**Joel Chapter 2 verses 21~28**

Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice, for the Lord will do great things!

Be not afraid, you beasts of the field,

 for the pastures of the wilderness spring green;

 the tree bears its fruit, the fig tree and the vine yield their strength.

Be glad then, children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God;

 for he has given you the former rain moderately,

 and he will send the rain down on you, the early and the latter rain as before.

The threshing floors shall be full of wheat, and the vats shall overflow with wine and oil.

I will restore to you the years that the locust has eaten, the cankerworm, the caterpillar,

and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among 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 ashamed.

And you shall know that I am in the midst of Israel,

and that I am the Lord your God, and none else.

And my people shall never again be ashamed.

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh;

 your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,

 your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams.

**Matthew Chapter 21 verses 17~22**

And Jesus left the temple, went out of the city to Bethany, and spent the night there.

In the morning, when he returned to the city, he was hungry.

And seeing a fig tree by the side of the road,

he went to it and found nothing at all on it but leaves.

Then he said to it, *‘May no fruit ever come from you again!’*

And the fig tree withered at once.

When the disciples saw it, they were amazed, saying,

‘How did the fig tree wither at once?’

Jesus answered them:

*‘Truly I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt,*

*not only will you do what has been done to the fig tree,*

*but even if you say to this mountain:,*

*“Be lifted up and thrown into the sea”,*

 *it will be done.*

*Whatever you ask for in prayer with faith, you will receive.’*

 **Collect** *(from Common Worship Alternative Collects)*

 Gracious God, You call us to fullness of Life;

 Deliver us from unbelief, and banish our anxieties

 With the liberating Love of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

**Food for Thought**

* Harvest celebrations are going to be challenging this year. Not only have we got conditions imposed upon us which mean we can’t have our large Community events with food and socializing with our wider communities, but this year we are looking back on many challenges and losses which have come upon us all.
* How can we celebrate? What can we celebrate? Where do we begin?
* Harvest through the ages has embraced loss as well as success. Whatever we have faced in the last few years, we, unlike in days gone by, don’t rely on the things we grow or can barter for our survival. With great transport networks and marketing outlets we can always access enough food to survive. In our times we are blessed.
* With life in lockdown and with the flooding earlier in the year we have experienced many, many losses in our communities. Some have physically lost home and belongings and tremendous upheaval; some have lost work and livelihood; some have had to forego major life events like weddings or baptisms, experiences that have been long saved up for, retirement or beginning a new job. Alongside this there has been separation from family and friends; those who are elderly, single or vulnerable have been particularly hard hit; support networks like Church or clubs have not been able to meet.
* Do take time to reflect on the losses you have experienced in the last year.
* It may feel as though months or most of this year has been lost or eaten!
* This is why I have chosen these verses from Joel Chapter 2. We know that the Lord is with us whatever we experience, through the rough and the smooth. But here He goes a few steps further. He promises to restore those things to us which have been lost. That restoration may well be of a different nature as we turn to Him in trust and wait on Him for repurposing and realigning our journeys.
* He promises to make good what has been spoiled, eaten up, ruined, robbed from us.
* In the last year, alongside the challenges, the nightmares and losses, there have also been unexpected gains. Care shown from unexpected places, mutual care amongst neighbours, time available to spend in the home and with close family or to do things that are not usually possible. Some have developed new skills or brush up old ones, written letters and reconnected with old friends by phone or internet, discovered new worlds of books. And some have given more time than usual to reflection, reading the Bible and prayer.
* I wonder if you can think of gains or some new aspect of life that you have discovered during this challenging year.
* For all these things, let us give thanks; in all things, losses and new discoveries let’s dedicate our lives to God in trust and expectation, ready to recognise His restoration and the new shape of His plans for each of us and our lives together as His people. And as our world continues to battle with this virus, let us pray for a new way of generosity, mutual understanding and care that may lead to peace.

 **WORSHIP for HARVEST TIME**

Your love Lord reaches to the heavens! And your faithfulness to the clouds

**We praise you Father, Son and Holy Spirit**

**HYMN:** All people that on earth do dwell **https://youtu.be/lhUiRonlzaQ**

**CANTICLE**

**Response: I will make a way in the wilderness**

**and refreshing streams in the desert.**

1. The wilderness and the dry land shall rejoice:

 The desert shall burst into song.

2. They shall see the glory of the Lord:

 The splendour of our God **/R**

3. Strengthen the weary hands:

 Make firm the feeble knees.

4. Say to the anxious, be strong, fear not:

 Your God is coming in judgement to save you. **/R**

5. Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened:

 And the ears of the deaf unstopped;

6. Then shall the lame leap like the deer:

 And the tongue of the dumb will sing for joy. **/R**

7. For the waters shall spring up in the wilderness:

 And the streams will flow in the desert lands.

8. The ransomed of the Lord shall return with singing:

 And sorrow and sighing will be turned to joy. **/R**

 **HARVEST COLLECT**

You crown the year with Your goodness

 And You give us the fruits of the earth in their season:

 Grant that we may use them to Your glory

 For the relief of those in need and for our own well~being,

 Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**READING: Joel Chapter 2 verses 21~28**

**SONG:** Give thanks with a grateful heart  **https://youtu.be/Bk\_7wUR2Wdg** **GOSPEL READING:** *from* Matthew Chapter 21 verses 17~22

**Food for Thought** *(See Overleaf)*

**HARVEST CONFESSION**

Lord, You asked for my hands that you might use them for your purpose.

I gave them for a moment then withdrew them, for the work was hard.

You asked for my mouth to speak out against injustice.

I gave you a whisper that I might not be accused.

You asked for my eyes to see the pain of poverty.

I kept them closed for I did not want to see.

You asked for my life that you might work through me.

I gave a small part that I might not be too involved.

Lord, forgive my calculated efforts to serve you

only when it is convenient for me to do so,

only in the places where it is safe to do so,

and only with those who make it easy to do so

Father, forgive us,

renew us, send us out as your useful and usable instruments

that we may take seriously our debt of gratitude to you and your world.

 *Jo Seramane, South Africa*

 **ANTHEM:** For the beauty of the earth ~ John Rutter **https://youtu.be/xlBkpAm3fhw**

**REFLECTION before PRAYER**

Listen to the water, air and earth; creation’s treasure store.

They are wounded for the want of being listened to.

They cry and too few hear; they slowly die and too few mourn.

And yet, through those who give attention,

who stretch both hands to touch, embrace and tend;

through those who marvel, reverence and kneel and cup the water,

feel the breath of heaven, and hear the humming earth,

a healing comes and there are seeds of hope;

there is tomorrow germinating in today.

Listen to the stories, dreams and thoughts of those who have no voice.

They are wounded for the want of being listened to;

They cry and too few hear; they slowly die and too few mourn.

And yet through these who give attention,

who stretch both hands to touch, embrace, receive;

Through these who labour, claim their dignity and drink the cup of suffering, breathe winds of change, and earth their dreams in struggle,

healing comes and there are seeds of hope;

there is tomorrow germinating in today.

Be still, Be just ~ Sharing in their truth.

In finding them, you find yourself.

**HYMN:**  We plough the fields, and scatter the good seed **https://youtu.be/ccVEjKFkAV4**