

Christ Church

High Harrogate



Mark 9:38 - end

A Parish service for when we're
UNITED but APART

on the

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY



after **TRINITY**

Harvest Thanksgiving

29th September 2023

Welcome to Christ Church, praying and united, with the whole Church of God ; may this bring a blessing upon your home, as also upon the needs of loved ones and the world,

We build upon all that we have shared and shared still, as now we rejoice in our renewal in Christ's grace, gather as the Church, and unite in fellowship, proclamation and prayer from the place of our own homes.

Be it 8am or 10am or other _ still, maybe, the wisdom to quieten our mobile phone  and be very much in prayer  .

Please sit very comfortably.

Please feel free to sing ; and maybe to speak some parts of this prayer time out-loud _ you may find it surprisingly helpful.

Please, above all, simply know that we are all together ; and as we pray where we are now, so do many many more, across the town, across these towns, and across the world,

The Lord is here.

His Spirit is with us.

Matthew

The Greeting

In welcome of one-another, near or far -

Come, let us celebrate in thanks.

Let us come as guests,
and to one another, hosts.

Come, be we lame, blind, crippled, poor,
be we rich, fearful, faithful or seeking -
come quickly.
and follow the example of the Lord.

Today we celebrate again this meeting with our Lord.
Today we renew our commitment to His Kingdom.
From today again, we work and pray that
nobody will stay hungry.

In the faith of Christ,
let us Come.

The Grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ,
the Love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us all.

[And also with you.]

Prayers of Penitence

As we prepare to meet with Christ
in faithfulness and prayer,
let us confess
our wastefulness of creation,
our forgetfulness of all we are given
and of the needs of our neighbour ;
and let us renew our place
as wise stewards
of God's creation :

- *Silence is kept for a short time, in Confession and Prayer.*



Lord, you give justice to those who are suffering,
and bread to those who hunger.

Lord, lead us -

All Lord, have mercy.

Lord, you loose those who are bound,
and open the eyes of the blind.

Christ, lead us -

All Christ, have mercy

Lord, you watch over the stranger in the land,
and you uphold the orphan and the widow.

Lord, lead us -

All Lord, have mercy

In sharing and receiving the Absolution of God :

May Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent,
have mercy upon us,
pardon and deliver us from all our sins,
confirm and strengthen us in all goodness,
and keep us in life eternal ;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Collect



Eternal God,
you crown the year with your goodness
and you give us the fruits of the earth in their season :
grant that we may
use them to your glory,
for the relief of those in need
and for our own well-being ;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

The Liturgy of the Word



The First Reading - Numbers 11 : 4 - 6, 10 - 16, 24 - 29

The rabble among them had a strong craving ; and the Israelites also wept again, and said, 'If only we had meat to eat ! 5 We remember the fish we used to eat in Egypt for nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic ; 6 but now our strength is dried up, and there is nothing at all but this manna to look at.' . . . 10 Moses heard the people weeping throughout their families, all at the entrances of their tents. Then the Lord became very angry, and Moses was displeased. 11 So Moses said to the Lord, 'Why have you treated your servant so badly ? Why have I not found favour in your sight, that you lay the burden of all this people on me ? 12 Did I conceive all this people ? Did I give birth to them, that you should say to me, "Carry them in your bosom, as a nurse carries a sucking child, to the land that you promised on oath to their ancestors" ? 13 Where am I to get meat to give to all this people ? For they come weeping to me and say, "Give us meat to eat !" 14 I am not able to carry all this people alone, for they are too heavy for me. 15 If this is the way you are going to treat me, put me to death at once - if I have found favour in your sight - and do not let me see my misery.' 16 So the Lord said to Moses, 'Gather for me seventy of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them; bring them to the tent of meeting, and have them take their place there with you. . . . 24 So Moses went out and told the people the words of the Lord ; and he gathered seventy elders of the people, and placed them all around the tent. 25 Then the Lord came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders ; and when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied. But they did not do so again. 26 Two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, and the spirit rested on them ; they were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp. 27 And a young man ran and told Moses, 'Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.' 28 And Joshua son of Nun, the assistant of Moses, one of his chosen men, said, 'My lord Moses, stop them !' 29 But Moses said to him, 'Are you jealous for my sake ? Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit on them !'

New Revised Standard Version

This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

The Second Reading - *James 5:13-20*

Are any among you suffering ? They should pray. Are any cheerful ? They should sing songs of praise. ¹⁴ Are any among you sick ? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵ The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up ; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. ¹⁶ Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective. ¹⁷ Elijah was a human being like us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. ¹⁸ Then he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain and the earth yielded its harvest. ¹⁹ My brothers and sisters, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and is brought back by another, ²⁰ you should know that whoever brings back a sinner from wandering will save the sinner's soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

New Revised Standard Version

This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

CLICK below to hear our **CHOIR** lead us. SORRY that the sound quality is not all we want it to be, but please use your imagination and your memory. **Hymn**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m2_C4QUvajY

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.*

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 : *All good gifts . . .*

We thank thee then O Father,
for all things bright and good ;
the seed-time and the harvest,
our life, our health, our food.
No gifts have we to offer
for all thy love imparts,
but that which thou desirest,
our humble, thankful hearts : *All good gifts . . .*

*Words : Matthias Claudius 1740 – 1815, tr. Jane Campbell 1817 – 78
Tune : Wir Pflügen*

The Gospel Reading - Mark 9 : 38 - end



The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark.
Glory to you, O Lord.

John said to him, 'Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.' 39 But Jesus said, 'Do not stop him ; for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterwards to speak evil of me. 40 Whoever is not against us is for us. 41 For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward. 42 If any of you put a stumbling-block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea. 43 If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off ; it is better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. *45 And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off ; it is better for you to enter life lame than to have two feet and to be thrown into hell. *47 And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out ; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into hell, 48 where their worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched. 49 For everyone will be salted with fire. 50 Salt is good ; but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can you season it ? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.'

New Revised Standard Version

** Vv. 44 and 46 (identical with verse 48) are lacking in the best ancient authorities*

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All Praise to you, O Christ.

The Sermon



The Revd Caroline Taylor (Curate)

Today marks a special day of celebration in this season of Creationtide. It is wonderful to thank God for all that the earth richly provides and for the beauty of creation. It reminds us that there is something brighter, more striking, glorious, and more significant than everything we hold onto. So, today, I want to inspire us to broaden our spiritual horizons to understand our sacred relationship with God and his creation and that he is the sustainer and redeemer, not just of us but the whole world.

But are we always ready and open to being inspired by God's creation and His word? Are we seeking to foster an attitude of thanksgiving and gratitude for all He has provided us? In today's Old Testament reading, we enter the story of the Israelites as they attempt their first approach to the Promised Land. This is a story of God's unwavering love and provision and the Israelites' struggle to trust in Him. In the lead-up to this moment, God has been preparing them physically and spiritually as his people set apart for His purposes. However, instead of faith and dedication to the one who has brought them out of slavery and set them on the path to freedom, the people are grumbling and weeping. "If only we had meat to eat!" They cry. Instead of appreciating the fresh manna provided daily by God, they would much rather be living as enslaved people. They longed for the food they had in Egypt despite God's miraculous provision of manna. God's provision wasn't good enough for them, and they turned their backs on him in disgust. No wonder the Lord became angry and Moses was displeased!

When we hear this story, it's easy to criticise the Israelites' lack of faith and integrity. But if we're honest, how much more are we the same? When faced with our journeys through the ups and downs of daily life, do we readily look to God and trust in him? Or do we look for other solutions to satisfy our cravings and grumblings? We live in a consumer society that enables instant access to virtually any goods we desire. It is easy to click a button to order whatever we like, night or day. Or add far too much food into our supermarket trolley. Our inner cravings are satisfied, and our eyes are slowly turned away from God, causing us to put our trust and hope in all the wrong things. This behaviour also places us at the centre of our thoughts and actions. If we focus entirely on what we want and need, we leave very little room to consider those in greater need than us and exercise due care and stewardship of the earth's resources that God has so generously entrusted to us.

I am only too aware of my sin in this area, and I'm sure this will resonate with you, too. In today's Gospel reading, Jesus is quite blunt about the action we need to take. It's better to take drastic

action and cut sinful habits out of our lives - it's better to be lame than to have two feet and be thrown into hell (Mk 9:45). In James' letter, there's a powerful reminder that if we confess our sins to God and each other, then we will be saved, healed and restored. Now is the time to turn our back on our greed, pride, and selfishness for our well-being and the planet. Jesus also reminds us that we are no good to him if we allow ourselves to be ruled by our sinful desires. How can we be a 'salty' presence if our desires and intentions are set on other things? If we turn to God in repentance, he fills us again with his spirit, enabling us to change and take a new direction.

So, returning to my opening thoughts about today, how can celebrating Harvest help us focus spiritually on God and his righteousness? Firstly, we have God's word to live by and guide us. Psalm 19 (today's psalm) gives us a beautiful poetic picture of our relationship with the divine creation, our role as stewards, and the divine instruction of the law of the Lord. When faced with hardship in the desert, the Israelites quickly rejected God and his promises; by contrast, the Psalm teaches us that the Lord's ways are perfect and reviving to our souls, enabling rejoicing in our hearts and giving light to our eyes. Because the Israelites complained so much, a whole generation ended up wandering in the desert for forty years, stuck in a pattern of grumbling, defiance and death. It took a new generation of faithful Israelites to forge ahead in faith and trust to possess the Promised Land. Let us not find ourselves heading on the same path of destruction.

What's important is that we seek to align our desires with God's truth that he designed us to be part of creation and serve and protect it. This season, we have the opportunity to examine how well or not we relate to the resources God has entrusted into our care, how well we are seeking to protect the habitats in our locality, and what we're doing to reduce pollution and reduce, reuse, and recycle. We do all of this in our belief of the resurrection that the risen Lord Jesus is, in fact, Lord of all, including ourselves. God is sustaining and redeeming all of creation, and he invites us to come alongside him in the task. We might only manage to do things on a small scale, but that's ok.

What can help is to be aware of what other Christians are doing; we can learn from each other, be inspired in our prayers and be motivated to keep going, especially when the task seems too great. Our hope and vision must remain steadfast on the truth that Jesus will return and the new creation will finally be fully realised; until that day, let us be inspired to play our part in the story of renewal and redemption for the sake of this world and the whole of creation. Amen.

The Revd Caroline Taylor

The Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried ;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again ;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come
to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

The Prayers of Intercession



As children and pilgrims of a loving God who always listens to our cries, we are invited to come before God, in all that we are, and with all the prayer we need make.

Let us pray to God,
the Lord of the harvest,
that he will bring to fruition
all that he desires for his creation.



Under Christ may we all give thanks for the good gifts of
creation and God's grace in our life, and still may our gaze be
ever only upon God ; help us to show the way of salvation
and the promise of glory.

Lord in your mercy - Hear our prayer.

Give light to those who walk in the darkness of fears, of worry,
and of threat ; bring peace and freedom to the anxious ; bless
each our labours, and bring fruitful harvests - which nourish the
world and feeds our daily bread.

Lord in your mercy - Hear our prayer.

Lead us and guide us to bring hope to the those around us ;
to bless the creation upon which we walk and from which we
receive ; to bless and be blessed in the common good of your
kingdom.

Lord in your mercy - Hear our prayer.

May your compassion be great upon those whose harvests fail,
those who are sick, those who are hungry or without their daily
needs ; hear the prayers of our heart for those in all need.

Lord in your mercy - hear our prayer.

Receive into your kingdom without fear, those who have fulfilled
their days on earth, and bless with peace, hope and comfort
those who mourn ;

Lord in your mercy - Hear our prayer.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name ; thy
kingdom come ; thy will be done ; on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our
trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead
us not into temptation ; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the
kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

CLICK below to hear Louise from our Choir lead us **The Dismissal**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1K72HxaCaQw>

**The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want.
He makes me lie in pastures green.
He leads me by the still, still waters,
His goodness restores my soul.**

*And I will trust in you alone.
And I will trust in you alone,
for your endless mercy follows me,
your goodness will lead me home.*

**He guides my ways in righteousness,
and he anoints my head with oil,
and my cup, it overflows with joy,
I feast on his pure delights.**

*And I will trust in you alone.
And I will trust in you alone,
for your endless mercy follows me,
your goodness will lead me home.*

**And though I walk the darkest path,
I will not fear the evil one,
for you are with me, and your rod and staff
are the comfort I need to know.**

*And I will trust in you alone.
And I will trust in you alone,
for your endless mercy follows me,
your goodness will lead me home.*

Words & Music : Stuart Townend (c)1996 Thankyou Music



The Blessing



May God our creator,
 who clothes the lilies of the field and
 feeds the birds of the air,
bestow on us his care
and increase the harvest of our righteousness ;
and may the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among us and remain with us always.
Amen.

The Peace

Christ is our peace.
We live under his name
and we share his peace ;
may the Peace of the Lord be always with us :

*Please look to your ROOM and HOME _
- - - please look from your WINDOW - - -*

In our place, heart and home, and to all the world :

The peace of the Lord be always with you.
 { - and also with you. Alleluia }

The Dismissal

In truth let us go into this day in peace ;
and may we love and serve the Lord
in the name of Christ. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Thank you for joining in this prayer.