

## Welcome

Welcome everyone to the worship of Tyndale Baptist Church – again, welcome if you're in church this morning, or watching on-line (or watching later, or following the script).

Again, the reminder for those in church that there can be no standing or singing (apart from under your breath) and please utter the responses into your masks....thank you for following the COVID 19 rules and layout as you arrived – and please follow the one way system and the steward's directions as you leave.

In these challenging times we cannot ignore the great Christian theme of harvest. On a planet rocked by viral-borne disease, as we are all becoming more and more conscious of climate change and the challenges of pollution, over-use of resources and species-loss still, we assert, this is God's good world, to be celebrated and cared for – the world that sustains us and which makes life possible, the world in which we are called to live by faith as God's people.

**'Praise God for the harvest'**

Tyndale Virtual Singing Group

### Call to worship

The earth is the Lord's  
**And we are his people,**  
Yet we have spoiled the earth  
**And failed to live as God's people.**  
We have sown much  
**And harvested little,**  
We eat and drink  
**But never have enough,**  
We clothe ourselves  
**But no one is warm,**  
The seas rise and the forests burn  
**The glaciers melt and the rains fall hard.**

(Pause in quiet)

We would return to the Lord  
**Whose earth this is**  
We would honour him  
**And praise his name**  
For God's world is good  
**We enjoy its blessings**  
And though we have spoiled much  
**Still the earth is the Lord's**  
Still we would be God's people  
**Still we would revel in the goodness**  
Still we would worship God in Christ  
**That we might live**  
That we might see the mending of the world.

BPW 135 ['We plough the fields and scatter'](#)

Scottish Festival Singers

### Opening Prayer

God who made every creature and us and every shining star and us and every filling field and us and everything and us we come before you; we relish your presence; we rejoice in your creation; we rely on your power – and we worship

For you are great and good and full of love and faithful and the eyes of the whole universe look to you for life itself – and Lord, for when we have not looked; when we have looked away; when we have looked for other things, forgive us, and restore us, we pray

In Isaiah the Lord says, 'I will bring near my deliverance swiftly, my salvation has gone out and my arms will rule the peoples; the coastlands wait for me, and for my arm they hope.

We thank you that you have delivered us and are saving us in Christ – and we will wait, like the coastlands, and the hills, and the fields and the creatures and the stars, for your coming to us – you who are our hope – we worship you.

### Lord's Prayer:

*Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as 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 forever. Amen*

### Readings

Haggai 1:1-11

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

### Sermon - 'Hope that remains'

*Lord, we give you this time. May what is spoken ring with truth, may what is heard and understood be touched by your spirit, and may what is decided lead us on towards your Kingdom. Amen.*

Harvest. 'We plough the fields and scatter' – words that hail from a different age.

When I went from BBC to a village church the 'evening' service was at 4.30pm – it had always been - so farmers could come to church before going back to milking...the old ways..

Our holiday cottage in a Cornish village had been converted from a former Meth' chapel. They'd framed a preserved poster from the opening of the chapel in 1871!!! (Tyndale?)

*It was an advert for the opening - 2 sermons the first Sunday, another sermon the next day, 2 more the following Sunday, another 1 the following day*

They used to go to church back then frequently to listen to sermons....imagine that world! Farmers straight from the fields; horses outside; 'tea' (bunfight!!) in the hall..sermons!

& on harvest Sunday one of those big bread centrepieces, flowers, sheaves of corn – tins, baskets of potatoes, tomatoes, a marrow as big as a baby...the old ways...?!

Then they tried to make it all more modern – a harvest of work..'cos not many folk knew about trad. harvest..

'God of concrete, God of steel' - Richard Jones 1964 – in Youth Praise.. - written after a youth group complaint about old-fashioned hymns.

*God of concrete, God of steel, God of piston & of wheel, God of pylon, God of steam, God of girder and of beam, God of atom, God of mine, all the world of power is thine!*

Bit dated itself now, though. The 60s? Concrete, steel, girders? Girder in the opening prayer.. Don't hear much about that such things any more, at least not in a positive way

Concrete's brutalist, ugly, crumbling – steel rusts...pistons? Internal combustion engines, no thanks! Pylons – marching like hideous aliens across the fields

Girders? Never mind that houses would fall down without girders, the only girders you ever hear of these days are in the InBru slogan 'made in Scotland from girders...'

Not much, this harvest, to say positively about the modern world, is there? Plastic waste, Glaciers melting, sea-levels rising, forests burning...species becoming extinct.. Harvest..

*Consider how you have fared. You have sown much, and harvested little; you eat, but you never*

*have enough; you drink, but you never have your fill; you clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; and you that earn wages earn wages to put them into a bag with holes.*

Haggai – words that seem to fit our world, aren't they? Futility all around – no matter how hard you try – how hard some people try, anyway..it all seems to come to nothing..

A coronavirus sentiment, for sure. Businesses had just begun to get back on their feet – 'eat out to help out'; the summers's felt more relaxed; we're beginning to get used to masks, social distancing, hand sanitiser – handing over names and phone no.s

Now..more restrictions – talk of 2nd waves – & this year's harvest is poor by the way & supermarket shelves are emptying & they're building lorry parks in Kent

*You have sown much, & harvested little; you eat, but you never have enough; you drink, but you never have your fill; you clothe yourselves, but no one is warm...*

Still, though, we believe, this is God's world. Still, though, it fair bursts with beauty; still, though, HBs are ingenious & creative & capable of great invention & innovation & love–

& no wonder, we say, because we are made by God in his image

& – these 3 remain..says Paul, at the end of his elegy to love –

everything else is passing; tongues; knowledge, prophecy – things Xtians thought of as of first importance.. not important at all, says **P**- they're *passing* – impermanent, ephemeral, transient.

That's an attitude for us to take to the whole world.

That holiday cottage was in a former chapel built of granite. The village had grown up round five granite quarries. Granite – the most permanent-seeming, of rocks -lasts for ages!

But the quarries are all worked out and closed. The chapel is no longer a chapel

& those old Harvest ways? You can't beat some of the old hymns, I know, but...trad. harvest services have passed now, haven't they?

Mind you , so has the world of 'God of concrete, God of steel' – lots of concrete and steel skyscrapers are two thirds empty now...

The coronavirus will pass as well, won't it? Oh, not yet awhile. But the bubonic plague passed, in its time - helped to end serfdom on the way, apparently...

'This too shall pass'. We know this. We know *this* world is passing. We know *our lives* are passing. Many problems seem to stem from trying to hold on to things that don't remain.

But these three remain. They're not granite-solid, not concrete-firm..they don't bathe us in warm, nostalgic glows. But they remain.

At least, insofar as they come from God they remain. Insofar as we don't put our faith in impermanent things, don't hope for transient things, don't love passing things,

If we put our faith in Christ who lives for ever; if we hope only in Him who is our life, and if we love – that's the greatest, see – if we love 'he who first loved us' -who came into our impermanent, passing, frail world and loved it so much that he gave his only Son

These three remain – faith, hope and love – and the greatest of these?..

In Haggai the Lord says that the poor harvest is because his people have neglected to build his house; the rounded OT message is that God's people have failed to do justice, be merciful, care for the stranger –

I think Paul's message is the same, really. Love, like there's no tomorrow - it's the greatest of the three things that remain.

['Hope of the nations'](#)

Brian Doerksen

**'Dives and Lazarus'**

Mike Garnier

### **Intercessions**

Prayer at Harvest has to be for parts of the world where life's a real struggle, by comparison with which the struggles we face pale... Christian Aid and BMS World Mission are just two of many mission and aid organisations working in many places to bring relief and good news – for health, education, survival – for the spirit. Two videos give us merely a snapshot and move us to prayer..

[Covid 19 support Kenya Christian Aid video](#)

[BMS World Mission prayer video](#)

### **Offering and Prayer**

Lord we are grateful for all the good things we have received in this glorious world and the good gifts we have been given to use and we gladly anticipate all that is yet to come from your generous hand.

As we give of ourselves in these and all our gifts, we are sorry for all that we have misused and abused but we look to the day when this world will be like your peaceable Kingdom. amen

#### **The Grace is said:**

*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, evermore, Amen.*

['There is a hope'](#)

Stuart Townend

### **Blessing**

*Thanks to Ian H and Bruce L for today's technical work and to Ian W for continuing to manage the website, to Rachel M, Sarah D, and the Tyndale Singers for the recorded music and to Mike G for his solo singing and playing, to Nick and Tina for the readings and for getting the script in in the post. Thanks to the stewards and 'preparers' and thanks to you all for being here this morning.*

*A 'together though apart' time follows at 11.30 am*