

Mears Ashby and Hardwick and Sywell with Overstone



**Prayers and Reflections
for use at home**

**Sunday 21 September 2025
Celebrating Harvest**

Welcome to this week's Prayers and Reflections. Across the benefice, over two Sundays, we are celebrating the gathering in of all of the cereals and vegetables, fruits and berries that have been growing in fields, orchards and hedgerows, gardens and allotments. For farmers, gardeners and allotment holders, it has been a challenging few months, with too little rain to swell the grain. Whilst there have been low yields on arable crops, our fruit trees have had bumper ones. If you have a garden, what's been your experience?

Every harvest is an opportunity to give thanks to our Creator God for the gift of life and love. It is a time when we can acknowledge, as co-carers, our responsibility for the wellbeing of our planet home. All life on earth has a right to thrive. Let's pray for this.

God bless,

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*As we begin to celebrate the fruitfulness of God's creation,
we offer our thanks and praise for the abundance of good things
that are all around us.*



Praise and thanksgiving,
Father, we offer,
for all things living
thou madest good;
harvest of sown fields,
fruits of the orchard,
hay from the mown fields,
blossom and wood.

Albert Frederick Bayly (1901-1984) - CCLI reported

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Trusting

PREPARING OURSELVES

Take a moment to be still in God's presence and drink in the wondrous beauty of his glorious creation. If you wish, go and look at your garden. Where can you see signs of God's presence and his loving provision? Open your heart to him. Receive of his love as you offer your thanks and praise. When you are ready, say this prayer.

Lord, here I am,
surrounded by your beautiful creation,
sitting in the peace of my home.
All that I have and all that I am is your gift to me.
As I offer you the gift of this time,
give of yourself to me, I pray. **Amen.**

LETTING GO

*Our time of letting go begins with the second verse of our harvest hymn, **Praise and thanksgiving**. It reminds us that the fruits of all of our efforts are our offering to the God who made us. It is a call to share God's abundance so that all may have enough. In these days of climate change, we are very conscious that our neighbours are not just human ones. Wildlife needs to share in God's generous provision too. Who is calling out for daily bread when, in this country, we waste so much of the food we buy or cook?*

What is this verse saying to you this harvest-time?

*Offer your praise and prayers,
seeking God's forgiveness
and asking for his guidance
as you share his goodness
with others.*





Bless thou the labour
we bring to serve thee,
that with our neighbour
we may be fed.
Sowing or tilling,
we would work with thee;
harvesting, milling
for daily bread.

Albert Frederick Bayly (1901-1984)

I've started reading a book by Rowan Williams, the former Archbishop of Canterbury. By a God-breathed coincidence, I read this phrase just before I sat down to write these harvest reflections. It speaks to us of God's centrality to our lives. 'You are because God is,' Rowan writes.

OUR HARVEST COLLECT

Across this season of Creation-tide, this Harvest Collect is being said in churches across our villages and across the globe. Add your voice to this earthly cycle of praise and promise to our God who made us with love.

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 peoples,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Our prayer comes in two parts. First, it is a heartfelt celebration of God's abundant creating. Season by season, he provides for all of our needs, and for all living creatures and all of the vegetation that sustains life. We are because God does all of this. He is constantly creating and re-creating life on earth in all of its many forms.

*Contemplate nature - What fills you with joy and happiness? Give thanks!
Give thanks as you celebrate the life that is below, above, and around us.
All of these are signs of God's creative presence, and our delight in the life
he has spoken into being with love.*

A Prayer of Thanksgiving

for the earth

For this earth,
this good earth,
for the work and life of nematodes,
of worms and woodlice
and all creatures that work the soil.
Thank You for the ground on which we walk,
for its firmness and fecundity.

For tadpoles that wriggle and sunfish that sparkle,
for all the swimming, skimming, diving life
that fills earth's watery veins and arteries,
for rivers and oceans and lakes and puddles,
for hydrogen and oxygen that marry to slake life's thirst.
Thank You for the water from which life emerges
and by which life thrives.

For sunlight and starlight
and the shining of the moon,
for darkness and shadow and earth's subtle turning,
for tides and for seasons,
for the cycling of fallow and fertile.
Thank You for the rhythm of sleeping and waking,
of being and making.

Thank You.

Carla A. Grosch-Miller (2014)

*Nature - of which, we are a part - speaks of God's presence. God is.
Without him, there would be no life - no earth - no universe, and this is
why we say, 'Thank You! Thank You! Thank You!'*

If we tune our lives and our hearts into him, we feel his call to us - 'Share, share what you have as freely as I have given.' And, this leads us into the second-half of our Harvest prayer where we ask God to help us to look after - cherish - our planet home and all of its inhabitants. It is a call to oneness of living as a human race (family) and as Planet Earth.

Ponder this beautiful image - of life as it could be. Think of the one step you could take to be more at one with God and the whole of his creation. Offer this to God with our penultimate verse.



Father, providing
food for thy children,
thy wisdom guiding
teaches us share
one with another,
so that rejoicing
with us, our brother
may know thy care.

Albert Frederick Bayly (1901-1984)

LISTENING TO GOD'S WORD

Do not worry...

Jesus said, 'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?

'And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labour or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you – you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "What

shall we wear?" For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Matthew 6:25-34

... Trust in God's providing.

For some of our farmers, this harvest has been a very poor one. Weeks, months without any appreciable rain resulted in stunted crops with ears containing far less grain than past years. Financially, it is an anxious time for them. This reading is a source of hope as climate change impacts on our harvests. Its message is 'Don't worry. Trust that God is, and listen. Listen to what he is saying, listen to what nature and the seasons are saying. Seek to work in time with creation as it is and as it will be.'

Don't worry! It is hard to stop worrying when we have a reason to worry, to worry about the wellbeing of our planet home... to worry about what's happening in Ukraine and Gaza and the other troubled nations... to worry about our own life or health, or that of a loved one. Harvest reminds us, God is and God provides. We may not yet see a way out of our worries, but God is. God does. We can trust him.

Feel this as you picture the scene in our Lord's sermon. Feel this as, prayerfully, you contemplate this concluding verse. It speaks of this line from the Lord's Prayer, 'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.'
You are a part of God's providing. May his will be done.



Then will thy blessing
reach every people;
freely confessing
thy gracious hand.
Where thy will reigneth
no one will hunger:
thy love sustaineth;
fruitful the land.

Albert Frederick Bayly (1901-1984)

OUR PRAYERS

Feel free to say these harvest prayers and to add your own.

Giving God, all that I have, all that I am, you have given to me.
You give me life, and I love you with every fibre of my being.
Teach me to love as you love, and to give as you have given to me...
Lord, hear my prayer.

Creating God, thank you for the beauty of Planet Earth,
and for all that sustains life. As a human race, help us to live at one
with each other and with nature. Forgive our sins, heal our living...
Lord, hear my prayer.

Loving God, thank you for all who care for those who are sick:
doctors and nurses, carers and vets. Bless, Lord, all in their care.
Calm those who are anxious. Dissolve their worries, I pray...
Lord, hear my prayer.

Offer your own heartfelt prayers and yearnings, praise and thanksgivings.

The Lord's 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.
And 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.**

PRAYER OF BLESSING

A closing prayer of blessing for this week.

O God, you search me and you know me,
all my thoughts and feelings are open to your gaze,
and you provide for me. Guide my daily living.
Bless me and keep my loved ones safe, I pray. **Amen.**