

Worship at Home: Plough Sunday 10th January 2021

THE GREETING

Rev Lindsay Yates, the Octagon Parish

Welcome to all of you, wherever you are watching, to the Octagon Parish; a group of small villages with historic churches in the beautiful South Downs National Park near Chichester. My name is Lindsay Yates, the Rector of the Parish. I am joined in this service by our Honorary Assistant priest, Will Adam and by farmers from our local community.

Today, on the First Sunday after the Epiphany, the Church commemorates the Baptism of Christ. But there is another ancient tradition for this time of year where agricultural communities marked going back to work after the Christmas feast. On this Plough Sunday we will be thinking about and praying for those who work on the land and who produce food in this and other communities; and in line with the old tradition we will be blessing a plough and seed as our farmers prepare to break the ground and plant the seed this year.

St Paul writes this: 'Those who sow bountifully will also reap bountifully'.

HYMN

Songs of thankfulness and praise

Sung by St Martin's Voices

Songs of thankfulness and praise,
Jesu, Lord, to thee we raise,
manifested by the star,
to the sages from afar;
branch of royal David's stem
in thy birth at Bethlehem:
anthems be to thee addressed
God in Man made manifest.

Manifest at Jordan's stream,
Prophet, Priest and King supreme;
and at Cana wedding-guest
in thy Godhead manifest;
manifest in power divine,
changing water into wine:
anthems be to thee addressed,
God in Man made manifest.

Manifest in making whole
palsied limbs and fainting soul;
manifest in valiant fight,
quelling all the devil's might;
manifest in gracious will,
ever bringing good from ill:
anthems be to thee addressed,
God in Man made manifest.

Grant us grace to see thee, Lord,
mirrored in thy holy word;
may we imitate thee now,
and be pure, as pure art thou;
that we like to thee may be
at thy great Epiphany;
and may praise thee, ever blest,
God in Man made manifest.

*Christopher Wordsworth (1807-1885), and Compilers of 'Rejoice and Sing'
Tune: Salzburg*

Grace, mercy and peace
from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ
be with you.

O Lord, open our lips
All: and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Give us the joy of your saving help
All: and sustain us with your life-giving Spirit.

We have come together in the name of Christ
to offer our praise and thanksgiving,
to hear and receive God's holy word,
to pray for the needs of the world,
and to seek the forgiveness of our sins,
that by the power of the Holy Spirit
we may give ourselves to the service of God.

PRAYERS OF PENITENCE

The grace of God has dawned upon the world
through our Saviour Jesus Christ,
who sacrificed himself for us to purify a people
as his own.

Let us confess our sins:

All: Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour,
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry
and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us, forgive us all that is past;
and grant that we may serve you
in newness of life
to the glory of your name.
Amen.

May the Father of all mercies
cleanse you from your sins
and restore you in his image
to the praise and glory of his name,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

The night has passed, and the day lies open before us;
let us pray with one heart and mind.

Silence is kept

As we rejoice in the gift of this new day,
so may the light of your presence, O God,
set our hearts on fire with love for you;
now and for ever.

All: Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Isaiah 55. 6-11

Read by Sally Ablewhite, Farmer

Seek the Lord while he may be found,
call upon him while he is near;
let the wicked forsake their way,
and the unrighteous their thoughts;
let them return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on them,
and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.
For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts.

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven,
and do not return there until they have watered the earth,
making it bring forth and sprout,
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;
it shall not return to me empty,
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,
and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

Here ends the lesson.

ANTHEM

We shall draw water joyfully

Sung by the Choral Scholars of St Martin-in-the-Fields

*We shall draw water joyfully, singing joyfully, singing joyfully;
we shall draw water joyfully from the wellsprings of salvation.*

Truly God is our salvation;
we trust, we shall not fear.
For the Lord is our strength,
the Lord is our song;
he became our Saviour.

Chorus

Give thanks, O give thanks to the Lord;
give praise to his holy name!
Make his mighty deeds known to all of the nations;
proclaim his greatness.

Chorus

Music: Paul Inwood (born 1947)

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 6. 25-end

Read by Ros Veltom, Farmer

Jesus said, 'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing?'

Consider the lilies of the field, 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, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith?

Therefore do not worry, saying, “What will we eat?” or “What will we drink?” or “What will we wear?” For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today'.

Here ends the reading.

SERMON

Rev Dr Will Adam, the Archbishop of Canterbury's Ecumenical Adviser

HYMN

We plough the fields and scatter

Sung by St Martin's Voices

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.*

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.

Chorus

We thank thee then, O Father,
for all things bright and good,
the seed-time and the harvest,
our life, our health, our food.
No gifts have we to offer
for all thy love imparts,
but that which thou desirest
our humble, thankful hearts.

Chorus

Words: Matthias Claudius (1740-1815) tr Jane Montgomery Campbell (1817-1878)
Tune: Wir Pflügen

THE APOSTLES CREED

All: I believe in God, the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ,
his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living
and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Let us pray to God our creator,
who has given us the earth's goodness for our delight,
and entrusted it to our care and tenderness.

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

Lord, we pray:
may those who sow in tears

All: reap with shouts of joy.

For all who depend on the earth for their daily food and fuel,
whose forests are destroyed for the profit of a few;

Lord, we pray:
may those who sow in tears

All: reap with shouts of joy.

For those who labour in poverty,
are oppressed by unjust laws,
are prevented from speaking the truth,
and long for a harvest of justice;

Lord, we pray:
may those who sow in tears

All: reap with shouts of joy.

For all who are captive to greed and waste and boredom,
whose harvest joy is choked
with things they do not need;

Lord, we pray:
may those who sow in tears

All: reap with shouts of joy.

Save us from all that holds us captive,
restore our vision,
that our tongue may be filled with laughter
and our tongue with songs of joy.

All: Amen.

THE COLLECT

Eternal Father,
who, at the baptism of Jesus
revealed him to be your Son,
anointing him with the Holy Spirit:
grant to us, who are born again by water and the Spirit,
that we may be faithful to our calling as your adopted children;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All: Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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,
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 those who trespass against us.
And 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.

REFLECTION

Every Day Faith

With local farmer Chris Veltom

THE BLESSINGS

The Blessing of Seed

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation:
in your goodness you have given us this seed to sow.
In it we perceive the promise of life,
the wonders of your creative love.

By your blessing,
let this seed be for us a sign of your creative power,
that in sowing and watering,
tending and watching,
we may see the miracle of growth,
and in due course reap a rich harvest.
As this seed must die to give life,
reveal to us the saving power of your Son,
who died that we might live,
and plant in us the good seed of your word.
Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

All: Blessed be God for ever.

The Blessing of the Plough and other agricultural equipment

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation:
for in your abundant care you have given us fertile land,
rich soil, the seasons in their courses.
You provide seed for sowing, water, light and warmth
to bring forth the miracle of growth.
You give us skill to work the land,
to prepare and nourish it, that it may be fruitful.
Bless all the labours of your servants,
bless the tools and machinery used in your service;
By your blessing,
let this plough be a sign of all that you promise to us.
Prosper the work of our hands,
and provide abundant crops for your people to share.
Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

All: Blessed be God for ever.

God speed the plough.

All: God speed the plough.

Prayer for the land and the community

Grant favourable weather, temperate rains
and fruitful seasons,
that there may be food and drink for all creatures

All: Hear us, good Lord.

Bestow your blessing upon the lands and waters,
and all who work upon them,
to bring forth food and all things needful for your people.

All: Hear us, good Lord.

Prosper all who care for the earth, the water, and the air,
that the riches of your creation may abound from age to age.

All: Hear us, good Lord.

May God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who is the source of all goodness and growth,
pour his blessing upon all things created,
and upon you his children,
that you may use his gifts to his glory
and the welfare of all peoples;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.

All: Amen.

THE DISMISSAL

Tend the earth, care for God's good creation
and bring forth the fruits of righteousness.

Let us bless the Lord

All: Thanks be to God.

HYMN

Hail to the Lord's Anointed

Sung by St Martin's Voices

Hail to the Lord's Anointed,
great David's greater Son!
Hail, in the time appointed,
his reign on earth begun!
He comes to break oppression,
to set the captive free,
to take away transgression,
and rule in equity.

He comes, with succour speedy,
to those who suffer wrong;
to help the poor and needy,
and bid the weak be strong;
to give them songs for sighing,
their darkness turn to light,
whose souls, condemned and dying,
were precious in his sight.

He shall come down like showers
upon the fruitful earth;
that love, joy, hope, like flowers,
spring in his path to birth;
before him, on the mountains,
shall peace the herald go;
and righteousness, in fountains,
from hill to valley flow.

Kings shall bow down before him,
and gold and incense bring;
all nations shall adore him,
his praise all people sing;
to him shall prayer unceasing
and daily vows ascend,
his kingdom still increasing,
a kingdom without end.

O'er every foe victorious,
he on his throne shall rest;
from age to age more glorious,
all-blessing and all-blest.
The tide of time shall never
his covenant remove;
his name shall stand for ever,
his changeless name of Love.

Words: James Montgomery (1771-1854)
Tune: Cruger

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BSL Interpretation by Naomi Barry.

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