



**Welcome to Blackburn Baptist Church, on September 25th 2022 at 10:45,
meeting at Bethesda Chapel.**

Whilst some are able to meet in person, others we know are still at home. We hope and pray that you will find this outline of our service helpful, as we seek to worship God as a Church family, wherever we are.

Our Harvest Thanksgiving service today is being led by Colin, with Trevor playing a number of Harvest hymns and songs for us as we gather for worship, The notices are being displayed on the screen .

Colin begins by welcoming everyone to the service today, and reads from Psalm 136:

"Give thanks to the Lord for he is good; his love endures forever".

Colin reminds us that we are here to thank God for this wonderful world, with beautiful scenery, and for all God's bountiful gifts, but also to reflect and think on those who are not as blessed as we are, but who go to bed and wake up starving. We think and reflect upon these many things as we gather together today, celebrating Harvest, even though we are still in September!!

He encourages those who are able to stand for our opening hymn, played by Trevor on the Clavinova (which is being used again after some years:)

O worship the King, all glorious above!
O gratefully sing his power and his love!
Our shield and defender, the Ancient of Days,
pavilioned in splendour, and girded with praise.
O tell of his might! O sing of his grace!
Whose robe is the light, whose canopy space.
His chariots of wrath the deep thunderclouds form,
and dark is his path on the wings of the storm.

The earth, with its store of wonders untold,
Almighty, thy power hath founded of old,
hath 'stablished it fast by a changeless decree,
and round it hath cast, like a mantle, the sea.

Thy bountiful care, what tongue can recite?
It breathes in the air; it shines in the light;
it streams from the hills, it descends to the plain,
and sweetly distills in the dew and the rain.

Frail children of dust, and feeble as frail,
in thee do we trust, nor find thee to fail;

thy mercies, how tender! How firm to the end!
Our Maker, Defender, Redeemer, and Friend!

O measureless Might, ineffable Love,
while angels delight to hymn thee above,
the humbler creation, though feeble their lays,
with true adoration shall all sing thy praise.

Author: Robert Grant, William Croft CCLI SONG #808775 Copyrights: Public Domain, CCL no 5664

(We actually sang slightly different words at Bethesda)

O worship the King all glorious above,
and gratefully sing his power and his love:
our shield and defender, the Ancient of Days,
pavilioned in splendour and girded with praise.

O tell of his might and sing of his grace,
whose robe is the light, whose canopy space;
his chariots of wrath the deep thunder-clouds form,
and dark is his path on the wings of the storm.

The earth, with its store of wonders untold,
Almighty, your power has founded of old;
established it fast, by a changeless decree,
and round it has cast, like a mantle, the sea.

Your bountiful care, what tongue can recite?
It breathes in the air, it shines in the light;
it streams from the hills, it descends to the plain,
and sweetly distils in the dew and the rain.

We children of dust are feeble and frail -
in you do we trust, for you never fail;
your mercies, how tender, how firm to the end!
our maker, defender, redeemer, and friend.

O measureless Might, unchangeable Love,
whom angels delight to worship above!
Your ransomed creation, with glory ablaze,
in true adoration shall sing to your praise!

Robert Grant (1779-1838) after William Kethe (ca. 1559-1594)

Colin then led us in prayer:

Our loving Heavenly Father, we thank for this wonderful world and everything that it has to offer us day-by-day. As we celebrate this time of Harvest Thanksgiving, we give thanks for the blessings of food and drink, and the many other gifts that receive from your bountiful hand, which we so easily take for granted. Help us always to be mindful of those in our world who are not so blessed. Sow a seed of hope within our

hearts Lord, that we might yield goodness and kindness in abundance. Sow a seed of peace in our lives Lord that we might bear the fruits of compassion and forgiveness. Sow a seed of love in our hearts Lord, here at BBC, that others may reap the blessings of a sharing and caring community. May each seed of hope, peace and love grow within us into a harvest that can be feasted on by all. This we ask for the sake Christ Jesus, our Lord of the Harvest. Amen.

Colin invited us to join together in saying this version of the Lords Prayer, displayed on the screen:

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.

Colin then left the pulpit and came closer to the congregation, bearing a child's lunch box - borrowed from his grandson. He asked what we associated with a child's lunch box in the bible, hoping for the answer of 5 loaves and 2 fishes, which led to a retelling of the feeding of the 5,000. Colin likes this miracle particularly as it is the only one mentioned in all four gospels. He went on to say that the danger is when we look at all the problems of the world, we feel too helpless to do anything, but when we give it to the Lord, he can make something of it.

This is the text of what he said:

In John's account of this great miracle, we are given the reaction of the disciples to the idea that this boy's meal of 5 barley loaves and two small fish would be enough to feed the crowd of 5000: *'What is this among so many?'*

When we confront the enormous problems of the world, it is so easy to throw up our hands in despair. We ask: how can what we have to give make even the slightest difference to these vast problems? And yet, when we give our offering to Christ, he is able to make a difference, and indeed if all those who name the Name of Christ were to give in the name of Jesus, miracles will happen.

We then watched a short video highlighting the work of Tear Fund in Pakistan following the recent disastrous floods. We will be supporting this work by sending them our Harvest Offering today.

After the video, our Harvest offerings were taken during the singing of another harvest hymn, sung to the tune of "We plough the fields and scatter", which Trevor again played for us.

We see the fruitful harvest our gracious God provides, and how, in his abundance, our needs are satisfied.

He sends the yearly seasons and feeds ,with joy and care,
pure light and living water poured out for all to share.
Lord of all the harvest, creation brings you praise,
so we will join the joyful song of everything you've made.

This world of revelation unfolds before our eyes,
the birds sing out God's glories, His wisdom fills the skies.
The seeds are sown to teach us of death that leads to life,
the fruitful trees remind us to live each day in Christ.
Lord of all the harvest.....

There is another harvest, the workers are so few,
we'll tend the seeds he's planted and see his word bear fruit.
Creation groans in longing for earth to be restored,
that day of celebration, the harvest of the Lord!
Lord of all the harvest.....

Songwriter: Sam Hargreave CCLI SONG # 7131467 Copyright@ ResoundMusic.Org. CCL no 5664

After receiving our gifts, Colin prayed:

Thank you Heavenly Father for these gifts. We give them to you for you to use to help Tearfund in Pakistan, to solve the problems there. For your namesake, Amen

Shirley reads Psalm 65

Praise awaits you, our God, in Zion; to you our vows will be fulfilled.
You who answer prayer, to you all people will come.
When we were overwhelmed by sins, you forgave our transgressions.
Blessed are those you choose and bring near to live in your courts!
We are filled with the good things of your house, of your holy temple.
You answer us with awesome and righteous deeds, God our Saviour,
the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas,
who formed the mountains by your power, having armed yourself with strength,
who stilled the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves,
and the turmoil of the nations.
The whole earth is filled with awe at your wonders;
where morning dawns, where evening fades, you call forth songs of joy.
You care for the land and water it; you enrich it abundantly.
The streams of God are filled with water to provide the people with grain,
for so you have ordained it.
You drench its furrows and level its ridges;
you soften it with showers and bless its crops.
You crown the year with your bounty,
and your carts overflow with abundance.
The grasslands of the wilderness overflow; the hills are clothed with gladness.
The meadows are covered with flocks and the valleys are mantled with grain;
they shout for joy and sing.

Colin then invited Joy - his glamorous assistant (and wife) - to come forward and offer everyone a square of chocolate - to which he himself is very partial!! He said this was an excuse to eat chocolate, but served as a reminder that as a country we are not as self sufficient as we imagine, but rely on farmers, growers and producers all over the world to provide us with food we need (- and like!). We then watched a short video about the making of chocolate , before another song was shown on the screen, a lighthearted Harvest Samba song, sung by children - with gusto!!

Cabbages and greens, broccoli and beans,
cauliflower and roasted potatoes, taste so good to me!

Apricots and plums, ripened in the sun,
oranges and yellow bananas, good for everyone!

It's another Harvest Festival when we bring our fruit and vegetables,
'cause we want to share the best of all the good things that we've been given.
It's another opportunity to be grateful for the food we eat,
with a samba celebration to say "Thank you" to God the Father..

Golden corn and wheat, oats and sugar beet,
fluffy rice and tasty spaghetti, wonderful to eat!
Coffee, cocoa, tea, growing naturally,
herbal plants and all kinds of spices, very nice indeed!

It's another Harvest Festival when we bring our fruit and vegetables....

Thank you for the harvest, thank you for your goodness,
for all the fruit and vegetables and the wonderful things that grow.

It's another Harvest Festival when we bring our fruit and vegetables.....

Authors: Helen Johnson, Mark Johnson CCLI SONG #3916935 Copyright © 2002 Out of the Ark Ltd, Middlesex TW12 2HD
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Colin then left the pulpit, and produced from a carrier bag a number of items, including bread, pasta, spaghetti hoops, weetabix, crisps and others. He asked what they had in common - the answer he was looking for was: wheat. (or Jean N can't eat any of them!!) He continued:

The Bread of Life

Wheat is an example of a super crop. Corn, beans and rice are other examples of super crops. (He then produced a number of food stuffs which had one thing in common - wheat) As we can see from these wheat-based food-products wheat-flour is a very versatile ingredient. Indeed, wheat has been such an important part of our diet down the centuries that in times of food-shortages and famine, experts talk about people being on or below the breadline. Below the bread line means that you are in a desperate state. When we prayed the Lord's Prayer, we asked God to 'Give us this day our daily bread'. In other words, may we not be in a state of want.

Similarly, from a spiritual point of view, we can talk about people being on or below the breadline, insofar as Jesus declared himself to be the Bread of Life. *'I am the living bread who has come down from heaven. He who believes in me has everlasting life.'* We live at a time of great spiritual famine. And this can be seen in so many ways. We have a God-shaped core at the centre of our being. The Bible calls it the soul. This can only be adequately filled with Christ. But we cannot live with this emptiness, so people will try to fill it in all kinds of ways, such as through pleasure, drugs, wealth, and even religion. But none of these can satisfy our deep spiritual hunger. Only the Spirit of Christ can do that, for only the presence of Christ give fill us with the eternal life of God.

Jean W leads our prayers for others:

Let us pray:

Heavenly Father it is good to come before you this morning. We thank you for all you have done for us over the past week for the blessings we have received and even the challenges we have had to face. It is good knowing that we can talk to you anytime, anywhere and about anything.

We thank you that you sent your son to die on the cross to take away our sins and we are sorry for the times we have sinned this week and ask for your forgiveness so we can start again and to keep trying to live a more Christ like life.

Today we celebrate our Harvest Festival which traditionally is the time of the year when farmers harvest the crops grown during the spring and summer so we all have food to eat. This is a very simple explanation, and it may appear a very easy task but farmers work very hard. They need the right weather to help them grow their crops and then wisdom to know the best time to harvest them. This year has been tough for many farmers as global warming is causing extremes of weather and Lord we ask loving guidance for all farmers, that they are all able to look after their land, their crops, and their animals under increasingly difficult circumstances as they need to provide for their families too.

This week has been different. The death of Queen Elizabeth 11 has bought us up a bit short! We know she was 96 and frail but she has been a constant in our lives for 70 years and her death brings about a lot of change. We thank you for her life of service not just to the people of this country and the Commonwealth but her service to You Lord which has sustained her reign and we ask that You will now sustain King Charles and we pray that he will continually turn to you for guidance. The funeral on Monday was an amazing spectacle and very much a Christian service for the whole country to see but now Lord grant the Royal Family the time to grieve and come to terms with all the changes that have come about from the late Queens death.

Father we bring to you all the areas of the world that are facing conflicts. We ask that you look after the people of The Ukraine they are suffering intolerable attacks on their country. Please put a restraining hand on the Russian leader's heart to make him aware of the pain all this needless killing is causing to both countries and for what?

Lord the people of Pakistan are suffering dreadfully too due to the severe flooding which will probably be attributed to global warming. Help the aid workers to reach those in greatest need and give them courage to go to the very hard to reach areas. Also be with the people of Japan as they have experienced the dreadful results of a typhoon. Please prompt the leaders of the world that they do the best they can to attain the targets to help reduce carbon emissions that are causing global warming.

Be with the new Prime minister and the new Cabinet; help them all to carry out their duties with integrity and honesty and to understand the very real fears that so many people have re the rising cost of living and the huge increases in the energy prices. Lord please be with those people who are really scared about how they will manage this winter let them feel your love and calm that they will find a way through and give them courage if they feel the need to use Food banks for the first time there is no shame trying to feed yourself and your family and help us to be good neighbours and be alert to anyone who may be struggling.

Father be with the leaders of our town of Blackburn. Help them to be impartial and unbiased and to do their best for all people of any race and belief.

We thank you for our church family. As with all families we sometimes have differences of opinions help us to be understanding and forgiving with each other. Give patience to those who are awaiting test results and hospital appointments, and Lord please be close to those who need your extra love and care especially those who are nearing the close of their life. Give us patience to await decisions that have to be made and please prepare us whatever the outcomes of those decisions. Be with the leadership team as they work hard on our behalf to ensure the running and care of the building along with a host of other jobs.

Lord there seems to be a lot of changes and difficulties at the moment but you created this world for us all to share. Help us to live simply so that our lives reflect your kindness help us to live in the best way possible to help protect your world so that those who come after us can enjoy the beauty of your creation.

Father we ask you for so much and we are so grateful and thankful for all you do for us each day. Please guide and help us in the coming week, until we meet as a family again next Sunday.

In the loving name of Jesus

Amen

Colin shared a short message after asking us to get our thinking caps on, and using letters from the word Harvest, list as many words as possible.

He used some of the words he himself had found to illustrate his points:



EARTH – Psalm 24 proclaims the glorious truth that *‘The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who dwell therein.’* Harvest reminds us to celebrate the fact that the Lord of the Harvest is indeed the Lord of Creation. We live in an abundant world, one that provides us with such amazing things to enjoy, from the flowers of the field to the fruits of the forest. It always strikes me as utterly staggering that when every other planet in our Solar System is so barren and wasted, we live on one that can support an incredible array of life. Indeed, scientists tell us that if the earth was a bit closer to the sun or a bit further away, the earth would probably be no different than Venus or Mars. And yet atheists tell us that this is one of the great cosmic coincidences, but in contrast, Psalm 19 declare that *‘The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.’* The Bible begins with the greatest of statements in Genesis 1 regarding the origin of the world: *‘In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.* Everything in this incredible world of ours, everything that we can see, hear, smell, taste, and feel, and appreciate, from the beauty of the hills and countryside, the sounds of birdlife, the smell of flowers, the sweet taste of fruit and honey, and the texture of fur and wool, cotton and silk, is ultimately due to the greatness of our Creator God. And what is even more remarkable is that, according to the Bible, we were created in the Image of God and therefore able to appreciate all the wonders of Creation and declare with the Creator that everything is good. Harvest gives us a wonderful opportunity to do exactly that and to worship our Creator God, the Lord of Creation, and join in with Louis Armstrong and declare ‘What a wonderful world!’

HAVE and **EAT** – The Psalmist declares *‘Blessed be the LORD, who daily loads us with benefits.’* Our tables testify daily to the faithfulness of our Creator God. We wander around our supermarkets and we see every possible food and drink on offer. Food products from around the globe fill the shelves. We are entertained on our TVs with endless cookery programmes, bake-offs, and masterchef series, all producing meals and products that are tasted and then no doubt thrown away. My parents’ generation suffered genuine shortages from time to time, and no doubt even went hungry on occasions during the war years, but I’ve reached nearly 70 and I possess no memory of any times when there was no food available and when three square meals could not be made, and I wasn’t brought up in a wealthy home, either. Such has been God’s goodness towards us as a nation. We are all members of the ‘haves’ rather than the ‘have nots’; we eat our fill and go to bed satisfied. And so, harvest is a time to express our gratitude to all those who are involved in the food chain, from farmers and fruit-pickers, truck-drivers and food-producers, meal-makers and shop-workers. We go to the supermarket and buy produce and as a rule we don’t give a thought to what effort has been expended to get that packet into our hands. And ultimately, of course, harvest allows us to thank the Lord, personally, for these many gifts that we so often take for granted, but which are signs of God’s providence and provision.

A **HEART** to **SHARE** with those who **STARVE** – Yet the Psalmist also declares *‘Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.’* And Proverbs 14 tells us: *‘Whoever oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honours God.’* Harvest is a time to think about the many in our world who lack the essentials of life, whose lives are blighted by hunger and thirst. In a world that has so much to offer, when the rich countries throw away vast quantities of unwanted food because packages have passed the sell and use by dates, it is still the case that so many people are beset with being unable to satisfy even the most basic of needs, the need for food and clean water. We’ve seen on our television screens only in the past few weeks a major flood disaster unfolding in Pakistan, a member of the British commonwealth, in which up to a third of the country has been swamped by water, which has destroyed crops and communities, leaving millions in a desperate state. Our collection-offering this morning will go towards reaching out to the people of this proud country to overcome the terrible plight they find themselves in, which is not of their own making. For has the man said on the TEAR FUND video, this level of flooding has never been known before.

TARES and **TEARS** – Harvest also reminds us of the great moral principle of life that what we sow in our lives we will also reap. If we sow evil and misery, these things will certainly come back to bite us one way or another. This principle follows a basic agricultural truth: that if we plant, say, potatoes we can expect to gather potatoes and not carrots – and so on! So, if we sow bitterness, we will surely harvest the fruits of bitterness in our hearts and lives. More than this, the Bible teaches us that the wages of sin is death and that because we all have sinned and fall far short of the standard that God has set in order to inherit eternal life, we cannot enter heaven when we die on our own perceived merits or goodness.

SAVE and **REST** – In the many stories that Jesus told, he used farming analogies to explain his mission as the Saviour of the world. At the end of the Parable of the Sower, he exclaimed *‘He that has ears to hear, let him hear.’* In another story, the Parable of the Wheat and Weeds, he compares the harvest at the end of the summer season with the great judgement at the end of the age. The harvested wheat represents those who are saved and enter into God’s eternal rest, whereas the tares are the weeds of the field that grow alongside the wheat and are separated out at the harvest and are then burnt up. This picture is a very solemn one for it reminds us that there is a heaven to gain and a hell to shun, and it is the gospel of Jesus Christ that makes all the difference. So, Harvest Thanksgiving is a wonderful time to celebrate the gifts of God, not only for our physical needs, but also for our spiritual needs. Have you accepted Jesus as your Saviour and Lord, whose death on the cross has brought about salvation, or are you resting on your own merits to achieve the great harvest at the end of the age? May the Lord grant you the faith to respond positively to the gospel call of the Lord of the Harvest: *‘Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.’* Amen

Finally, Colin invited those who wished to stand and sing one of the most familiar Harvest Hymns, which Trevor played: (again, we sang slightly modified words)

Come, you thankful people, come, raise the song of harvest home!
fruit and crops are gathered in now, 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!

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.

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.

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!

Author: Henry Alford (1810 - 1871) CCLI SONG #1039093 COPYRIGHTS@1982 The Jubilate Group Ltd CCL No 5664

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, evermore, Amen.

The weekly notices were displayed on the screen both before and after the service, and included a notice for Church Members, stating that the planned Church Members Meeting scheduled to take place on September 20th had been postponed until Tuesday October 4th, and would now be preceded by a Special Church Meeting:

Next Church Meeting (for Church Members)

Advance notice that the next Church Meeting, which was originally planned for Tuesday 20 September, is being postponed to **Tuesday 4 October**

This will be preceded **at 7.15 pm** on the same day by a Special Church Meeting focused on adoption of a new (interim) Constitution for BBC

(The revised constitution has been distributed electronically to members, if you require a written copy please ask Jane, the Church Secretary)

