

A TIME FOR HOPE

HARVEST

Welcome to our celebration

**'For everything there is a season,
and a time for every purpose under heaven'**



WE PREPARE

Dear God,

we bring before you our modest gifts, like tiny seeds, not knowing what fruits you may bring out of them. We wait before you, in hope, asking that our hands and gifts, offered in your service, will make a difference to the world beyond all our imaginings. In the name of Jesus, who once was weak and now is exalted. Amen.

HYMN

- 1 Come, you thankful people, come,**
raise the song of harvest home!
fruit and crops are gathered in
safe before the storms begin:
God our maker will provide
for our needs to be supplied;
come, with all His people, come,
raise the song of harvest home!
- 2 All the world is God's own field,
harvests for His praise to yield;
wheat and weeds together sown
here for joy or sorrow grown:
first the blade and then the ear,
then the full corn shall appear –
Lord of harvest, grant that we
wholesome grain and pure may be.
- 3 For the Lord our God shall come
and shall bring His harvest home;
He Himself on that great day,
worthless things shall take away,
give His angels charge at last
in the fire the weeds to cast,
but the fruitful ears to store
in His care for evermore.
- 4 Even so, Lord, quickly come –
bring Your final harvest home!
gather all Your people in
free from sorrow, free from sin,
there together purified,
ever thankful at Your side –
come, with all Your angels, come,
bring that glorious harvest home!

We say, 'Sorry'...

Lord God, at times we are selfish, we are greedy, we are wasteful of all that you have given us, sometimes we forget to say, 'Thank you'

Lord have mercy.

Sometimes we ignore the needs of others

Christ have mercy.

Sometimes we just can't be bothered to live your way

Lord have mercy.

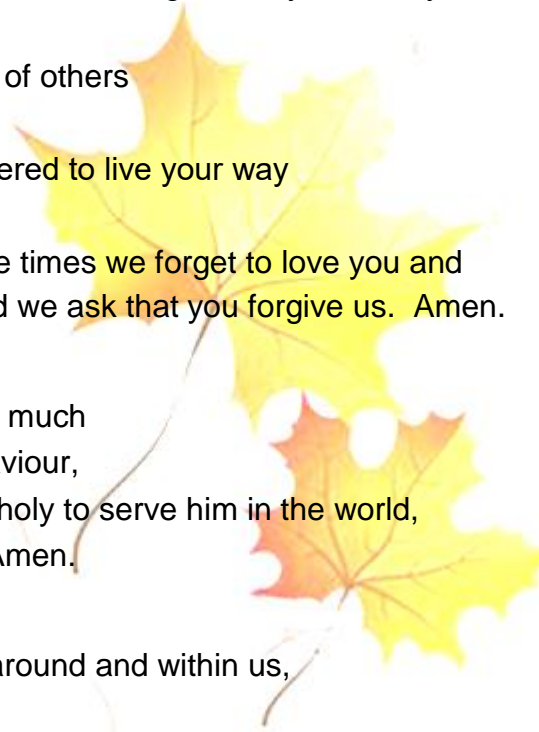
We are sorry for these and all the times we forget to love you and our neighbours as ourselves, and we ask that you forgive us. Amen.

...and receive God's forgiveness

May God who loved the world so much that he sent his Son to be our Saviour, forgive us our sins and make us holy to serve him in the world, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A Collect for Harvest...

Lord of creation, whose glory is around and within us, open our eyes to your wonders, that we may serve you with reverence, and know your peace at our lives' end, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



WINTER

Plants seem twiggy and lifeless

There's not much happening

Creatures are scarce

But there will be times of fun and celebration

Will it snow???

Ecclesiastes 3: 1-3

3 For everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven:

²a time to be born, and a time to die;

a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;

³a time to kill, and a time to heal;

a time to break down, and a time to build up;

Some Winter thoughts...

King Solomon's words, written some 3000 years ago are totally up-to-date and always will be, describing the different facets of life, 'time' moves us on; nothing is forever...

To every positive in life, there is a negative; or, to every negative, there is a positive - either way all lives hold good and hard times.

And Solomon is clear; 'There is a time to be born and a time to die', unable to extend life at either end, we are called to take full advantage of the time God gives us.

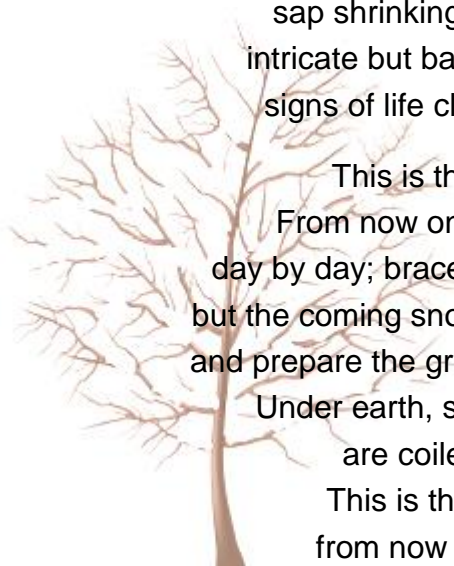
We recall how our God created four seasons, based upon the rotation of the earth as it orbits the sun. The earth moves, the seasons change; the sun remains constant, unchanging. The same God created us; likewise our lives revolve around the Son - Jesus. We enter and exit many seasons, but the Son remains constant; unchanging; yesterday, today and forever....

Poem...

'The Shortest Day' Jan Sutch Pickard

This is the shortest day.
A shy sun hugs the horizon;
life is at a low ebb,
wrack piled on the shore,
waves making a litany of endings,
sap shrinking in bare branches -
intricate but barren against the sky -
signs of life clenched in the corn.

This is the shortest day.
From now on there is more light
day by day; brace yourself for more cold,
but the coming snow will make a clean end,
and prepare the ground for new beginnings.
Under earth, snowdrop and crocus
are coiled like springs.
This is the shortest day -
from now on it gets better.



SPRING

New life appearing
We get busy in the garden
Days getting longer
Colours appear

Ecclesiastes 3: 1, 4, 5

3 For everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven:
4 a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;



a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together;
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

Some Springtime thoughts...

As the season of darkness gives way to more light and hope, so life's dark times will give way to brighter times.

In spring the Church goes through utter darkness as we stand helpless, watching our Lord nailed to a cross, for us. We know what will happen after three days, but Good Friday cannot be rushed, we have to go through every hour, spend that time, mourn, weep, grieve; before we laugh and dance in the light of Jesus' empty tomb, joyfully declaring, 'Alleluia! He is Risen!'

Just as Solomon says, 'to everything there is a season'; so there is to every aspect of our lives; a reason for each. Many we don't understand, some we don't want; we weep and mourn; then other times when we laugh and dance, we never want it to end.

We may not like the changes, but without change, we would become complacent in one place; which simply wouldn't be 'life in all its richness'....



We pray together...

Lord, take my life, my small life and illumine it; that everything I say and do may reflect the Light of your Glory.

Lord, take my life, my small life and imprint it;
that everything I say and do
may reveal the Image of your Love.

Lord, take my life, my small life and inspire it;
that everything I say and do
may resonate with the Power of your Spirit.

Lord, take my life, my small life and indwell it;
that everything I say and do
may radiate your Life, your Glorious Life. Amen.



SUMMER

Warmth of the sun

Drawing out the beauty and colour of plants and flowers

Seeking shade and coolness

We water the garden, assisted by God

A summer prayer...

God of golden fields and blue skies, thank you for summer.
God of white waves and wet pebbles, thank you for summer.
God of ripe plums and meadowsweet, thank you for summer.
God of warmth, beauty and wonder, thank you for summer. Amen.

Then God said, 'Let there be light', and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good.' [Gen. 1;3-4]

On the Summer Solstice, in Britain, we experience more hours of light from the sun than on any other day. The short, cold days of December seem far away, as we enjoy the long warm days. In other countries it is winter; but the light will come round to them too.

'Lord, lift up the light of your countenance upon us.' [Ps. 4;6]

Light brings warmth and comfort.

Light shines into dark corners and shows us that there are no hidden monsters waiting to pounce.

Light reveals the colours of our world.

Light always shines, even through storms.

'Truly the light is sweet, and it is pleasant for the eyes to behold the sun.' [Eccl. 11;7]

Ecclesiastes 3; 1, 6, 7

3 For everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven:

⁶a time to seek, and a time to lose;

a time to keep, and a time to cast away;

⁷a time to tear, and a time to sew;

a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

Some Summer thoughts...

Normally we know what to expect, but this summer caught us off balance. Yet, Epidemics and Pandemics are not new, developing as soon as humans began to live in community, thousands of years ago. There's the Black Death, the great plague of London, Cholera, Measles, Russian Flu, Spanish Flu, Asian Flu, to mention just a few; now of course Covid 19.

I know this is a harvest celebration; but we're in extraordinary times; within this darkness, there is hope; there is light. Despite the blackness of times past, bright times emerged. Covid 19 will likely impact our lives for ever, and it may

alter the course of world history, but the earth's nature is to have, 'these times'.

We have our part to play in taking care, following guidelines and laws. And, we are called to remember Jesus says, 'Do not worry about your life.' 'Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?' [Well, we know that, with Solomon's help.] 'Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself.' Jesus then talks about how God looks after lilies and birds, and that we are so much more important [Mt 6: 25, 27,34]. The bottom line is, for everything there is a season; we are called to keep our eyes on the unchanging Son Jesus and trust that everything is safe in God's hands...

SONG...

To ev'rything (turn, turn, turn),
There is a season (turn, turn, turn)
And a time for ev'ry purpose under heaven.

A time to be born, a time to die;
A time to plant, a time to reap;
A time to kill, a time to heal;

A time to laugh, a time to weep.
A time to build up, a time to break down;
A time to dance, a time to mourn;

A time to cast away stones, a time to gather stones together.

A time of love, a time of hate;
A time of war, a time of peace;
A time you may embrace, a time to refrain from embracing.

A time to gain, a time to lose;
A time to rend, a time to sew;
A time to love, a time to hate;
A time for peace, I'm sure it's not too late.

We declare our belief...

We believe in God the Father,
who reveals his love to us in Christ.
We believe in God the Son,
who pours out his Holy Spirit on us.
We believe in the Holy Spirit,
who teaches us God's truth.
We believe in one God:
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

[after 1 John]

AUTUMN

Falling leaves marking seasonal change - crunching underfoot
Feeding birds and hedgehogs
Days getting shorter
Air getting colder



[Ecclesiastes 3: 1, 8](#)

3 For everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven:

° a time to love, and a time to hate;
a time for war, and a time for peace

Some Autumnal thoughts...

If a seed isn't buried in the earth to germinate, shoot through the dark ground into the light; grow, change, develop; it will not form. It will not become what it is created to be - flower, fruit, grain.

So it is that we have to go through life's seasons and changes, hard and good times. Every season, each change, all times enable us to grow, develop and become the person God wants us to be. So that when we go through our final earthly season, move to the place prepared for us in Heaven, we will be fit for that place. In Heaven there are no second or third rate places; no silver or bronze; only gold; gold which has been refined in the fire of life; life with all its times and seasons. Amen.

We pray together...

Loving God, you shower us with good things and you know the needs we have. You listen to our prayers and hear the unspoken words of our hearts. So we bring our prayers, words and thoughts before you today....

Creator God, your world is wonderful, full of delight and difference. We pray today for all who care for the world and for those who work to bring us understanding. We pray for those places where life is demanding, for those living in hostile climates caused by nature or caused by human beings.

Generous God, we pray today for all who work to bring us food and for all who speak out for those who have little food. We

pray for those who will not have enough to eat today and for all those who are working to bring help.

Healing God, we pray today for all who endure pain in mind or body and for those who help. We pray for those working in hospitals and those in research, those who work in our community and those caring out of love.

Joyful God, we pray today for all who bring us delight and help us show praise and thanks in our daily lives. For our children and those we love, for those who entertain and those who create beauty in words, music, paint or clay; we pray that your creative life would overflow with joy.

Holy God, we pray today for the life of our church, for all who serve and all who lead. Help us to be people who share generously and speak boldly of your love. Give our leaders and teachers wisdom and give each of us the courage we need to follow you.

Loving God, we pray for ourselves, knowing that you see each of us with eyes of love. Help us to love ourselves as you love us and to reflect your image into the world around us. In ours and every life bring your hope and healing

We make our prayers in the name of the one who taught us to pray, saying..... Our Father...

HYMN...

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.
*All good gifts around us
are sent from heaven above,
then thank the Lord, O thank the Lord,
for all His love.*

2 He only is the maker
of all things near and far;
He paints the wayside flower,
He lights the evening star;
the wind and waves obey Him,
by Him the birds are fed;
much more to us, His children,
He gives our daily bread.
All good gifts . . .

3 We thank You 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 Your love imparts;
we come now, Lord, to give You
our humble, thankful hearts.
All good gifts . . .



OUR WORSHIP DRAWS TO A CLOSE

*'For everything there is a season,
and a time for every purpose under heaven'*

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.

*Material for this service was taken from:
New Patterns for Worship, Church House Publishing
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*Service compiled by Sue & Claire
Hymns chosen by Gareth
Seasonal thoughts by Claire*

Worship at home for 18th October 2020