. Help us to admit our emptiness that we may turn to be filled with the love that rushes to meet us. May we be more conscious of God's goodness than of our own guilt. May we allow ourselves to be embraced and kissed by you our Heavenly father, who delights in us, and if we look out of the eyes of the other, the elder brother, in jealousy and pain, help us to admit our emptiness that we may turn to be filled with the love that says: 'My son, my daughter, you are with me always, and all I have is yours.'

When we see the happiness of father and children through the smoke of the cooking fire, from behind the daily juggling act of unfinished tasks, may our tears be ones of joy, as we admit our emptiness, our longing for fulfilment, and receive the understanding love which empowers and enables us to serve by being ourselves.

**God’s word:** Read one or more of these passages: Romans 8 vs 28-39, Romans 12 vs 1-21 Galatians 6 1-10, Colossians 3 vs 12-17

**Reflection**

A pile of fresh fruit and vegetables on display

Description automatically generated***This is the time of the first harvest; apples are ripening on the trees and the corn is being brought in from the field. During the season of harvest, we take time to enjoy the cornucopian feast that God through nature has laid out before us. Whether we live in the city or the country, we can mindfully use our five senses to appreciate the bountifulness and abundance of the season.***

**Summer Turns To Autumn**

Summer is now ending, and autumn is visible on the horizon. Whether we are gardeners or not, we all have a harvest, and now is a good time to consider what we are harvesting.

It is a chance to review the past year and consider where we planted our energies. Your harvest may be the fruition of a long-term goal, or a blossoming of a friendship after much nurturing or perhaps you have found an inner peace which for various reason has alluded you. Maybe you have created a new-found interest in gardening which has contributed towards that sense of contentment.

As the days begin to draw in, we too, begin to withdraw but we can use the opportunity to sort out the wheat from the chaff. Contained within our harvest are the seeds of next year’s crop. When you hold an apple pip in the palm of your hand, you are holding a miracle that is full of potential growth. What do you wish to preserve from your harvest? What are the seeds that you wish to store over the autumn and winter, ready for planting out next spring? Autumn and winter aren’t the best time for action, but they are the perfect time to step back and through God’s guidance to make plans for next years harvest. At harvest we are able to use the opportunity for inner reflection to enter the very heart of our being, to enter our true, knowing loving and wise centre. More importantly engage with God. Yes, there may be moments where in some areas that we wish we could turn the clock back, but it is because that we have a knowing and loving God who forgives us that we can confidently move forward. Sure in the knowledge he will help us to refocus and move forward even in spite of Corvid19.

A close up of a plant

Description automatically generatedWhat will you give away with love this harvest season? Paradoxically, it is when we share our wealth and give it away that we feel most enriched. One way to celebrate our abundance is to mindfully share with our loved ones. As we prepare our food do we notice the colours of the ingredients, the smells, textures and tastes all mixed with the ingredient of love. Harvest time is the occasion for giving thanks. We can express our thanks in a variety of ways. We can for example express our thanks by embodying the principle of non-harm or violence to our environment. Reduce air pollution and improve our fitness, by one day a week, leaving the car behind. All of this can be reinforced with the mantra ***Change begins with me.***

**Harvesting Love**

Our latest grandaughter who is just 7 months old loves being taken out on our green to just stop and stare to see the leaves flutter in the wind whilst the suns rays stream through. I was reminded of the passage from Matthew.21 16 From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise. She may not be able to speak yet, but the intensity of her gaze is very evident. Sometimes we can get so caught up in the minutiae and busyness of our lives that we forget to look around us and appreciate the beauty of the season and to express our thanks to God. To counteract this, when we encounter something beautiful or awe inspiring is to stop and enjoy it. We can also recall the image in our minds eye so when we are having our off moment by creating the image in our mind we can help alter our emotions or feelings.

**A picture containing fruit, sitting, food, table

Description automatically generated**A picture containing grass

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**Harvesting Happiness, Gratitude and Contentment**

One way we can cultivate gratitude is by acknowleding all those people who have enabled us to “grow” our harvest by saying thank you.

If we include as part of our quiet time, to look within so we can acknowledge that we are part of an intricate web of interdependency and that we support one another we begin to enter into the spiritual dimension of valueing and appreciating one another. Showing our appreciation extends beyond our immediate family. It extends to all who have contributed in our journey of following the way of Christ.

Practising before going to sleep can help to get a better nights sleep too? It doesn’t have to be outstanding events just simply day to day events. For example a mug of tea,, hot shower, succulent taste of a juicy peach, a child’s smile, or the sun on your face. Being mindful in this way will pave the way towards contentment.

**Intercessory Prayers.**

Living God,creator of all that is, and has been, and shall be, we thank you for this glad season.

You have blessed us in so much: **help us to respond**.

We thank you for our world  with all its rich and wonderful variety, for your gift of life constantly being renewed by your loving hand, for all that you have made to grow and flourish around us, all that provides our food and clothing, all the bountiful resources of this astonishing planet.

You have blessed us in so much: **help us to respond.**

We thank you for those to whom we owe this harvest — workers on farms and in agriculture, sailors and fishermen  who risk their lives on the seas, miners and engineers who help supply the raw materials for industry, scientists and technicians who help develop better crops, employees in shops and factories who labour to satisfy our demands.

You have blessed us in so much: **help us to respond.**

Living God, help us to appreciate all so many do, to bring us the fruits of creation, and teach us the part we must play in ensuring future generations can enjoy it in turn. Teach us to use your gifts wisely, responsibly effectively, so that nothing may be needlessly wasted or foolishly squandered.

You have blessed us in so much: **help us to respond.**

Help us to remember those who do not share equally in the rewards of harvest the poor, the hungry, the homeless, the oppressed, those overwhelmed by disaster, and those whose crops have failed. Save us, we pray, from selfish indulgence, looking to our comforts and ignoring their needs. Inspire us to share from our plenty with all who cry out for help?

You have blessed us in so much **help us to respond**

Living God, you have provided beyond our needs, enough for all in every place to have enough and more than enough. Forgive us that some still go hungry and forgive our part within that

Stir our hearts so that we may challenge the consciences of governments and nations, until the time comes at last when your gifts are shared and enjoyed by all. You have blessed us in so much, help us to respond, in the name of Christ. Amen

**Lord’s Prayer**

**Listen and Sing:**

From Heaven you came, helpless babe [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oOnidzZusJA&list=RDoOnidzZusJA&index=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oOnidzZusJA&list=RDoOnidzZusJA&index=1%20)

My Song of love is unknown <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HMart4wXsI0>

When my love grows weak <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pxi0iuoa5fc>

Give to me Lord a thankful heart <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o-xYrM8UVVA>

**Blessing**: The love of the faithful Creator, the peace of the wounded Healer, The joy of the challenging Spirit, the hope of the Three in One surround and encourage you today, tonight, and forever. Amen

‘The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.’ Philippians 4: 5 – 6