

Introduction & Announcements

Welcome, esp. to anyone new – so glad you decided to join us today. There will be lunch in the Caley Hall, shortly after the service ends, you are all welcome to stay, even if you haven't signed up. Then there will be a short session back in here to gather some ideas of what things people would like the church to do – members and the community. Help setting up some tables in here please. At the back of the church there are some tables with things that are free to take away – including a devotional booklet I've made (show) – if there are none left and you'd like one, please put your name on the list and I'll make more copies. There are also some things that might help you come up with ideas for the session after lunch.

If this is your first time at worship with us, there is a sheet at the back – if you would like to receive our weekly email list of what's happening (What's On) or our monthly church newsletter, please sign up there.

Notices – a few things you need to know – we livestream our service on our Facebook page. We just do this on a mobile phone, so it isn't fancy, or like Songs of Praise, and mostly what people can see at home is the worship leader. We don't show the congregation and we try very hard to make sure no children's faces appear. This can be viewed live, or at any time afterwards. You don't have to be signed up to Facebook to watch – there is also a link to watch it on our website.

- Church meeting, & concert next week (keep church open...). Back to usual time of 10am.
- Memory Worship, Tues, 3rd, 2pm at Rayleigh Methodist

Doing things a bit different – for anyone who is new to church I will be explaining why we do different elements of the service (doesn't hurt for those who have been coming a long time to be reminded). A point in general, we usually stand up to sing hymns and stay sitting down for prayers.

A few months ago we agreed that when the worship leader and elders come out of the Vestry (that's the little room back there, where we have a prayer before we start) and everyone stands up, we should bring the Bible in and place it at the front here. This is because we come here on a Sunday morning to worship God, and we believe that the Bible contains the word of God – that is very important so we should stand for that, rather than for the humans coming out as we are all the same – none of us are any better than anyone else.

Put the Bible on the stand

Then we have what is called the Call to Worship. This is a few words said at the beginning to welcome God into our space and our worship service. We might come on a Sunday to meet friends, have a chat, sing, but the main reason is to worship God and learn a bit more about God and about Jesus, so the Call to Worship sets the scene and reminds us what we are doing. Since today we are celebrating Harvest, our Call to Worship and all the songs are on that theme. **Please stand and...**

Call to worship

Shouts of joy! Songs of praise!
Sounds of hope and love!
These are moments of thanksgiving –
giving thanks to our God!

Enter God's house giving thanks.
Enter God's house full of praise!
These are moments of thanksgiving –
giving thanks to our God!
God's love is never ending. God is good! Alleluia!

The hymn words will come up on the screen, they are also in the hymn book at 124. If you don't know the song or don't want to sing, that's no problem!

Hymn We plough the fields and scatter R&S 124

Matthias Claudius

Children's Time

Once a month on the 2nd Sunday we have what we call an All Age service when any children stay in for the whole service and we try to make the service a bit more interactive and easy for children to understand. On the other Sundays of the month we try to make the first part of the service inclusive of children, before they go to Sunday Club in the hall for age appropriate activities. Whoever is leading, or sometimes Sandy our Children and Family Worker, does a short talk or activity aimed at the children. Today, the whole service will be All Age, but as you can imagine it is quite hard to appeal to all ages from 1 to people in their 90s, so Sandy will do something more specifically for the younger children now. **Sandy**

Sing Who put the colours in the rainbow Red folder 109

Today is our Harvest Festival. You can see that we have the church decorated especially for that (different groups in the church). Every week we give gifts of money either to help keep the church running or to give to people in need through local charities. On Harvest Sunday we also bring gifts of food to go to the Hopeworx food bank. We will bring those up now, and then we will say a short prayer, thanking God for all the good things God has given us.

While we bring up the food and collect our offering, we will sing:

All things bright and beautiful Red folder 4

Gifts + Harvest

On this day of the harvest – we bring our gifts to you, God.

You have brought us into this place
and shared with us this land, full of good things.

Bless this Harvest thanksgiving, and these gifts offered to you now,
in Jesus's name, we pray. Amen

Opening Prayer (talking to God. At the end we say 'amen' which means – let it be so, or so be it)

God of honey and harvest, of grain and grape, of ocean and orchard:

at this harvest time may we both praise and pray;

praise you for the abundance

and pray that this harvest is not just shared with others, but shared justly.

God of beehives and breadbaskets, of living webs and the weaving of life
of ecosystems and economy:

This harvest time may we both praise and pray

praise you for the wealth of the harvest

and pray that this harvest is not just a promise

but is full of promise for all.

God of bumble bees and blue whales, evolution and environment

This harvest time may we both praise and pray

praise you for the sheer wonder of the world

and pray that this harvest is not about our wealth, but the wealth of our generosity.

We bless you, God of Seed and Harvest

And we bless each other that the beauty of this world

and the love that created it might be expressed through our lives and be a blessing to others. **Amen**

Explain about reading the Bible every week & lectionary (this week only 1 reading)

Bible reading: John 2: 1-10 Wedding at Cana

Church Urban Fund reflection

The harvest season is a great opportunity to reflect on God's provision for us and God's blessing for others. It can help us practice gratitude, even in difficult times, and connect us

with the God who is here, whose Spirit is with us and works through us. It can help us be grateful for all the good things we have and to think about the treasures, the amazing things that are around us.

In this reading from John's Gospel, Jesus, his mother Mary, and his disciples attend a wedding in a village called Cana. At this time, weddings lasted for days, and hospitality was a sacred duty. If you did not provide enough wine or food for your guests, you could be looked down on – it would be very embarrassing. So, when Mary notices that the wine has run out at this wedding, it poses a real problem for the family hosting the party.

The huge stone water jars nearby hold 20-30 gallons of water each, and Jesus asks the servants to fill them to the brim with water and then serve some to the person in charge of the banquet. The water had become wine and, as we read, the person was amazed at the quality of the wine: "But you have kept the good wine until now."

If we read the story carefully, we notice that Jesus did not perform this miracle alone. His mother, Mary identified that the wine had run out, saying "They have no wine." And she put her trust and faith in Jesus: "Do whatever he tells you." Then, the servants poured the new wine for others to enjoy – not just any wine, but the best wine.

This story is about transformation. It is about changing things. It's about living and thinking differently about the gifts God has given us and using them to make a difference. When we encounter problems to be fixed, can we see them instead as an opportunity for transformation, a calling to do something new?

The best wine was created from gifts that were already in the room but were initially overlooked. It required looking around the environment, discerning what was useful, and using items for a purpose that was greater than the sum of their parts. What hidden treasures, gifts, skills are in our community? Where can we identify need, and what will we use to fill it? **After we sing our next hymn we will be doing an activity to look at this.**

We can have a part to play in Jesus' transforming work too. Sometimes we need to step up like Mary and identify what has run out – even if we don't know how to fill it up. Sometimes we need to be servants to fill the jars and to carry and pour the new wine, sharing goodness and helping others to participate. Through all this, we need to put our trust and faith in Jesus, asking him to show us our jars of water, the gifts we might have overlooked.

This Harvest, we are encouraged to reflect on the part Jesus is calling us to play in His transforming work. When has the wine run out for our community? The wine of justice and equality, hospitality and welcome? Where are our jars of water? The gifts that already exist; the potential for change that is already at hand but overlooked and unlikely?

Hymn God in his love for us R&S 85

Church Urban Fund All Age Activity - MAP

Hymn Let all God's people join in one R&S 113

Prayers of intercession – Explain – ask if there are particular things people want to pray for?

Christ Church, 1st Oct. 2023 Harvest, 'All-Age'

We thank you, Holy One, for flour:
flour made from wheat or other grains,
grown in the mystery of the earth,
ripened in the warmth of the sun;
cut down at the harvest by the farmer's skill,
ground by the miller, sold by the shop assistant,
placed in the bowl and made into bread.
In the silence we give thanks for our food.

We thank you, God, for salt:
Jesus told us we were to be salt of the earth,
and we must never lose our flavour.
The salt, which adds flavour to our food,
is also antiseptic to our wounds,
reminding us of the challenge to our faith
and the healing power of Jesus.
In the silence we think of all those who need that healing power.

We thank you, God, for yeast:
that small living organism
that enables the bread to rise,
that reminds us of the fact that even small works done in Jesus' name
can enable the kingdom to grow.
In the silence we ask you to help us determine what work we need to do in Jesus' name.

We thank you, God, for water:
water, without which none of us could live,
water, which forms the other elements of our bread into dough,
which, having risen, and been formed and drawn into shape by human
hands, is baked to give us the basis of life;
water, which cleanses and renews us, refreshes and revives us,
the water of baptism, which commits us to our faith
which in the silence we renew.

We thank you, God, for bread:
Bread, the basis of the food we eat,
bread for toast, for sandwiches, for bread and jam,
bread for bread pudding and bread for buns –
and bread that is broken and shared in communion with one another,
in remembrance of the night when Jesus sat with his friends at supper,
and broke the bread and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body broken for you."
We thank you, God, for bread, and for all your goodness to us. **Amen**

Lord's Prayer

Hymn O Lord my God R&S 117 omit verse 3

EXPLAIN Blessing

God of the harvest, as the wild flower scatters its seeds far and wide,
so may your people scatter the seed of hope in the soils of despair,
bringing to growth those good things that are your gift and promise.
And may the blessing of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
rest on us and on all our work and worship done in God's name. Amen.