



**Reflections & Prayers for Sunday  
3rd October 2021  
Harvest Festival**



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## Readings for this Sunday

*You may want to find your Bible and read the lessons set for this week:*

### **Joel 2: 21-27**

Psalm 8

Matthew 6: 25-33

### **Joel 2: 21-27**

Do not fear, O soil;  
be glad and rejoice,  
for the LORD has done great things!  
Do not fear, you animals of the field,  
for the pastures of the wilderness are green;  
the tree bears its fruit,  
the fig tree and vine give their full yield.  
O children of Zion, be glad  
and rejoice in the LORD your God;  
for he has given the early rain<sup>[a]</sup> for your vindication,  
he has poured down for you abundant rain,  
the early and the later rain, as before.  
The threshing-floors shall be full of grain,  
the vats shall overflow with wine and oil.  
I will repay you for the years  
that the swarming locust has eaten,  
the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter,  
my great army, which I sent against you.  
You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied,  
and praise the name of the LORD your God,  
who has dealt wondrously with you. And my people shall never again be put to shame.  
You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel,  
and that I, the LORD, am your God and there is no other.  
And my people shall never again  
be put to shame.

## Reflection by Anne Edwards

In *The Message*, Eugene Petersen writes in his introduction to the Book of Joel (which, by the way, you will find between the books of Hosea and Amos, in a group of books at the end of the Old Testament written by minor prophets): “There is a sense in which catastrophe doesn’t introduce anything new into our lives. It simply exposes the moral or spiritual reality that already exists but was hidden ... Then suddenly there it is before us: a moral universe in which our accumulated decisions – on what we say and do, on how we treat others, on whether or not we will obey God’s commands – are set in the stark light of God’s judgment.”

This Sunday we are celebrating our Harvest Festival. It’s not so long ago in the great scheme of things that nearly everyone going to church for this festival of thanksgiving would have taken with them some fruit or vegetable they had grown in their garden, or may be some eggs their chickens had laid. This is rare these days as most of us buy our food from the butcher, the baker, the grocer, the supermarket, and some of that food will come from hundreds, if not thousands of miles away rather than just down the road, or from our own country.

There is a great challenge for us today – in this world marketplace we can buy any food from anywhere in the world (if we can afford it) without the blink of an eye. And people do – but, do we take this freedom for granted, something we’re entitled to without a second thought? Today second, third and even fourth thoughts are required.

Joel’s prophecy was written at a time when the Israelites were suffering from a terrible plague of locusts that was devastating the crops of Israel, creating an agricultural disaster of major proportions. He projected this catastrophe onto a big screen and used it to focus the reality of God in the lives of his people. Then he expanded it to include everything and everyone everywhere – nothing left out – the whole world crowded into the “valley of decision” (ch. 3:4).

It seems to me that this is what is happening now in 2021 – everything and everyone everywhere – and the ‘valley of decision’ is COP26 in Glasgow next month.

COP26: Conference of the Parties for a number of treaties, which include representatives and Parties of the United Nations Framework on Climate Change – established in the early ‘90s to combat “dangerous human interference with the climate system” – the Kyoto Protocol, that commits state parties to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, and the Paris Agreement.

It is a sobering fact that much is happening around the world today that is killing or strangling our natural world, but at last some are listening to today’s prophets. More of us should be.

We know, and Joel tells us, that nature can recover from disasters, and “You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God” (ch.2:26). But first comes “Yet even now, says the LORD, return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping, and with mourning: rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the LORD, your God, for he is gracious and merciful ...” (ch.2:12 and 13).

It is so important that we do celebrate the fruits of earth and sea, thanking God from the whole of our hearts for his wonderful grace in providing us with our ‘daily bread’, but this ‘daily bread’ intended for one and all is dependent on not only our climate but our way of life which is, and has been, changing our world’s climate.

In the Sermon on the Mount, from which the verses from Matthew come, Jesus tells us ‘not to worry’ – but nowhere does God tell us we can squander food, waste it and throw it away just because we’ve decided not to eat it after all. He wants us to use everything He provides for us – whether it is food, petrol, gas, electricity, clothes, manufactured goods, and especially water – with the wisdom that ensures there is enough for all, not just for today or tomorrow, but for the ages to come.

So, what can we do – first, not worry! Second, turn to God in prayer, in repentance, asking God’s grace to help us change our lifestyles, and then to think carefully as we plan our shopping lists, use water and the fossil fuels of gas, electricity, petrol more frugally and with greater care. The whole of western economy has been based on more, more, more – leaving four fifths of the world’s population holding out their begging bowls with the plea “Please, sir, I want some more!”

## Prayers

### **Collect for the day**

Creator God,  
you made the goodness of the land,  
the riches of the seas and the rhythm of the seasons;  
as we thank you for the harvest  
may we cherish and respect this planet and its people,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Heavenly Father,  
We confess that we have trodden more heavily than the earth can bear through use,  
abuse and misuse of your generous gifts:  
Forgive us, Lord, help us to cherish your creation.

We have used resources that cannot be replaced:  
Forgive us, Lord, help us to cherish your creation.

We confess our selfishness and lack of concern  
for the generations to come:  
Forgive us, Lord, help us to cherish your creation.  
Amen.

This we know:  
the earth does not belong to us,  
we belong to the earth.  
This we know:  
all things are connected,  
like the blood that unites one family.  
This we know:  
we did not weave the web of life,  
we are merely a strand in it.  
This we know:  
whatever we do to the web,  
we do to ourselves.  
Let us give thanks for the gift of creation,  
let us give thanks that all things hold together in Christ.

*Iona liturgy*

Lord, hear our prayer,  
and change our lives  
until we illustrate  
the grace of the God  
who comes to make all things new. Amen.

## Parish Prayers for the week ahead

### **In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer for:**

Sunday	The Church in Wales
Monday	The Diocese of Gambella – The Episcopal/Anglican Province of Alexandria
Tuesday	The Diocese of Gambia – The Church of the Province of West Africa
Wednesday	The Diocese of Garissa – The Anglican Church of Kenya
Thursday	The Diocese of Gasabo – The Anglican Church of Rwanda
Friday	The Diocese of Gboko – The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)
Saturday	The Diocese of George – The Anglican Church of Southern Africa

### **In our Diocesan Cycle of Prayer:**

Sunday	Parish of Dean (Deanery of Sharnbrook)
Monday	Parish of Felmersham (Deanery of Sharnbrook)
Tuesday	Parish of Harrold (Deanery of Sharnbrook)
Wednesday	Parish of Keysoe (Deanery of Sharnbrook)
Thursday	Parish of Knotting with Souldrop (Deanery of Sharnbrook)
Friday	Parish of Melchbourne (Deanery of Sharnbrook)
Saturday	Parish of Milton Ernest (Deanery of Sharnbrook)

### **For the homes and families in:**

Sunday	Linwood Road, Loire Mews
Monday	Long Buftlers, Longfield Road
Tuesday	Magna Close, Maple Cottages
Wednesday	Meadow Walk, Meadway
Thursday	Mons Close, Nairn Close
Friday	Netherfield Road, Newton Close
Saturday	Oak Way, Oakfield Road

### **The Sick:**

Claire, Sue, Christine, Hermione, Karen, Chris, Paul, Tamsin, Mike and all whose names are entered on our St Luke's Cell Prayer List.

### **On their year's mind:**

Violet Venning, Philip Emerson, Audrey Rolt, Herbert Burchell, Anthony Whittaker, Henry Stroyan, Philippa Buller, Judith Hooper, Robin Lawrie.

### **Church Opening times:**

#### **Other services / in Church congregation**

- Morning Prayer Monday – Thursday at 9.30 am
- Evening Prayer Monday – Thursday at 5.00pm
- Wednesday 11.00 am Midweek Communion
- Sunday 9.30am Parish Eucharist
- Short Family service at 4 pm on Sunday 17 October and Sunday 21 November
- First Sunday of each month at 8.00 am Holy Communion (in Lady Chapel)
- First Sunday of each month at 4 pm Faith & Light
- 6.30 pm Harvest Sung Evensong today, 3 October, followed by drinks at the back of church

## Private Prayer

- Saturday and Sunday 11.00am – 4.00pm
- Wednesday 9.00am – 5.30pm

## A reminder... of this phone service:

**Daily Hope** – dial 0800 804 8044 for prayer, reflection, music and worship services from the Church of England. A weekly service is available from 9 am every Sunday.

## Church at home:

We are delighted to produce each week these printed papers. If you would prefer not to receive these papers each week, please let Julie in the parish office know. If you are aware of others in the parish who would also value the opportunity to worship at home in this way, do please contact a member of the Ministry team or Julie (Parish Office Tel: 01582 712776).