

The Rectorial Benefice of the East Vale  
Morning Prayer  
Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> September, 2020 | Harvest

*Hymn*

Come, ye thankful people, come,  
raise the song of harvest home;  
all is safely gathered in,  
ere the winter storms begin.  
**God our Maker doth provide  
for our wants to be supplied;  
come to God's own temple, come,  
raise the song of harvest home.**

All the world is God's own field,  
fruit as praise to God we yield;  
wheat and tares together sown  
are to joy or sorrow grown;  
first the blade and then the ear,  
then the full corn shall appear;  
Lord of harvest, grant that we  
wholesome grain and pure may be.

Even so, Lord, quickly come,  
to thy final harvest home;  
gather thou thy people in,  
free from sorrow, free from sin,  
there, forever purified,  
in thy presence to abide;  
come, with all thine angels, come,  
raise the glorious harvest home.

*The Gloria*

Glory to God, glory in the highest,  
peace to his people, peace on earth.  
**Glory to God, glory in the highest,  
peace to his people, peace on earth.**

Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father.  
**Glory to God, glory in the highest,  
peace to his people, peace on earth.**

We worship you,  
**glory in the highest,**  
give you thanks,  
**glory in the highest,**  
praise you for your glory.  
**Glory to God, glory in the highest,  
peace to his people, peace on earth.**

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father  
Lord God, Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world:  
have mercy on us,  
**have mercy on us;**

you are seated at the right hand of the Father:  
receive our prayer,  
**receive our prayer.**

Glory to God, glory in the highest,  
peace to his people, peace on earth.  
**Glory to God, glory in the highest,  
peace to his people, peace on earth.**

For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God, the glory of God the Father.

**Glory to God, glory in the highest,  
peace to his people, peace on earth.**

Amen. **Amen.**

*The Collect*

Lord of all creation, you give us the fruits of the earth in their season and crown the year with your goodness: help us so to receive your gifts with thankful hearts that we may use them to your glory, for the relief of those in want and to meet our daily needs; through Jesus Christ the Bread of life, who is alive and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

*First Reading*

*(Deuteronomy 8:7-18)*

A reading from the book of Deuteronomy.

For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land with flowing streams, with springs and underground waters welling up in valleys and hills, a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey, a land where you may eat bread without scarcity, where you will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron and from whose hills you may mine copper. You shall eat your fill and bless the Lord your God for the good land that he has given you. Take care that you do not forget the Lord your God, by failing to keep his commandments, his ordinances, and his statutes, which I am commanding you today. When you have eaten your fill and have built fine houses and live in them, and when your herds and flocks have multiplied, and your silver and gold is multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied, then do not exalt yourself, forgetting the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, who led you through the great and terrible wilderness, an arid waste-land with poisonous snakes and scorpions. He made water flow for you from flint rock, and fed you in the wilderness with manna that your ancestors did not know, to humble you and to test you, and in the end to

do you good. Do not say to yourself, 'My power and the might of my own hand have gained me this wealth.' But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, so that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your ancestors, as he is doing today.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

*Responsorial Psalm* (Psalm 65)

**R/ You crown the year with your goodness, and your paths overflow with plenty.**

You are to be praised, O God, in Zion; to you shall vows be performed in Jerusalem. To you that hear prayer shall all flesh come, because of their transgressions. **R/**

Our sins are stronger than we are, but you will blot them out. Happy are they whom you choose and draw to your courts to dwell there! they will be satisfied by the beauty of your house, by the holiness of your temple. **R/**

Awesome things will you show us in your righteousness, O God of our salvation, O Hope of all the ends of the earth and of the seas that are far away. You make fast the mountains by your power; they are girded about with might. **R/**

You still the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, and the clamour of the peoples. Those who dwell at the ends of the earth will tremble at your marvellous signs; you make the dawn and the dusk to sing for joy. **R/**

You visit the earth and water it abundantly; you make it very plenteous; the river of God is full of water. You prepare the grain, for so you provide for the earth. **R/**

You drench the furrows and smooth out the ridges; with heavy rain you soften the ground and bless its increase. You crown the year with your goodness, and your paths overflow with plenty. **R/**

May the fields of the wilderness be rich for grazing, and the hills be clothed with joy. May the meadows cover themselves with flocks and the valleys cloak themselves with grain; let them shout for joy and sing. **R/**

*Second Reading* (2 Corinthians 9:6-15)

A reading from Paul's second letter to the Corinthians

The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in

every good work. As it is written, 'He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.' He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us; for the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God. Through the testing of this ministry you glorify God by your obedience to the confession of the gospel of Christ and by the generosity of your sharing with them and with all others, while they long for you and pray for you because of the surpassing grace of God that he has given you. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

This is the word of the Lord **Thanks be to God**

*The Gospel* (Luke 17:11-19)

**Alleluia! Alleluia!**  
**Give thanks to the risen Lord.**  
**Alleluia! Alleluia!**  
**Give praise to his name.**

**Jesus is Lord of all the earth,  
he is the king of creation.**  
**Alleluia! Alleluia!...**

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Listen to the gospel of Christ according to Saint Luke. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

On the way to Jerusalem Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee. As he entered a village, ten lepers approached him. Keeping their distance, they called out, saying, 'Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!' When he saw them, he said to them, 'Go and show yourselves to the priests.' And as they went, they were made clean. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. He prostrated himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan. Then Jesus asked, 'Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they? Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?' Then he said to him, 'Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

**Spread the good news o'er all the earth,  
Jesus has died and risen.**  
**Alleluia! Alleluia!...**

## The Homily

If we are inclined to think that social distancing is a new or unusual requirement, then we are mistaken. History is littered with instances where people have been required to distance from one another and there in the midst of our gospel reading detailing Jesus' interaction with ten lepers, we are told they kept their distance. Lepers, as we know, are probably most notably numbered among those required to live separately in colonies and the like through the centuries.

It's astonishing to think that a disease that was very prevalent at the time of Jesus and which now has a cure, is still causing around 200,000 new infections globally each year. There is an annual World Leprosy Awareness Day on January 28th and there are still a number of charities committed to caring for and treating those with leprosy. Of course, as with many illnesses, it is most prevalent among those living in poverty, and so although we have a medical cure, we still need to find the economic solution too. If we can pull people out of poverty, then we also alleviate many of the problems that arise as a result of poverty, including ill health.

The scriptures tell us how those with leprosy and other diseases were treated in the first century, and in the centuries preceding Jesus. But we are also presented with something of an incongruity in the divine response and attitude to leprosy, in that, in the old testament, God gives instruction on how lepers ought to be treated, they are to be set apart from the community and be easily identifiable, wearing torn clothes and disordered hair, and crying out 'unclean'. Of course, this requirement was designed to stop the spread of the infection, but nowadays that sort of ostracisation is considered discriminatory or inhumane. Whereas, in our gospel reading, Jesus cured lepers in order that they might reintegrate back into the community, that they might be restored to society.

The primary focus of the gospel story today though, is concerned with the business of expressing gratitude, of being grateful. Jesus healed ten and yet one took the time to give thanks and praise, and that one was the Samaritan, the only foreigner. As a result, we are prompted to consider what place gratitude has in our lives and challenged to reflect on those times when we have neglected to show gratitude to God and others for acts of kindness and mercy. Today we observe Harvest Sunday, a Sunday designated to give gratitude for God's abundant goodness around us. But I suppose, we could be tempted to think in the current climate that we may not have an awful lot to be grateful for, so maybe the greater challenge of the gospel on this Harvest Sunday is to consider how we can nurture and cultivate within ourselves a grateful heart all of the time, despite everything, and foster around us a culture of gratitude.

## Fr David

From gratitude springs generosity and St Paul touches upon the grace that flows from generosity in the letter to the Corinthians today.

Interestingly, the dictionary gives two definitions for 'leprosy'. Firstly, the one we would expect: *a chronic infectious disease affecting especially the skin and peripheral nerves and characterized by the formation of nodules or macules that enlarge and spread accompanied by loss of sensation with eventual paralysis, wasting of muscle, and production of deformities — called also Hansen's disease.* Then secondly, a definition we might not expect: *A morally or spiritually harmful influence.* The physical ailment became a metaphor for things that erode our moral or spiritual wellbeing and vitality, in the same way that leprosy erodes skin and muscle. I suppose, essentially our attitudes can be a form of moral and spiritual leprosy, so if we struggle to be grateful and practice generosity then we diminish or erode our capacity to be more Christ-like and to do good.

No doubt a side effect of having leprosy was loneliness from having been cast out and cut off from wider society, from family and friends. Mother Teresa of Calcutta once suggested that the leprosy of the modern world is loneliness. She said, 'being unwanted, unloved, uncared for, forgotten by everybody, I think that is a much greater hunger, a much greater poverty than the person who has nothing to eat.' And I'm inclined to agree with her as I encounter more and more people who are battling with loneliness and all the many other issues that arise as a result of it, like depression.

The church has an important part to play in reaching out to those who feel unloved, uncared for and forgotten. Prior to the introduction of social distancing, society was already becoming increasingly more polarised, detached and segregated as we advance into a digital age, which is why so many find themselves out on a limb – struggling to find their place and know their worth. Loneliness, like leprosy, can be cured, not by drugs but by social interaction and community cohesion. How then can a spirit of generosity springing from a thankful heart enable us to be the remedy society needs? This is traditionally a time to give food stuff for the hungry and money for the poor, but maybe we can broaden the scope of what we are able to offer as 'gifts' of thanksgiving and gratitude this Harvest-tide, to include the gift of ourselves for others.

## **Hymn**

**Now thank we all our God  
with heart and hands and voices,  
who wondrous things hath done,  
in whom his world rejoices;  
who from our mothers' arms  
hath blessed us on our way  
with countless gifts of love,  
and still is ours today.**

**O may this bounteous God  
through all our life be near us,  
with ever joyful hearts  
and blessed peace to cheer us,  
and keep us in his grace,  
and guide us when perplexed,  
and free us from all ills  
in this world in the next.**

**All praise and thanks to God  
the Father now be given,  
the Son and him who reigns  
with them in highest heaven,  
the one eternal God,  
whom earth and heav'n adore;  
for thus it was, is now,  
and shall be evermore.**

## **The Intercessions**

Let us pray to God, the Lord of the harvest, for the church and world, giving thanks for his bountiful goodness.

As you have blessed the church with abundant grace, keep her faithful in the offering of word and sacrament, knowing that all things come from you and return to you. Send out labourers to gather the harvest of the world, that all may know the riches of your love. Bless June our bishop and in our link parish cycle of prayer, we pray for all who worship at and contribute to the life of Lagunda and Långtora churches and Pendoylan and Llancarfan churches, especially near the feast of St Cadoc.

Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Be with all who work that others may be fed, for those who bring in the harvest of land and sea. We pray particularly for the farming industry in and around the East Vale and for those who process and transport food. Grant a fruitful harvest and a more just distribution of the world's resources.

Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Give to us, our families and friends, grateful hearts and a concern for the needs of others. Bless those who work to feed the poor and vulnerable in our communities and those who bring relief to those affected by famine and malnutrition globally. Strengthen and heal the sick and bring comfort to all in need.

Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Grant to the departed who have been gathered into your care, rest and peace. May their labour in this world cause them to reap a rich eternal harvest in your kingdom.

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

In a moment of silence, we offer to the Lord of the Harvest, our own needs and concerns...

**Merciful Father  
accept these prayers  
for the sake of your Son,  
our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen**

## **Hymn**

**Think of a world without any flowers,  
Think of a world without any trees,  
Think of a sky without any sunshine,  
Think of the air without any breeze.  
We thank you, Lord,  
for flowers and trees and sunshine,  
We thank you, Lord,  
and praise your holy name.**

**Think of a world without any animals,  
Think of a field without any herd,  
Think of a stream without any fishes,  
Think of a dawn without any bird.  
We thank you, Lord,  
for all your living creatures,  
We thank you, Lord  
and praise your holy name.**

**Think of a world without any people,  
Think of a street with no-one living there,  
Think of a town without any houses,  
No-one to love and nobody to care.  
We thank you, Lord  
for families and friendships,  
We thank you, Lord,  
and praise your holy name.**