



On-Line “HARVEST”

Sunday 27th September 2020

Rev'd Jenny Pathmarajah & Rev'd Danny Wheadon.

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use as you are unable to attend church. If you are well enough why not spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people are sharing this act of worship with you.

**Welcome: The Lighting of a Candle
& Call to Worship**

Loving God, gather up all that is dead in me like leaves from the ground into your redeeming arms, in order that you might scatter forth into the world all that you have brought to life in me so that it might be shared graciously and unselfishly in the world. For I ask it in Christ name, Amen



Hymn: For the fruit of all creation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zbBUF5OKbdM>

For the fruit of all creation,
thanks be to God.

For the gifts bestowed
on every nation,
thanks be to God.

For the ploughing, sowing, reaping,
silent growth while we are sleeping,
future needs in earth's safekeeping,
thanks be to God.

In the just reward of labour,
God's will be done.

In the help we give our neighbour,
God's will be done.

In our worldwide task of caring
for the hungry and despairing,
in the harvests we are sharing,
God's will is done.

For the harvests of the Spirit,
thanks be to God.

For the good we all inherit,
thanks be to God.

For the wonders that astound us,
for the truths that still confound us,
most of all that love has found us,
thanks be to God.

Let us pray together

Gracious God, be with me now as I think about how a seed must die in order to bring forth new life. Help me to trust in your life-giving processes even when they are painful, to let go of all that needs to be released, and to take up all that you would have me take up in faith and love. For I ask it in Christ's name, **Amen**

Reading: **Hosea 10:11-12**

¹¹ *Ephraim is a trained heifer that loves to thresh; so I will put a yoke on her fair neck. I will drive Ephraim, Judah must plow, and Jacob must break up the ground.*

¹² *Sow righteousness for yourselves, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the LORD, until he comes and showers his righteousness on you.*



StF 130 We plough the fields, and scatter

1 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.*

2 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.

3 We thank thee then, O Father, for all things bright and good, the seed-time and the harvest, our life, our health, our food. Accept the gifts we offer for all thy love imparts, and, what thou most desirest, our humble, thankful hearts.

*Matthias Claudius (1740-1815) tr Jane
Montgomery Campbell (1817-1878)*

Time to Reflect (Rev'd Jenny)

I'm a huge BBC World Service fan and one of my favourite programs is by the economist Tim Harford, '50 Things that made the modern economy.' In his final episode, he talks about one particularly object which transformed not just the modern economy, but civilisation itself. This is an extract from that podcast which was turned into a fantastic book and I can't recommend highly enough as a great Christmas present to someone - it's not too early to start thinking about it!

I want you to imagine, catastrophe. The end of civilization. This complex intricate modern world of ours is finished. Don't worry about why. Maybe it was swine flu or nuclear war, killer robots or the zombie apocalypse. And now imagine that you, lucky you, are one of the few survivors. You have no phone. Who would you phone anyway? No internet, no electricity, no fuel. Four decades ago, the science historian James Burke, posed that scenario in his tv series connections. He asked a simple question. Surrounded by the wreckage of modernity. Without access to the lifeblood of modern technology. Where do you start again? What do you need to keep yourself and the embers of civilisation, alive? His answer was a simple yet transformative technology. It's a plough. It was the plough that kick started civilization in the first place that ultimately made our modern economy possible.

12,000 years ago, humans were almost entirely nomadic, hunting and foraging their way into every niche they could find all around the world. But the world was emerging from a cold snap. Things started to get hotter and drier. People who'd been hunting and foraging in the uplands, found that the plants and the animals around them, were

dying. Animals migrated to the river valleys in search of water and people followed.

Confined to these fertile but geographical limited river valleys, people had to settle down and farm. Which meant breaking up the crust of the soil, bringing nutrients to the surface and letting moisture seek deeper out of sight of the harsh sun. At first, they used sharp sticks, held in the hand. But soon they switched to a simple scratching plough, pulled by a pair of cows. It worked remarkably well. These farmers were 5 or 6 times more productive than the forgers they had replaced. Think about that. It becomes possible for a 5th of the population to grow enough food to feed everyone.

What do the other 4/5ths do? Well, they are freed up to specialise in other things, baking bread, firing bricks, felling trees, building houses, mining ore, smelting metals, constructing roads. Making cities. Building civilisation. But there's a paradox. More plentiful supplies of food means more competition for control of the surplus.

That competition creates rulers and rules. Masters and servants. And inequality of wealth unheard of within hunter gathering societies. Early farming societies could be astonishingly unequal. The Roman Empire for example, seems to be

close to the biological limits of inequality. If the rich had had any more of the empires resources, most people would have simply have starved. But the plough did more than create the under pinning of civilisation with all its benefits and inequities, different types of plough led to different types of civilisation.



The mould-board plough, first developed in China was then developed in Europe. This plough cuts a long thick ribbon of soil and turns it upside down. In a dry soil, that's a counterproductive exercise. It squanders precious moisture. But in the fertile wet clays of northern Europe, the mould-board plough was vastly superior, turning soil, killing weeds and turning them into mere compost.

Other ploughs required a team of two oxen, working in a criss cross pattern, allowing farmers to be individualistic in simple square fields. A farmer could live alone with his plough, oxen and land.

This new plough, required a team of

8 oxen, or better, horses. Who had that kind of money to squander? It was most efficient in long thin strips often a step or two away from someone else's long thin strips. As a result, farming was more of a community practise. People had to share the plough and animals and most importantly, resolve disagreements. They would gather together in villages. This plough helped usher in the manorial system in northern Europe.



The plough reshaped family life. It was heavy equipment so it was seen as 'men's' work. Wheat and rice needed more prep than nuts and berries so women found themselves more at home preparing food. Since women no longer had to carry toddlers around whilst foraging, they had more frequent pregnancies. Suddenly, having land was something you hand down to your children, so society changed to relationship practices to make sure that children where definitely theirs – after all your wife is spending all that time alone! Is she really doing nothing but grind grain?!



All of this raises the question of whether inventing the plough was a wise idea. Not that it didn't work, it worked brilliantly. But along with all the benefits of civilisation, it seems to enable the rise of misogyny and tyranny.

Some historians say the adoption of agriculture was the worst mistake in the history of the human race. Eventually those with the capacity of surplus food, drove the remaining hunter gather tribes off all the but the most marginal land. Even there, the few remaining modern nomadic lives, still have a healthy diet, with a

rich variety of nuts, berries and animals.

One Tribes member was asked why they hadn't copied their neighbours and picked up the plough. He replied, "why should we, when there are so many mongongo nuts in the world." So here you have it. One of the few survivors at the end of civilisation. Will you reinvent the plough and start the whole thing all over again? Or should we be content with our mongongo nuts?

So. Let me ask you the question. Would you...reinvent the plough? We live in a world that utilises the plough and all the comes from it. When we look at the principals of the KoG which Jesus set out, it's hard not to think that actually, life without a plough is far more similar to what Jesus was talking about. More community based, working together, no competition, not building barriers around our own fields, being burdened by work, allowing God to provide for you, living by the seasons and God's produce. Maybe.

But we live in a world of the plough. But I'm challenged by what Hosea says in the bible reading. Perhaps we can combine the two. If we make the plough the power of God to break up fallow land and transform it in to God's Kingdom,

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what would our world look like?
What would our church look like?
What would our lives look like?
God's kingdom is plough-less, but as we live in this world with a plough, lets use it to transform and change the ground that's with us. Make it grow good things, turn the soil for the glory of God, the soil of our lives, our work place and our families. Prepare our hearts and minds for the planting of the seed of the kingdom of God and let it grow within us.

What areas in your life, work, family, personal, spiritual life need a plough? Where Does God need to sow the seeds of love, patience, kindness, generosity and forgiveness?



Hymn: Autumn Days

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ni9Cm2ZqPLO>

1 Autumn days
when the grass is jewelled,
And the silk inside a chestnut shell,
Jet planes meeting
in the air to get refuelled,
All these things I love so well,

*So I mustn't forget,
No, I mustn't forget,
To say a great big thank you,
I mustn't forget.*

2 Clouds that look like familiar faces,
And a winter's moon
with frosted rings,
Smell of bacon
as I fasten up my laces,
And the song the milkman sings.

3 Whipped up spray
that is rainbow- scattered,
And a swallow curving in the sky,
Shoes so comfy though they're
worn-out and they're battered,
And the taste of apple-pie.

4 Scent of gardens
when the rain's been falling,
And a minnow
darting down a stream,
Picked-up engine that's been
stuttering and stalling,
And a win for my home team.

“Autumn Days”

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A time of prayer

We see signs of summer's passing in golden leaves, shortening days, misty mornings, autumn glow.

We sense its passing in rain that dampens, winds that chill, Harvest's bounty placed on show.

Creator God, who brings forth both green shoot and hoar frost, sunrise and sunset, we bring our thanks for seeds that have grown, harvests gathered, storehouses filled, mouths fed.

And, as your good earth rests through winter's cold embrace, we look forward to its re-awakening when kissed by Spring's first touch.

Some prayers of thanksgiving and intercession

Eternal God, I give thanks this day for the beauty of the earth and the wonder of my life. I give thanks for the changing of the seasons and the movement of the stars. I give thanks for Jesus, my rock and my friend.

Bless your world this day, I pray, and use me to do acts of discipleship in it. Be with those who are hungry and do not know the luxury of three square meals, complete with snacks in between, and as many hot drinks as I like.

Be with those who are fighting Covid-19 and are fearful about their health. Be with those are fighting addictions and help me to be wary of things by which I can fall addicted. Be with those who are facing violence on a battle field or in their own homes. Bless every human being, I pray, with grace enough and faith enough, to bring them home to you now and forevermore. For I say it, and mean it, in Jesus name who taught me to pray saying....

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 them 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



StF 129 To thee, O Lord

- 1 To thee, O Lord, our hearts we raise
in hymns of adoration
to thee bring sacrifice of praise
with shouts of exultation:
bright robes of gold the fields adorn,
the hills with joy are ringing,
the valleys stand so thick with corn
that even they are singing.
- 2 And now, on this our festal day,
thy bounteous hand confessing,
upon thine altar, Lord, we lay
the first-fruits of thy blessing;
by thee the souls of men are fed
with gifts of grace supernal;
thou who dost give us earthly bread,
give us the bread eternal.
- 3 We bear the burden of the day,
and often toil seems dreary;
but labour ends with sunset ray,
and rest comes for the weary:
may we, the angel-reaping o'er,
stand at the last accepted,
Christ's golden sheaves for evermore
to garner bright elected.
- 4 O blessed is that land of God,
where saints abide for ever; where
golden fields spread far and broad,
where flows the crystal river:
the strains of all its holy throng
with ours to-day are blending;
thrice blessed is that harvest-song
which never hath an ending.

William Chatterton Dix (1837-1898)

A prayer of blessing

Bless us Lord as we seek to see that
which is beautiful in the changing
seasons, and seek to do that which
is faithful in the passing of time.
Amen.

And the blessing of
God Almighty,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with you
and all whom you love
and all those
you are called to love,
this day and for evermore. **Amen.**



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