

The Benefice of Silsoe, Pulloxhill and Flitton
Growing as beacons of Christ's Light in our communities



The olive and lemon tree harvest in Jerusalem 2019

Sunday 4th October 2020

Harvest Festival

**Led by Reader Gillian Kern
Recorded at
St John the Baptist, Flitton**

Call to worship

Whether we live close to the land, grow our own crops or buy our food in supermarkets, we all depend on the land, weather and agriculture for food. Today we gather to give thanks and praise to God for the harvest that provides food for the world.

We wonder, in awe, at the diversity of plants, animals and fish God has provided for us. But as we also contemplate the species and environments that are under threat we ask that you guide our leaders to curate creation.

Let us give thanks to God

Let us give thanks to the Creator for making us.

Let us give thanks to the Son for saving us.

Let us give thanks to the Spirit for guiding us.

Let us give thanks for the harvest

for the abundance gathered in.

It is good to give thanks and praise.

Amen.

Opening prayer

God of compassion, in the midst of our abundance there are those who are less fortunate, we thank you for our good fortune and the way you look after us; constantly reassuring us of your care. Protecting, providing and loving.

Grant to us the joy of this occasion, as we gather to worship you knowing that you offer us fullness of life.

Praising, praying and giving.

Teach us to remember those who are less fortunate and remind us that there is joy in giving and sharing our good fortune with them; both at home and in the nations of your world that need our support.

Amen

Hymn - We plough the fields and scatters

We plow 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 heav'n above;
then thank the Lord, O thank the Lord
for all his love.

Prayer of confession and assurance

For the abundance of food that is taken for granted,
forgive us.
For the abundance of wealth that is not justly earned,
forgive us.
For the abundance of land that is held by a few,
forgive us.
For the abundance of resources that are over extracted,
forgive us.
For the abundance of life that is denied to too many,
forgive us.
For the loss of abundance of species and habitats
The deterioration of good fertile soil
And polluted seas and rivers
Forgive us.

Believing that in Jesus our sins are forgiven,
inspire us with your kind and generous love to work
for a world where abundance is shared.
Amen.

Collect for Harvest

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 people
through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen

The Epistle - read by Margaret Butt

2 Corinthians 9:6-15

⁶The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. ⁹As it is written,

'He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor;
his righteousness endures for ever.'

¹⁰He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. ¹¹You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us; ¹²for the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God. ¹³Through the testing of this ministry you glorify God by your obedience to the confession of the gospel of Christ and by the generosity of your sharing with them and with all others, ¹⁴while they long for you and pray for you because of the surpassing grace of God that he has given you. ¹⁵Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift.

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

The Gospel

Luke 12:16-30

¹⁶Then he told them a parable: 'The land of a rich man produced abundantly. ¹⁷And he thought to himself, "What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?" ¹⁸Then he said, "I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. ¹⁹And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry." ²⁰But God said to him, "You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?" ²¹So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich towards God.' ²²He said to his disciples, 'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. ²³For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. ²⁴Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! ²⁵And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? ²⁶If then you are not able to do so small a thing as that, why do you worry about the rest? ²⁷Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. ²⁸But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith! ²⁹And do not keep striving for what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not keep worrying. ³⁰For it is the nations of the world that strive after all these things, and your Father knows that you need them.'

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Reflection - Gillian Kern and Simon Stranks

Creed

We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family in heaven
and on earth is named.
We believe in God the Son,
who lives in our hearts through faith,
and fills us with his love.
We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
Who strengthens us
with power from on high.
We believe in one God;
Father, son and Holy Spirit.

Intercessions - led by Maggie Jeeves

Bidding: Lord of all creation

Response: In your mercy hear us

Merciful Father

Accept these prayers for the sake of your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ

Amen

The Lord's Prayer

And we gather our prayers together into one as we say together 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**

Closing prayer and blessing

**God of the first fruits,
let your rain dance on us,
your sun shine on us,
and your love and justice grow in us,
until we bring our last fruits to your harvest.
Amen**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord,
In the name of Christ, Amen.