

St. Mary's Church Cubbington



Trinity 17
Sunday 4th October

Sunday Message 4th October 2020

Hello again and greetings from the vicarage.

Today being the first Sunday in October would normally have been our Harvest Festival. Due to the restrictions of numbers in church, today is a service of Holy Communion from Common Worship with Harvest readings.

So, what is Harvest Thanksgiving?

It's a more modern addition to the church calendar. Its origins are traced back to the adaption in 1843 of Lamas Day by the Revd R. S. Hawker, a parish priest in Cornwall.

*Revd. R. S. Hawkers
Parish in Cornwall.*



He chose the first Sunday in October as a Christian response to coincide with the traditional but largely secular 'harvest home' celebration.

However, there is some evidence to suggest that a thanksgiving for the harvest was already a relatively widespread practice.

An annual church celebration of the harvest established itself rapidly with great popularity and was first recognized officially in the Church of England in 1862.

Since then many local traditions have developed.

Here at St. Mary's our tradition has been to bring gifts of food into church which are displayed and then made into small parcels and delivered to local people and charities.

I'm sure you will have read in the Parish News that this year we are trying something a little different. We are asking if anyone would like to donate an item of food (tins and packets) and to deliver them to the home of one of the people listed.

On the afternoon of Friday 23rd October, the food will be available to collect from the village Hall for anyone who would benefit from a little support.

Anyone unable to get to the Village Hall who would also benefit from a parcel will have it delivered to their home.

If you would like to nominate someone to receive a parcel please contact me.

Our Harvest readings are **Psalm 65** and the gospel is from **John chapter 6 verses 25- 35**.

The theme of the Psalm is that God provides abundantly and so we can be thankful to God for His many blessings.

Psalm 65

**Praise awaits you, our God, in Zion; to you our vows will be fulfilled.
O you who hear prayer, to you all men 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 deeds of righteousness,
O 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.
Those living far away fear 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 corn, 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 corn;
they shout for joy and sing.**

In the Old Testament times vows were taken very seriously, once made it was binding.

The vow that we read about in our Psalm is the promise from God to answer our prayers.

In those early times access to God was through the priests who lived in the Temple Courts. They were the only ones who were allowed to go into the sacred rooms where God's presence resided.

Because of Jesus' death on the cross, believers today have full access to God's presence in every place and at every time.

The harvest psalm glorifies God the Creator as we see every day in the beauty of nature. Nature helps us to understand something of God's character.

The Jews believed that God's care of nature was a sign of His love and provision for them. Nature shows us God's generosity in giving us more than we need or deserve. God's abundant generosity should make us grateful to Him whilst being generous to others.

Today as much as any other day it is good to think about what we need and what makes us happy.

I say this because I believe we live in a society where instead of being thankful we are becoming more and more demanding.

It's rather sad that our society's biggest problem is that we have run out of ways to get rid of the stuff that we throw away! The more we have does not mean the happier we are.

Often the more we have the more we seem to need.

We all need a certain amount to get by, but not that much, Jesus knew that.

John 6: 25-35 Jesus the Bread of Life

²⁵ When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, "Rabbi, when did you get here?"

²⁶ Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill.

²⁷ Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you.

On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval."

²⁸ Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?"

²⁹ Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."

³⁰ So they asked him, "What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? ³¹ Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'

³² Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven.

³³ For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

³⁴ "Sir," they said, "from now on give us this bread."

³⁵ Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.

Rich people are not happier because they are rich.

Indeed, sometimes the worry of their wealth and what to do with it makes them very unhappy.

One of the problems is that as we live in an affluent society we become spoiled.

Luxuries which we once deeply appreciated we take for granted.

We need to remind ourselves of how fortunate we are and become more contented with less.

In complete contrast to the sort of lives we live, I've been reading about the work from one of the charities that our church supports.

It is from Embrace the Middle East, a charity that does great work in and around the Holy Land. In the latest edition they report on the Zabaleen community in Cairo.

One person's rubbish is another person's treasure.

Each day the Zabaleen (which translated from the Egyptian Arabic literally means '**garbage people**') workers visit the homes and businesses of Egypt's capital by horse and cart collecting rubbish and taking it back to their community for sorting, re-using and re-selling.

The collecting is generally done by the men of the community while the women, children, and elderly wait for the rubbish to be brought back for sorting.



Recyclable materials are sold, food waste given to the community's pigs, and other materials burnt.

It is back-breaking, dirty, dangerous work that provides a meagre existence.

It is impossible to explain just how bad the conditions are that the Zabaleens live in. One million people squeezed into slums interspersed with rubbish dumps.

Life is hard and the average life expectancy is 57.



Zabaleen community in Cairo

There is one small glimmer of hope in the middle of the chaos and filth, and that is Embrace's partner The Salaam Centre run by the Sisters of The Daughters of St. Mary, a Coptic Orthodox Order.

The centre offers two children's nurseries, a school, a children's health clinic, vocational workshops, a hospital, a home for the elderly and a rehabilitation centre.



Children at the centre

There's even a garden growing cabbage, tomatoes and spinach.

It is hard for us to imagine living in such conditions as these people do.

But in amongst the filth and carnage is this centre offering them a little glimpse of heaven.

As we celebrate the goodness of God in providing us with the bounty of earth, sea, and sky.

The goodness of God who grants us both seedtime and harvest.

And the goodness of God who shares with us the love that is in His heart and calls us to share likewise – let us pray for the Zabaleen community and so many more like them around the world.

No matter how poor we may seem, we all have a gift or a contribution that we can make to help others.

Amen.





A Prayer of Thanksgiving

We give thanks to the Lord for the gifts He gives us.

Gifts that are spiritual and material alike.

We give you thanks for all the food you give to us.

May the Lord supply all the needs of the poor.

Accept, O Lord, our thanks and praises.

Now and forevermore.

Amen.



Reverend Graham



Something to think about

- God is so generous to us; do you ever feel that you don't deserve it?
- In what ways do you find to glorify God?
- How can we as a church praise and thank God?
- Do you think we are a society that are becoming more demanding, and if so what can we do to stop it?
- What luxuries do you take for granted?
- Seeing and hearing about the Zebaleen people how does it make you feel?
- Is there anything we can do to help their situation?

SUNDAY 4th October 2020

Trinity 17

Altar Flowers – Flower Guild



SERVICE TODAY

Invitation only

10.00am: Harvest Common Worship



Sunday 11th October

Invitation only

10.00am: Book of Common Prayer



This coming week

Monday 5th October

7.30pm: Annual Parochial Church Meeting



Many Congratulations to
Adam & Robyn Pearman

who were married at
St. Mary's

on
Saturday
26th September
at 1.15pm



For any of your family, friends
and neighbours
who have access to the internet,
you might like to suggest
that they look at the church's website
where they will be able to see this
message and other useful information.

Also, anyone you know with
Primary Age school children will find
stories from 'Open The Book'.

Tell them to Google
St. Mary's Church Cubbington.