

Wednesday Worship
1st September 2021
Autumn

Opening words

As summer sun gives way to autumn chill,
bright glare turning to yellow light,
shadows lengthening and leaves falling,
All **we move and change with the cycles of the seasons.**

As timetables and programmes restart in unfamiliar ways
and new and changed activities begin to take shape,
as colleges, schools and churches gear up for a new session,
All **we move and change with the cycles of the year.**

As patterns in our lives shift and change
with both losses and gains,
altering our perception of ourselves and those around us,
All **we move and change with the cycles of our lives.**

God of our days and years,
we set this time apart for you.
Form us in the likeness of Christ
so that our lives may glorify you.
All **Amen.**

Hymn: All creatures of our God and King

1st Reading: Deuteronomy 24.19-22

When you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be left for the alien, the orphan, and the widow, so that the Lord your God may bless you in all your undertakings. When you beat your olive trees, do not strip what is left; it shall be for the alien, the orphan, and the widow.

When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, do not glean what is left; it shall be for the alien, the orphan, and the widow. Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I am commanding you to do this.

Prayer of response

For summer's passing and harvest home
All **Lord, we thank you.**

For autumn's splendour and winter's chill
All **Lord, we thank you.**

For seed that has fallen, the promise of spring
All **Lord, we thank you.**

Psalm 104.1, 7-8, 16-20

Praise the Lord!
How good it is to sing praises to our God;
for he is gracious, and a song of praise is fitting.
He covers the heavens with clouds,
prepares rain for the earth,
makes grass grow on the hills.
He gives snow like wool;
he scatters frost like ashes.
He hurls down hail like crumbs—
who can stand before his cold?
He sends out his word, and melts them;
he makes his wind blow, and the waters flow.
He declares his word to Jacob,
his statutes and ordinances to Israel.
He has not dealt thus with any other nation;
they do not know his ordinances.
Praise the Lord!

Prayer of response

In the fading of the summer sun,
the shortening of days, cooling breeze,
swallows' flight and moonlight rays
All **we see the Creator's hand.**

In the browning of leaves once green,
morning mists, autumn chill,
fruit that falls, frost's first kiss
All **we see the Creator's hand.**

2nd Reading: Matthew 9.35-38

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest.'

Prayer of response

In the needs of the people around us,
and in the compassion of those who help
All **let us see you, Lord.**

When our faith grows weak,
and we despair of the harvest,
All **strengthen us again, O Lord.**

Hymn: For the fruits of his creation

Reflection: 'And Breathe', by Kirrilee Reid

Intercessions

O God of Creation,
you have blessed us with the changing of the seasons.
As we welcome the autumn months,
may the earlier setting of the sun remind us to take time to rest.
May the brilliant colours of the leaves
remind us of the wonder of your creation.
May the steam of our breath in the cool air
remind us that it is you who give us the breath of life.
May the harvest from the fields remind us of the abundance
we have been given and bounty we are to share with others.
May the dying of summer's spirit
remind us of your great promise that death is temporary
and life is eternal.

God of creation,
All **hear our prayer.**

For all who are in captivity to debt,
whose lives are cramped by fear
from which there is no turning
except through abundant harvest.

God of creation,
All **hear our prayer.**

For all who labour in poverty,
who are oppressed by unjust laws,
who are banned for speaking the truth,
who long for a harvest of justice.

God of creation,
All **hear our prayer.**

For all who are in captivity
to greed and waste and boredom,
whose joy is choked
with things they do not need.

God of creation,
All **hear our prayer.**

For those who face the future with anxiety or fear,
for children and young people starting new schools,
for university students preparing to leave home,
for those starting or going back to work,
for those worrying about darker days.

God of creation,
All **hear our prayer.**

Turn us again from our captivity and restore our vision,
that our mouth may be filled with laughter
and our tongue with singing.

All **Amen.**

Gathering our prayers and praises into one,
let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us
All **Our Father, who art in heaven...**

Hymn: How great thou art

Closing prayer

As the autumn butterfly
seeks a hiding place to begin its winter rest:
All **so may we find a refuge in God.**

As the autumn tree
sheds its leaves to begin its long sleep:
so may we lay down the labels we bear
All **and rest in the love of God.**

As the autumn seed
falls into the earth that will nurture its growing:
All **so may we give ourselves to the God who brings life.**

As the autumn rain
fills the lakes and the streams:
All **so may the justice of God soak into our living.**

As the autumn day grows short,
bringing us the hours of winter dark:
so may we know the near companionship of God
through the night.
All **Amen.**