

Order of Service

Harvest 2018

This Harvest thanksgiving, the Order of Service¹ takes inspiration from powerful women, standing together to renew their communities and transform lives in Ethiopia. Here, we weave together readings, prayers and songs in the hope that as we give thanks for God's gifts at home, we also share in the joy of those gathering their harvests around the world.

Opening activity

Display the images from Ethiopia of the women's cooperative available at the end of this Order of Service, alongside images from your church community and your local community, learning and working together.

Opening responses

Praying together
sharing together
this is good news.

Learning together
working together
this is good news.

Laughing together
weeping together
this is good news.

This is good news
for our community.
This is good news
for God's world.

Song

(suggestion: 'We are the church')

Prayers of approach

God our maker
God of springtime and Harvest
we are here.

Jesus the storyteller
Jesus our friend
we are here.

Holy Spirit our breath
God alive within us
we are here.

We are here
at your invitation
to meet with you.

(silence)

As we think about Harvest in our lives, our communities and around the world, we come to you, seeking hope, strength and forgiveness.

For our tendency to work alone when it would be more constructive to work with others,
God of the Harvest **forgive us.**

For closing our minds to stories and situations we need to understand and act on,
God of the Harvest **forgive us.**

For our reluctance to let your Holy Spirit challenge us and remake us,
God of the Harvest **forgive us.**

(silence)

Jesus said –
Listen, this is Good News:
those who hear my message and let it grow in their hearts and minds,
keep on living and loving until they bear good fruit.
Amen.

First Bible reading

Luke 8:1-15 (a version for six voices)

Narrator Jesus travelled through towns and villages, preaching the good news of the reign of God.

Voice 1 The twelve disciples went with him

Voice 2 And so did some women who had been healed of evil spirits and diseases – Mary Magdalene was one of them

Voice 3 Joanna, whose husband Chuza was an official in Herod's court, was another

Voice 4 And Susanna was with them too, and there were many others.

Voice 5 These women used their own resources, their own skills and ideas and money, to support Jesus and his disciples.

Narrator People from one town after another kept coming to find Jesus. One day, when a great crowd had gathered, he told them this story.

Voice 1 Once there was a farmer, who went out to sow corn.

Voice 2 As he scattered the seed in the field, some of it fell on the path and people trod on it, and the birds found it and ate it.

Voice 3 Some of the seed fell on rocky ground, where there was very little soil. When this seed began to grow in the hot sun there was no moisture in the ground and the plants dried up and died.

Voice 4 Some of the seed fell amongst thorn bush seedlings. The thorn bushes grew up with the seed and choked it.

Voice 5 And some of the farmer's seeds fell in good soil. These seeds grew to maturity and each plant produced hundreds and hundreds of grains of corn.

Narrator Later the disciples came to Jesus and asked him to explain what the story meant.

Voice 1 Well, said Jesus, the seeds in the story are the good news about how God loves you and wants you to live your lives.

Voice 2 The seeds that fell along the path are like the people who hear what God is saying, but when bad people tell them that God's words are not true, they don't listen to God's words anymore.

Voice 3 The seeds that fell on the rocky ground are like the people who are happy to hear God's words but when difficult things happen to them, because God's words have not taken root in their lives, they fall away.

Voice 4 The seeds that grew up with the thorn bushes are like the people who hear God's words, but the words are choked by the worries and riches and pleasures of life, and these seeds never ripen.

Voice 5 But the seeds that fell in good soil, these are like the people who hear God's words and keep them in their hearts. These are the people who hear the good news and live it.

Narrator These are the seeds that go on growing until they produce good fruit and are ready for Harvest.

Song

(suggestion: 'If you believe and I believe')

Second Bible reading

Proverbs 8:1-12, 18-21 (a version for two voices)

Voice 1 Listen, Wisdom is shouting out, she is making herself heard.

She stands on the hilltops.
She stands at the crossroads.
She stands at the city gates.

Don't miss her.
What she says is important.
Listen up.

Voice 2 I am speaking to you, humanity.
I am speaking to everyone on Earth.
Are you immature? Come and learn
to be mature. Are you foolish?
Come and learn some sense.
What I will teach you is right and true.
I hate lies.
I will not mislead you.
I will make things clear.
My instructions, my teachings,
are more valuable than silver and gold.
My experience is better than all the jewels in
the world.
I have knowledge and insight.
My judgement is sound.

Voice 1 Listen, Wisdom is shouting out,
she is making herself heard.

She stands high on the hilltops.
She stands at the crossroads.
She stands in your path.

Don't miss her.
She will blow your mind.
Listen now.

Voice 2 I have integrity and honour to gift to you.
What you get from me will be better than the
finest gold, more glorious than the purest
silver.

I know where to walk.
I follow the paths of justice.
I do what is right.
Those who love me,
those who learn from me,
will fill their lives and houses with treasure.

Listen,
Wisdom is shouting,
she is making herself heard.
Wisdom is calling you out.

Song

(suggestion: 'In Our Lives Plant Seeds of Hope')

Sermon

Offering

Prayers of thanksgiving and intercession

Not so safely gathered in
in recent years,
climate change, human greed,
floods and drought and disease
have taken their toll.

God of creation,
as we sing the joyful hymns
and admire the Harvest display,
give us compassion
and understanding
which moves beyond our dismay
at the increased prices in our shops,
into prayer and active concern
for those whose livelihood depends on the harvest
in all its forms.²

We pray for the women and families of Alduba village
and Chali village in Ethiopia,
God of the Harvest **hear our prayer.**

We pray for people around the world who
work together to support themselves and their
communities,
God of the Harvest **hear our prayer.**

We pray with Christian Aid partners and all those
working to make a difference,
God of the Harvest **hear our prayer.**

We pray for our own communities in... (insert your
own area and/or local needs),
God of the Harvest **hear our prayer.**

We pray for ourselves... our needs, our questions, our
dreams,
God of the Harvest **hear our prayer.**

God of the Harvest
make of us cheerful givers.
Accept our thanks and hear our prayers.
Gift us today your love and your blessing.
Amen.

Taking a group photo

Like the group photos of the communities of women
in Ethiopia, we invite you to take a group photo of
your congregation at your Harvest service. If you're
happy for it to go on social media, please share with
#PowerfulTogether and the name of your church.

Tag:

@christianaiduk on Instagram,
@christian_aid on Twitter or
@christianaid on Facebook.

Song

(suggestion: 'For the Beauty of the Earth')

Closing prayer

God, who made the earth,
root us deeply in your love
and grow your wisdom and justice in us.
Amen.

Jesus who told great stories,
sow your good news in our hearts,
and help us to live it together, joyfully.
Amen.

Holy Spirit of adventure,
challenge us and comfort us all our days
and bring us at last safe home to Harvest.
Amen.

Endnotes

1. Order of Service written by Ruth Burgess from the Iona Community and member of Christian Aid's worship and theology collective.
2. Acorn and Archangels by Ruth Burgess, Wild Goose Publications, page 147, Carolyn Morris, ionabooks.com



Suggested songs/hymns

We Are the Church

Richard Kinsey, Avery and Donald Stuart Marsh
https://hymnary.org/text/the_church_is_not_a_building

Praise God For The Harvest of Orchard and Field

Brian Wren
https://hymnary.org/text/praise_god_for_the_harvest_of_farm_and_f

Oh The Life Of The World

Kathy Galloway
https://hymnary.org/text/o_the_life_of_the_world_is_a_joy_and_a

In Our Lives Plant Seeds of Hope

Carol Dixon
https://hymnary.org/text/jesus_said_if_you_have_faith

As A Fire Is Meant for Burning

Ruth C Duck
https://hymnary.org/text/as_a_fire_is_meant_for_burning

For the Beauty of the Earth

Folliott Sandford Pierpoint
https://hymnary.org/text/for_the_beauty_of_the_earth

We're On This Road

Stephen Fischbacher
<https://www.fischy.com/songs/were-on-this-road/>

If You Believe and I Believe

Zimbabwean Traditional, arranged by John L Bell
https://hymnary.org/text/if_you_believe_and_i_believe

The Church Is Wherever God's People Are Praising

Carol Rose
https://hymnary.org/text/the_church_is_wherever_gods_people_are_p



The Shaka ('morning light') women's self-help group meeting, at their Shaka solar shop in Ethiopia.



Shaka women's self-help group meeting at their solar shop.



Aberash and her family in front of the house they built, using the money generated through the solar shop. Aberash is a member of the women's group that runs the solar shop they named 'Shaka' because it's been a shining light in their lives.



Members of the Shaka women's group sell coffee husk at the market. Ari Fereda is on the right. Ari used a loan from the women's group to expand and improve her livestock business (goat fattening) in times of drought.



Abebech Libane, 38, runs a local shop with her husband Akayake. She is a member of the Addis women's group, and has expanded her shop business with the help of loans from the group.



**Members of Addis women's group generate income through working farmers' fields.
(L to R): Aster Argo, 29. Aasnakech Almi, 27. Makesho Mata, 49. Adaneh Muda, 28. Tigist Lifo, 28. Maysso Aliyo, 23.**



Addis ('the new one') women's group meeting.



Addis women's group meeting.