

Worship at Home
'Field to Fork'
A service of prayer for Harvest and the Creation Season
4th October 2020

INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

Sarah Spencer Discipleship in the World Officer, Diocese of Lincoln, Nick Shepherd, Programme Director for Setting God's People Free, Church of England

Welcome to the weekly online service for the Church of England. We're here in St Giles' Community Garden in Lincoln, surrounded by the produce which has been growing over the summer and is now ready for harvest. Once an overgrown, derelict space behind the church, this is now a very special asset, a beautiful, peaceful place which many in the community enjoy.

I'm Nick and you join me in the store cupboard for the foodbank that we run here as a church in Lewisham. Today's service is based around the Litany for Rogationtide and we'll be asking for God's Blessing and seeking God's mercy on our care for the land, supply of food and stewarding of resources.

We'll also be hearing from a number of people about their work, and how these roles, paid and unpaid, are also an act of worship as we care for the creation that God has gifted to us.

So, Let us pray.

God the Father, the Lord of creation,
All have mercy on us.
God the Son, through whom all things were made,
All have mercy on us.
God the Holy Spirit, who renews the face of the earth,
All have mercy on us.
Holy, blessed and glorious Trinity, creating and saving God,
All have mercy on us.

Remember, Lord, your mercy and your loving-kindness towards us.
Bless this good earth and make it fruitful.
Bless our labour and give us all things needful for our daily lives.
Bless the homes of our parishes and all who live within them.
Bless our common life and our care for neighbour.
All Hear us, good Lord.

As we begin this service of prayer, let us celebrate the God who created all things and in whom all things hold together.

HYMN

All Creatures of our God and King

Sung by St Martin's Voices

All creatures of our God and King
lift up your voice and with us sing,
Alleluia, alleluia.

Thou burning sun with golden beam,
thou silver moon with softer gleam,
O praise him, O praise him,
alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Thou flowing water, pure and clear,
make music for thy Lord to hear,
Alleluia, alleluia.
Thou fire so masterful and bright,
that givest man both warmth and light:
O praise him, O praise him,
alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Let all things their creator bless,
and worship him in humbleness;
O praise him, alleluia.
Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son,
and praise the Spirit, Three in One;
O praise him, O praise him,
alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

*Words: William Henry Draper (1855-1933)
based on Laudato sii, O me signore
St Francis of Assisi's Canticle of the Sun*

Tune: Lasst uns erfreuen

TESTIMONY

Paul Davey: Farmer from Lincoln on farming to give the soil life

Hello, my name's Paul Davey, I'm a seventh-generation farmer from Lincolnshire. We farm in the Lincolnshire Wolds with a flock of sheep, we have a growing number of different crops, milling wheat through to yellow linseed. The sort of thing that you might find in a multi-seeded batch loaf. Each year we get the opportunity for the farm to almost have a rebirth, to reinvent the way we farm, and change and embrace those changes be they adapting to the weather, or be they looking at alternative cropping, and alternative farming systems.

2019 through to 2020 is not only a time of great change for our industry, with our changing relationship with the European Union, but also it's also been a year of great extremes with the weather.

This year we have the smallest area of winter wheat in the United Kingdom for a generation, and possibly the smallest harvest for a generation as well.

The soils we work with are our greatest resource, we take the time to preserve those as best we can, with modern thinking. We pray that as farmers we continue to look for the most sustainable answers to help with feeding the planet and the support that our communities, friends, our customers are able to give us in the future.

FIELD TO FORK PRAYERS

For all cities, towns and villages,
and for their well-being and prosperity,
let us pray to the Lord.

All Lord, have mercy.

For the rural economy and for its regeneration,
let us pray to the Lord.

All Lord, have mercy.

For those who tend the countryside
and preserve its order and beauty,
let us pray to the Lord.

All Lord, have mercy.

For all farms, all who work them,
and for the whole farming industry,
let us pray to the Lord.

All Lord, have mercy.

For those who make farming policy,
and for all with authority in government,
let us pray to the Lord.

All Lord, have mercy.

Joe, who is head of Farm Assured at the RSPCA reads from the book of Micah, chapter 6, verses 6 to 8.

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Micah 6.6–8

Joe Bailey, head of Farm Assured at the RSPCA

A reading from the Prophet Micah; the requirement of the Lord.

“With what shall I come before the Lord,
and bow down before God on high?
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,
with calves a year old?
Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams,
with ten thousand of rivers of oil?

Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"
He has told you, O man, what is good;
and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?

TESTIMONY

Shayne Tyler, Justice in produce supply chain and Clewer Slavery App

Hello, my name's Shayne Tyler and I'm the group compliance director for the Fresca Group. We own a number of businesses around the UK, and supply fruit and veg to the retail accounts. Today I'm standing in the fields of one of our businesses, DGM Growers, who are a proud business based in Saracen's Head, in South Lincolnshire, and we're in the rural Lincolnshire flats now. There's been the number of challenges over the years, but 2019 and 2020 have proven to be quite difficult. With Brexit impending, and potential labour shortages, but also what we're facing with COVID-19. There's a lot of vulnerable people currently in our industry, in communities, and it's what we're trying to do to help them, and make sure that they're best placed in our industry.

Farm labour in our industry is typically an industry which is extremely variable in the amount of work, availability of work. It's truly seasonal, and that doesn't suit everybody. So we tend to have quite sporadic labour shortages, or over labour, which creates vulnerabilities for workers in our supply chain. And we need to have a sustainable supply chain that can help facilitate those people within it. Because we have vulnerable people we need to start looking out a little bit more for the people around us, not just in the fields, but in all areas of rural community. If we just took a moment to care for the person that's next to us on the train, next to us in a shop, and just looking out to ensure that we're doing whatever we can to make sure that their welfare is being catered for, then that's something that we can go all do. It's certainly something that I now try and do as much as I can.

Earlier this year we worked with the Clewer Initiative, the National Crime Agency, and the Gangmasters and the Labour Abuse Authority to recognise that there are some people in our industry that are vulnerable, and we developed an app called the ' Farm Work Welfare App', it's something that you can download, it's something that you can use, that will help you understand what farm work life is like, what the rights of workers are, and should there be anything that gives anybody any concerns you can report a concern that will then be dealt with by the authorities, totally confidentially, that could help the welfare of a fellow human.

For me there's many things that we could do to help those that are vulnerable in our society, one thing that we could pray for, is for those authorities that are helping tackle those that are taking it upon their lives to exploit these people. Businesses like ours don't exploit people, but we have to deal with those that choose to do so, and I'd very much appreciate if we could pray to help the authorities tackle that.

FIELD TO FORK PRAYERS

For a blessing on our land we pray.
All Hear us, good Lord.

For healthy crops and abundant harvests, we pray.
All Hear us, good Lord.

For the care and welfare of animals
and for the veterinary profession we pray.
All Hear us, good Lord.

For seasonable weather we pray.
All Hear us, good Lord.

For protection from blight, pestilence and disease we pray.
All Hear us, good Lord.

For those engaged in agricultural research we pray.
All Hear us, good Lord.

For the ministry of your Church in rural areas we pray.
All Hear us, good Lord.

For parts of the world where the harvests have failed, we pray.
All Hear us, good Lord.

For charities and aid agencies and overseas development we pray.
All Hear us, good Lord.

And now we hear Simon Parks, Managing Director of Kidd Transport read from the Gospel of Luke, Chapter 12, verses 22 to 34.

GOSPEL READING

Luke 12.22–34

Simon Park, Managing Director of Kidd's Transport

Luke, 12, 22 through to 34.

Jesus said to his disciples, "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing.

Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? If then you are not able to do so small a thing as that, why do you worry about the rest?

Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, you of little faith!

And do not keep striving for what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not keep worrying. For it is the nations of the world that strive after all these things, and your Father knows that you need them. Instead, strive for his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

“Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

TESTIMONY

Simon Park, Managing Director of Kidd's Transport

Hi, I'm Simon Park, I'm the Managing Director of Kidd's Transport, which is a logistics company based in Lancaster. The haulage industry as a whole is used to challenges, we're quite good at it, we get challenges all the time, we meet them head on day after day. 95 to 98 percent of all products of everything we have in this country has been delivered by truck, that's including your house, that's including the street outside your house, the pipeline, the utilities to that house. We're used to challenges. The biggest two challenges at the moment are obviously Brexit and COVID, and they've delivered the biggest challenge which is the uncertainty that this country is going through at the moment. People aren't certain what's going to happen in the future, they're not spending as much, businesses aren't going for it like we would hope them to do so, so at the moment the uncertainty is one of the biggest challenge we have in the industry at the moment.

We tend to try and develop our staff, help our staff grow beyond working for us, to achieve their goals, whether they want to become solicitors, whether they want to become doctors, whatever they want to do. We try and push them on to that, that way if we can. Improve their education, improve, not just their finances, but we want them to thrive. We don't want our staff to just survive and to just make do. That includes forklift staff, we've had all sorts of weird and wonderful people come through there, and some people have gone on to achieve great things within the warehouse, which is what we like to see. So I would like to see us in a position where we can support that and continue that, and to have the time and the skills and the lack of pressure to deliver that kind of thing for our staff.

As an industry as a whole, I think just to pray against this uncertainty that we have, the reading in Luke is very apt at the moment, we don't need to worry, we can just trust God, but uncertainty does bring that kind of worry, ironically.

REFLECTION

Field to Fork: Our Work and Worship

Samuel P. S. Williams, Christian Aid Salt Business Network Manager, UK and Ireland

FIELD TO FORK PRAYERS

For our daily bread:
All we pray to you, O Lord.

For all who work the land to bring us our food in due season:
All we pray to you, O Lord.

For all who fish the rivers, lakes and seas:
All we pray to you, O Lord.

For all who process foods and prepare them for distribution and sale:
All we pray to you, O Lord.

For all supermarkets and shops, and for all who work in them:
All we pray to you, O Lord.

For those who distribute food to those in need:
All we pray to you, O Lord.

TESTIMONY

Supermarket workers on challenges of this time: Rev Bill Durose, Supermarket worker and SSM in Stoke-on-Trent and Sharon Evans Supermarket worker from Wollescote in the West Midlands

Hi, My name is Bill Durose, an SSM, the Stoke-On-Trent Team; I work for Sainsburys! The best thing about my job is that I'm based in a supermarket, which is the centre of the community, about forty-five thousand people a week come through our doors, I am there right in the middle of it, doing God's work. During this pandemic, it's been tough in the supermarket industry, with things like social distancing, at the beginning, starting again now with panic buying. It's put a lot of strain on everyone. Because of the self-isolating we miss seeing a lot of our very elderly customers, who quite often did not see anyone else, unless they visited Sainsbury's. They became part of our family. Colleagues were obviously concerned for their safety, and asking other customers for news of their friends. Mostly it was good news, but sometimes colleagues would ask for prayers for someone who was really, really ill. Another impact I've been at, is that I've been in more demand than ever for prayers and to conduct funerals. Trying to explain where God is in this pandemic to people who've just lost a loved one can be difficult.

But I'm still humbled when someone comes to me and says their loved ones has asked 'that Vicar' from Sainsbury's to do their funeral. One particular funeral I conducted of a very well-liked customer, upset some of the cashiers, because they could not go to the service to say goodbye. Sometimes people forget that we are not just someone who works in a supermarket, but people who really care about our forty-five thousand friends.

We would ask all to pray for everyone in the retail sector, who are on their own frontline, who are often forgotten about during this time. Ask God for their safety and patience, that they can go home safely each day to their loved ones. Amen.

Hello, I'm Sharon and I've worked for Sainsbury's for over fifteen years, I started Sainsbury's when my children were little to fit round their school times and their bedtimes, I love working with the team that I'm working with, I feel that we work well, and we look out for one another, and I feel that I make a difference, and I can come in and I know what I'm doing, and I can be part of making it a success.

As staff we work really hard to get things on the shelf as soon as possible, as soon as it comes in, so that people are able to get what they need, and then there's the concern of working in an environment where we're exposed to the virus, so if you're a single parent, or you've got caring responsibilities, or people at home, vulnerable, it is a worry in case you take it back, and the worry of childcare, so if a child has to isolate at home then you have to take time off work, so if you could pray for that, that would be great. And we miss seeing our regular customers, who are hopefully at home shielding, so prayers would be really beneficial for our mental health, and our physical health. As you go round the store you could pray, or if you're passing in the car, just being nice to staff, being kind and saying thank you makes a big difference.

We've had customers say thank you for what you're doing, and that's really brightened our day. Send a card to the store, to our managers, or to staff, saying thank you, and that you're thinking of us. We work really hard to provide a good service, during a very difficult time. If you could pray for protection for us, for our families, for peace, and protection and a smooth service, especially over Christmas when people are stressed and trying to get all their Christmas shopping done. If you could pray that we can provide a good service and that people come in and find peace. Protection for our vulnerable customers too, who need to shop and that are probably coming out of isolation now, that people won't panic buy, for kindness and respect, that we can deliver as smooth a service as possible. Pray a blessing when you are in store, pray a blessing for staff, and for customers, or if you're in the car passing pray a blessing for the stores that you pass. That would make a huge difference. Thank you.

FIELD TO FORK PRAYERS

For the world of work in all its diversity:
All hear us, good Lord.

For the right ordering of work in times of technological change:
All hear us, good Lord.

For all service industries that provide for our daily needs:
All hear us, good Lord.

For the safety of those making deliveries and stocking warehouses
All hear us, good Lord.

For the industry and workplaces of our own communities:
All hear us, good Lord.

HYMN

At your bidding (All your ways are good)

Resound Worship

At your bidding there was beginning,
at your summons this world was formed,
all things living brought into being
by the power of your word.
You saw that it was good,
you saw that it was good,
help us give you thanks
with the praise and awe we should.

For all your ways are good,
yes, all your ways are good;
God of all creation,
all your ways are good.

In this garden that you have given,
we were hungry for all its fruit,
so we plundered the earth and oceans,
seizing more than we were due.
We stole from what was good,
we stole from what was good,
help us face the truth
with the honesty we should.

For all your ways are good,
Yes, all your ways are good
God of all creation,
all your ways are good.

As the planet longs for redemption,
spoiled and reeling from nature's loss,
we remember the source of healing
flowing out from Jesus' cross.
You came down for our good,
you came down for our good,
help us look to you
with the hope and faith we should.

For all your ways are good,
Yes, all your ways are good
God of all creation,
all your ways are good.

All your ways are good.
So good.

If we bow down and seek your mercy,
will you hear us and still forgive?
Holy Spirit, make us determined
to reshape the way we live.
Restore all that is good,
restore all that is good,
help us change our hearts
so we show the care we should.

For all your ways are good,
Yes, all your ways are good
God of all creation,
all your ways are good.

All your ways are good. Oh
All your ways are good. Oh. Oh.

So good.

*Words and Music: © Alex Fergusson, Tim Fergusson / Resound Worship,
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COLLECT

Holy God,
Earth and air and water are your creation,
and every living thing belongs to you.
Have mercy on us for our sinful exploitation of your world.
Grant us the will and the courage to live with simplicity,
to consume with integrity,
and to share with generosity.
Forgive our past mistakes
and send us your Spirit,
with wisdom for the present
courage to bear the cost of change
and vision for that future to which you call us.
In Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

TESTIMONY

Joe Bailey, Head of Farming, RSPCA Assured, UK

Hello, I'm Joe Bailey, Head of Farming for RSPCA Assured. We're the only farm assurance scheme in the UK. Totally dedicated, committed to improving farm animal welfare. I love my job. It enables me to fulfil my purpose in life, which is to help improve the lives of farmed animals, and to raise awareness and standards, of welfare, not just in the UK, but globally.

It's been a tough and challenging year. All of us have been affected, directly, or indirectly by COVID, but through these difficulties, the worries, the stress and disruption to our personal and working lives, kindness has grown to our neighbours, our communities, key workers, like farmers who work so hard to put food on our plates.

Please pray for our farmers, for their health, and their strength, that they not only survive, but they continue to thrive, post COVID, and Brexit. For those that are responsible for livestock, make compassion fill their hearts, and may their hands and voices be gentle. Please pray that the respect that has grown through lockdown, towards key workers, the environment, wildlife and all sentient beings continues, and that we remain kind to all kind. Thank you.

LORD'S PRAYER

So, as our saviour taught us, so we pray

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.**

CLOSING WORDS

It has been good to worship with you here in St Giles Community Garden, surrounded by the fruits of this season. Today, we've been reminded of our dependence on each other, on the land and ultimately on the source of all our life, God our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer. We've become more aware of how many people work to provide our daily food and we've been urged to act justly, so that we also might be a blessing to others.

We hope that the stories we've heard from people today might give us each pause for thought as we lift our forks at lunch or dinner. More than that, we hope that they've inspired you to think about your work, paid or unpaid and the role we each have in our stewarding of creation. I'm now going to hand back to our supermarket self-supporting minister Bill, for our final blessing.

BLESSING AND DISMISSAL

May God
who clothes the lilies of the fields and feeds the birds of the air,
who leads the lamb to pasture and the deer to water,
who multiplied loaves and fishes, and changed water into wine,
lead us and feed us,
and change us to reflect the glory of our Creator
now and through all eternity;
and the blessing:
Tend the earth, care for God's creations,
and bring forth the fruits of righteousness.

Go in the peace of Christ.

All **Thanks be to God.**

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The Lord's prayer: *Young Rangers from St Barnabas Church of England Primary School, Barnetby Fiona and Derek from Curry Jacks Lincoln, We Are One food charity with St Andrews and St John and St Stephen. Maureen, Joanna and Angela - Franciscans in Lincolnshire, Sandie and Geoff from Faith and Environment Lincoln. Debbie - St Giles' Church Community Gardener.*

British Sign Language Interpretation provided by Gill Behenna.

Music performed by Andrew Earis and St Martin's Voices and Resound Worship.

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