

Barthol Chapel and Tarves Sunday 4 October 2020

Harvest Thanksgiving Materials for Worship



Give Thanks for the Harvest!

INTRODUCTION

This is harvest
and in our diversity and colour
we come together
to give thanks for God's gifts to us
and to offer our gifts in God's service....
in the reds of autumn...
and the oranges of sunset...
in the yellows of corn....
and the greens of fields....,
in the blues of skies....
and the purple of berries....
we see and celebrate the glory of all creation
So let us gather now,
each of us a shade in God's rainbow people,
and sing praise to the Creator of every harvest colour.

Praise CH4 229 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.

Refrain:
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 winds and waves obey him,
By him the birds are fed;
Much more to us, his children,
He gives our daily bread.

We thank thee 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 thy love imparts,
And what thou most desirest,
Our humble, thankful hearts.

Our harvest thanksgiving this year has a rainbow theme. In recent months rainbows have appeared in all sorts of places. Many homes have them in their windows, often drawn by children and accompanied by words of thanks to the NHS. Rainbows have brightened up some of the darkest days of the pandemic.

You might like to focus now on a particular colour of the rainbow. Pause for a moment and think about why you have chosen your particular colour..... we are all different and we will choose different colours for different reasons.

The most amazing rainbow I have ever seen is one that appeared in the sky when we were in Orkney this summer. For those of you who know Orkney we were driving up to Kirkwall from South Ronaldsay across the Churchill barriers. As we came over the brae the most massive rainbow hung in the sky across the whole of the town of Kirkwall – the sunlight reflecting on droplets of moisture. It was truly awesome as all these different colours came together – to make up the whole rainbow - a wonderful gift of nature.

But rainbows represent more than the beauty of the natural world. They have always been interpreted as a sign of hope. The poet Wordsworth wrote

*My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a man;
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die!*

In the Book of Genesis the rainbow is seen as the sign of God's promise to Noah of a new beginning after the flood. It is the sign of God's love for all living things.

The Word of God: Genesis 9:8-16

8 Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, ⁹'As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, ¹⁰and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. ¹¹I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.' ¹²God said, 'This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: ¹³I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. ¹⁴When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, ¹⁵I will remember my covenant

Tarves Parish Church of Scotland. Registered Charity: SC 017161

CCLI: 2417487, 2417504, 241749

Barthol Chapel Parish Church of Scotland. Registered Charity: SC 010960

that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. ¹⁶When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.

Some of you may have noticed that I cheated in the introduction to these worship materials – combining indigo and violet to give purple! Why purple?

Well I like the colour purple. When I was a teenager and allowed to choose for the first time the colours to decorate my bedroom, purple was right up there. I still remember the wallpaper – it was brown and purple and turquoise! It was the 1970's I hasten to add. And some judicial intervention from parents meant it was toned down a bit!

Purple – it is perhaps the closest we can come to describing the harvest of berries that are ripe in the late summer – blueberries and brambles.

Purple is a significant colour in the Church too. It marks the seasons of Advent and Lent in the Christian Year. They are seasons of preparation and waiting – when we are encouraged to examine ourselves and our lives in light of the love of God. The focus is on how God came into this world in the person of Jesus, in search of a lost people and of how God in Jesus shared our human death on the cross. Historically, Advent and Lent are times of repentance, sorrow and grief.

But even in its darkness, purple is also a royal colour. And the message it conveys is always one of hope because it anticipates the joy of Easter – Jesus resurrection. That hope reminds us that God's love is stronger even than death. And that in the meantime we are invited to let God's love rule in our hearts, confident that one day that love will prevail over all creation.

Harvest too is a sign of that hope. Some of you will remember the words of another harvest hymn by Henry Alford

*Even so Lord, quickly come
Bring your final harvest home
Gather all your people in
Free from sorrow, free from sin.
There forever purified
In your presence to abide
Come with all your angels come
Raise the glorious harvest home.*

The rainbow and the harvest are symbols of the amazing love of God. And we give thanks for them today.

But they also remind us of our responsibility as human beings to care for other people and the whole of God's creation. And there are some suggestions given below on how we might do this despite the restrictions that surround us at this harvest time. I hope you will choose one of these suggestions. Because as we worship and work together, different as we are, then the Church too becomes a symbol of hope as she reflects God's love for us, for others and for the whole of creation.

Pointers for Prayer

- Give thanks for the Harvest; pray for the farmers, shopkeepers, drivers, who make sure our food reaches us
- Those in the world who do not have enough to eat
- Those suffering from or bereaved by the corona virus
- Those who have lost a loved one for other reasons during the pandemic
- All key workers, those adjusting to working from home and those who are returning to their workplace
- The governments in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland and their advisers as the virus threatens to peak again
- University students and staff
- Businesses struggling and all who are facing redundancy and financial hardship
- Family, friends and neighbours, those most affected by the restrictions
- Local congregations as they take difficult decisions on whether to re-open for worship and how best to implement health and safety measures

Praise CH4 231 For the Fruits of all creation

For the fruits of all creation

Thanks be to God

For these gifts to every nation

Thanks be to God

For the ploughing, sowing, reaping

Silent growth while we are sleeping

Future needs on 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

For the harvest 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

Notices

Today 'Harvest at Home'

How can we celebrate '**H-A-R-V-E-S-T**' this year? Here are some suggestions

- **H-A-V-E** a meal using local produce only
- Open your **H-E-A-R-T-S** by making contact with someone on their own
- **S-H-A-R-E** with others by making a donation of food or money - instead of taking produce to church use the local collection points at Duthie's and the Pharmacy. Or give to a charity like Mary's Meals whose vision is that every child receives one daily meal in their place of education and that all those who have more than they need, share with those who lack even the most basic things. Donate by Tel:01838 200605 or 0800 698 1212 Or online www.marysmeals.org.uk

Tarves Parish Church of Scotland. Registered Charity: SC 017161

CCLI: 2417487, 2417504, 241749

Barthol Chapel Parish Church of Scotland. Registered Charity: SC 010960



Next Sunday 9.45am Joint Worship (Service commences 10.00am)

If you would like to be added to the e-mail list for the link to Sunday's live worship gathering on zoom or join in on your landline please contact:

Rob e-mail sessionclerk@bartholchapel.org or Susanna Tel 851345 or e-mail smbichard@aol.com.

Community Bible Experience – Thursday 8 October 4.00pm when we will be discussing our questions and discoveries from reading Isaiah 1-39.

Care in the Community if you are aware of anyone in Tarves who needs help of any kind please contact Ruth 851887. If you are aware of anyone in Barthol Chapel please contact James Hepburn 806611.

Pastoral Care If you would like to speak to the minister please contact Alison 851295.