

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2020      A Harvest celebration

Please have something that has been grown in front of you and something that could be given to the Foodbank or another charity.

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God is love, let us adore God by sharing God's love.

God is ever present, around us and within us, though separate let us worship together in God.

In this season of Harvest, we gather together to celebrate creation and give thanks.

Suggested hymn      [Come ye thankful people come](#)

Prayer

Loving God, as we worship together, we offer thanks for all that creation offers. We marvel at how you have provided for your people throughout time and space and rejoice in our understanding of your eternal and unconditional love which surrounds all people. As each new day begins, we are aware of its potential and give thanks for the opportunities it will bring to thank you through our caring and sharing of one another. As the season changes and autumn colours bring a reminder that each season holds its own treasure, we thank you for the seasons and their refreshing of nature, and the opportunity each brings to explore life in different ways. We thank you for all the creative ways we have to keep in touch with friends and family, and at this time we thank you for the technology which allows us to share in worship when we cannot meet together.

As we pray we remember the life and ministry of Jesus and his message of love and give thanks that through this message our journey of faith is deepened and our understanding grows, and through the resurrection our hope is affirmed. Recognising our place within the followers of Jesus we share together the words prayed by the disciples, saying

Our Father....

Reading      Leviticus 23.15-22 (read the Contemporary English version at [Bible Gateway](#) )

Suggested hymn      [We plough the fields and scatter](#)

Reflection

Even though it might feel like it this year, we do not live in isolation, our actions affect the lives of others. We hope this is in a positive way but sometimes our choices are not as loving as they might be. The way we live affects the planet, and that in turn affects the lives of others, often those least able to cope with the change. This year has been a strange year for crops, there have been abundances and shortages, and the change in weather patterns means this is happening more often. It is disappointing when something you have grown fails to produce the hoped-for bounty but imagine if you were relying on that crop to provide the money for your family to survive the winter. There have been stories told from Britain and Europe of peasant people unable to survive winter because the summer has not produced the necessary reserves, sometimes crops have failed or the weather has meant a shorter visitor season in which to sell goods. This year, the hospitality sector has been particularly badly hit and we have heard stories of communities in Europe who are very concerned that the tourists have not come to provide the money for winter.

Covid 19 is, thankfully, a unique episode in our world history but the consensus seems to be that the desire for exotic animals, and their trade, is the most likely cause of the virus crossing species. Humanity's actions changing the course of history, for however much we hope for a new normal, things have been changed by the pandemic. Other actions are changing our world also, our use of pesticides and plastic as well as pollution are altering the ecosystem, endangering the balance of nature and threatening whole species.

A few years ago, there was a quote in the Waitrose magazine based on a Kenyan proverb - "*Treat the earth well. It was not given to us by our parents, but loaned to us by our children.*" It is not a

new thought, theologian Meister Eckhart (1290-1329) said, 'There is no such thing as 'my' bread. All bread is ours and is given to me, to others through me, and to me through others. For not only bread, but all things necessary for sustenance in this life, are given on loan to us with others, and because of others and for others, and to others through us.'

Hymn 85      [God in his love for us lent us this planet](#)

As Christians we understand that we have a shared responsibility for the planet on which we live, its flora and fauna and the very substance of the earth. Humanity has plundered the earth, mining and drilling, removing the very essence of the planet. There is a children's story which explores this, and it offers two endings, the happy ending or the sad ending.

Listen to [Milo and the magical stones by Marcus Pfister](#)

We have to work together to ensure our future. In 1982 there was a conference for young Jews and Christians to explore faith in the context of our ecological and environmental crisis. There were many fine speakers but much of the time was spent in Bible Study and over the course of the conference some were drawn to conclude that while the essence of the ten commandments remained unchanged there was a new imperative in the law of love for today's problem. They produced a list of Ten ecological commandments:

1. I am the Lord your God who has created heavens and earth. Know that you are my partner in creation; therefore, take care of the air, water, earth, plants and animals, as if they were your brothers and sisters.
2. Know that in giving you life I have given you responsibility, freedom, and limited resources.
3. Steal not from the future; honour your children by giving them a chance at longevity.
4. Implant in your children a love of nature.
5. Remember that humanity can use technology but cannot recreate life that has been destroyed.
6. Set up pressure groups within your community to prevent impending catastrophes.
7. Throw out all arms which cause irreversible destruction to the foundations of life.
8. Be self-disciplined in the small details of your life.
9. Set aside time in your weekly day of rest to be with the world rather than to use the world.
10. Remember that you are not the owner of the land, merely its guardian.

As we celebrate harvest let us pledge to make a difference in our own lives and share with others our concerns for the planet which sustains our life. We can use less plastic, use water carefully, and recycle or re-use wherever possible.

Reading            1 Timothy 6:17-19 (read the New Revised Standard Version at [Bible Gateway](#) )

Suggested hymn      [Touch the earth lightly](#)

Prayers (place your harvest gifts in front of you)

We pray for our hurting world:

for all the times when fear means nothing is done,

when greed means lives are held cheap,

when simple answers are chosen over complicated truth, may we draw on the strength of the Spirit

**In our daily living may we follow the way of Jesus and challenge the way of the world**

We pray for our church:

in our worship, our faith and our lives,

when we think that we know best,

if we are tempted to count the cost, may we draw on the strength of the Spirit

**In our daily living may we follow the way of Jesus and challenge the way of the world**

We pray for ourselves:

Deepen in us the desire to be generous with our time, our judgements, our material wealth.  
Help us to give abundantly, so that God's love may be seen and we become more like Christ.

**In our daily living may we follow the way of Jesus and challenge the way of the world**

Loving God, when the rain batters the windows may we remember it waters the earth and value water as a precious commodity, remembering all whose land is dry and whose crops are failing, and for whom clean water is a luxury not often experienced.

**In our daily living may we follow the way of Jesus and challenge the way of the world**

When the sun shines and we experience warmth help us remember those for the whom the world is a dark and cold place, those for whom the heat of the sun is a danger and threatens life and harvest.

**In our daily living may we follow the way of Jesus and challenge the way of the world**

When we enjoy the world's harvest, may we remember all who have played a part in producing our food, may we be responsible in our shopping, and generous in our sharing, supporting those whose basket is empty and who fear that they cannot feed their children.

**In our daily living may we follow the way of Jesus and challenge the way of the world**

When we rejoice at the arrival of a card or letter, an email or text that brings us closer to family and friends may we remember those who are alone and feel isolated. As we continue to struggle with the effects of the pandemic may we be aware of the needs of those around us and loving in our actions and words.

**In our daily living may we follow the way of Jesus and challenge the way of the world**

When we can enjoy a holiday may we remember those who must work continuously to provide for their family. As we celebrate harvest may we remember all who have experienced the disaster of a crop failure. As we give thanks for another day dawning may we remember those who have lost a loved one and for whom the morning brings more pain.

**In our daily living may we follow the way of Jesus and challenge the way of the world**

**Amen**

### **Harvest blessings**

Wigmore church invited us to join in their collection of goods for Women's Aid. Many of you support the Foodbanks and although it is difficult to pop something in the basket at the moment Foodbanks are accepting donation of money to help them provide for many more people who are finding themselves in need as a result of the pandemic. As we move forward from our celebration may we remember that there is always a need to share and be creative in how we support and help those in need.

Prayer

Almighty and everlasting God, we offer you our heartfelt thanks for your goodness and care in giving us the fruits of the earth in their seasons. Give us grace to use them rightly to your glory and for the good of others and the relief of those in need, in Jesus name, **Amen**.

We finish with a wonderful Harvest Samba which was created to support New Hope, a homeless charity in Watford.

[A Harvest Samba](#)

Blessing

May the blessing that is the knowledge of God, source of all being, the love of God discovered through Jesus and the inspiration of the Spirit which binds us together be with us on our journey this day and every day. Amen.