

A Seasonal All Age Worship Service

(SAAW027)

Harvest:

“Be content with what you have!”

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HARVEST – “Be content with what you have!”

Service Aim:

In response to God’s generous provision of all we have, to encourage people to: 1) Give thanks to Him and share with others, 2) Guard against greed and learn to be content.

Biblical Reference(s):

Acts 14:17b, Proverbs 22:9, Hebrews 13:16, Luke 12:15-21, 1Timothy 6:6-8, Hebrews 13:5, Philippians 4:12-13

Outline of Service:

Welcome:	Introduce the theme
Opening Prayer:	
Opening Response:	Acts 14:17 followed by response “God is good.....”
Opening songs:	<u>A couple of songs to draw people into worship</u> (See Appendix 1)
Warm up:	Video: “Food, glorious food”
Food tasting:	Children taste some cut up fruit and vegetables
Link:	God has provided. Part of our response is to “give thanks” to Him
Prayers:	Prayers of thanks
Bible Readings:	Proverbs 22:9, Hebrews 13:16
Link:	Another response is to share. Prayer of blessing over food given
Song:	<u>A song of thanks</u> (See Appendix 1) (Harvest gifts are presented if appropriate)
Link:	BUT we live in a culture that is dissatisfied and wants more and more
Drama 1:	“Parable of the rich fool” – Luke 12:15-21 dramatised
Talk 1:	Jesus warned against greed.
Drama 2:	“Greed in the 21 st century”
Link:	Cycle: “see, want, get, unused, tip, cluttered seas, rubbish mountains”
Confession:	Forgive us for greed and discontent with what we have
Song:	<u>A song about justice</u> (See Appendix 1)
Talk 2:	Materialism is damaging God’s world • We need to learn to be content. Phil 4:12-13
Video:	“For the beauty of the earth”
Prayers:	Ending with the Lord’s Prayer
Summary:	Summarizing the main points of the service
Final song:	<u>A final song</u> (See Appendix 1) (Pass around Phil cards)
Blessing:	

Notes for the service:

General notes and instructions for the service are in black font.

Prayers or responses said by the congregation together are in bold purple font.

The full script of a talk or other activity is in purple font.

Welcome:

Welcome everyone to the Harvest service.

Opening Prayer and response:

You may choose to open the service with:

- an informal prayer followed by the Bible verse, Acts 14:17b and response.

St Luke reminds us that:

“God has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy.”

God is good,

All the time!

All the time,

God is good!

Opening Songs:

A couple of songs to draw people into worship as per Appendix 1

Warm up:

The warm up is a Video “Food glorious food” (from the musical “Oliver Twist”). It can be found on YouTube. If you use the video linked in the footnote,¹ you could stop it after 1:30.

Food Tasting:

Prepare a number of bowls with cut up fruit and vegetables in them e.g. bananas, grapes, carrot, cucumber. Invite children to come and join you and say something like:

Food glorious food!

- Look at all of this food around the church. *(If your church has been decorated for Harvest)*
- So many different and tasty things to eat.

Who would like to taste some fruit or vegetables? *(Children taste the food)*

- Are they good? *(Responses)*

While you try those, who would like to tell me their favourite food? *(Responses)*

Many people have been involved in getting our food,

- from where it has been grown, to where it is processed, and into our shops,
 - but who is behind providing all of this for us?
 - Who should we thank for the gift of all this wonderful and varied food?
- (Responses)*

¹ A version of “Food glorious food” can be found on YouTube here: [Oliver! \(1968\) - Food, Glorious Food Scene \(1/10\) | Movieclips](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oliver! (1968) - Food, Glorious Food Scene (1/10) | Movieclips). Alternatively put “Food glorious food” into the search bar of YouTube.

Father God is the One we thank.

- He is the One who gives us everything that we need and more.

So, as part of our response to Father God for His generous and good gifts to us, let us pray and say “Thank you.”

Prayers of thanks:

You can do this in a variety of ways.

- 1) Children and adults hold up different foods at the front of the church and say “Thank you Father for.....” one at a time.
- 2) A family could lead a couple of simple prayers of thanks.
- 3) A responsive prayer of thanks led by different people, like the example below:

As we give thanks, when you hear the words, “For all your goodness,” please respond by saying: “Thank you Lord”

For all your goodness,
Thank you Lord.

Father God,
For food that is easily available, varied, and affordable
For taste and different flavours,
For crunchy carrots and delicious ice-cream,
Spicy samosas and fragrant coffee,
For all your goodness,
Thank you, Lord.

Father God,
For the farmers working the land,
and for all those involved in bringing food to our table,
For all your goodness,
Thank you, Lord.

Father God,
For the land that supplies so much of what we need,
For the refreshing rain and warming sun,
For all your goodness,
Thank you, Lord. Amen.

As well as showing our gratitude to God by thanking Him for all He has given us, I wonder how else we can show Him our gratitude.

- Listen to these Bible readings.

Bible Readings:

The two Bible readings could be read by children or adults and are as follows:

- 1) Proverbs 22:9 says: *“The generous will themselves be blessed for they share their food with the poor.”*
- 2) Hebrews 13:16 says: *“And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.”*

Link:

Follow the bible readings with something like:

We have said that part of our response to Father God for His generous and good gifts to us is to say “Thank you.”

The two Bible passages you have just heard, encourage us to also to share what we have,

- to give to those who have less than we do.

We can do that in all sorts of ways, including:

- Bringing food to church today to be given to those who need it. *(if that is your tradition)*
- Supporting local food banks,
- Supporting mission agencies who feed people in other countries who have nothing.

Let's show God our gratitude by sharing generously with others.

[If it is your practice to collect food at Harvest you may invite people to bring their food forward during the next song – having explained what will happen to the collected food. Before they do that pray over the food that has been given using a prayer that the congregation say together, for e.g.:

**Heavenly Father, Lord of the Harvest,
You have called us to share what we have with others.
We pray that the food we have given today,
will be a blessing to those who are hungry.
May they know your goodness to them,
for the glory of your name.
Amen.**

Song:

A song or couple of songs of thanks as per Appendix 1.

Link:

Moving on from the first aim of the service of giving thanks and sharing, the rest of the service is focused on encouraging people to turn away from greed and to become content with what they have. You could introduce the dramatised reading as follows:

Although we have just given thanks to God for his goodness to us, we are living in a culture that is never satisfied with what they have.

- We live in a culture that wants more and more and more.
- Jesus had something to say about that.
- Watch this.

Drama 1:

The drama is “The parable of the rich fool” – Luke 12:15-21, which is dramatised and found in Appendix 2 of this document.

Talk 1:

In the Bible reading we have just seen dramatised; Jesus warned people to guard themselves from every kind of greed.

- Greed is the desire to have more than we currently have or need.
- It can apply to wealth, food, and possessions,
- Including toys, clothes and tech.
- It can also apply to power and status.

Jesus then told a story to make the point that focusing on getting more and more things for ourselves is pointless and foolish, because one day, when we die, we leave it all behind!

- We don't just leave some of our stuff behind.
- We leave every single thing behind.

If, however we put the focus of our life upon our relationship with God,

- the treasure of that relationship will last for all eternity.

Now the society we live in is accumulating possessions at an alarming rate,

- and if we are really honest with ourselves, we can get caught up in the "more and more" disease too.
- Watch this:

Drama 2:

The drama is called "Guard against Greed" and can be found in Appendix 3. It consists of one person giving a monologue with another person acting as a delivery driver.

Link:

You might find projecting the "Cycle of Materialism" diagram in Appendix 4 useful for this talk.

The problem we all face in our society is that when our eyes see something, we can be tempted to want it,

- which can then result in us getting it.

So much of what we get we don't need or use, so then we throw stuff away,

- adding to the rubbish already in cluttered seas or on rubbish mountains.

This must grieve Father God's heart, and it affects our relationship with Him.

So let's take a moment of quiet now as we think about what we have heard this morning before we come to a time of confession where we can say sorry.

Confession and Absolution:

Use a prayer of confession that includes confession of greed. You could use the prayer below as you say together:

Heavenly Father,

**We confess that we have often been greedy,
wanting and getting more and more things that we don't need.**

**We confess that our lifestyles have often been driven by our desire for
comfort and convenience.**

Please forgive us Lord.
 Help us learn to be content with what we have,
 and to live lives of gratitude for all you have given us,
 For the glory of your name.
 Amen.

Follow this with a prayer of Absolution – receiving God’s forgiveness

Song:

A song/s about justice as per Appendix 1

Talk 2:

You will need cards printed with Philippians 4:12-13 to give out to every member of the congregation during this talk.

Now greed is not only bad for our relationship with God.

- Acquiring more and more, in other words, materialism, is also bad for God’s world.

If I were to ask you, how much waste we produced in 2023 in the UK, I wonder what you would say.

- Who would say we made 10,000 tons of waste? (Receive responses)
- 50,000 tons?
- 1million tons?

According to government figures, households actually produced 25.91 million ²tonnes of waste,

- and of that, less than half was recycled.

If I were to ask you, how many tonnes of plastic waste England exported in 2023, I wonder what you would say.

- Who would say 10,000 tonnes of plastic waste? (Receive responses)
- 50,000 tons?
- 100,000 tons?

According to UK export figures, England exported over 600,000 tonnes ³of plastic waste in 2023, which was an increase of more than 10% from 2022.

All the production of stuff that we buy and then waste is damaging the beautiful world that God created and called us to look after.

So, what should you and I do about all of this?

Well, the challenge the bible gives us, which goes to the heart of the issues of greed and materialism is this:

- **“Be content with what you have!”**
- **“Be content with what you have!”**

² Source: WasteDataFlow, Defra Statistics. See [UK statistics on waste - GOV.UK](https://gov.uk/statistics-on-waste)

³ [Growth in UK export for plastic packaging recycling in 2023 shows need for rethink on use of non-OECD | Hub-4](https://www.hub4.org/news/growth-in-uk-export-for-plastic-packaging-recycling-in-2023-shows-need-for-rethink-on-use-of-non-oecd)

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If you and I are content with what we have,

- we won't keep on getting more and more stuff,
- and so, we will create less rubbish,
- which will help to look after God's beautiful world.

And the reason that we can be content with what we have is found in a verse from the book of Hebrews that says:

- *"Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.""* (Hebrews 13:5)

Father God is our greatest treasure – not our stuff.

- He is the One who fills our hearts with love, and joy and peace in a way that things never can.
- He is the One who is always with us.

St Paul encourages us in his letter to the Philippians that being content with what we have is something to be learned.

Listen to this:

"I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength." (Phil 4:12-13)

So, let's all learn to be content with what we have for the sake of our relationship with our Heavenly Father, and for the sake of His beautiful world.

- We have a card with the Philippians verses on it for you to take away with you today.
- We'll pass them around during the final song.

Video:

The video is the hymn "For the beauty of the earth"⁴ and can be found on YouTube. You may like to introduce it by saying something like:

As we watch the video of our beautiful earth,

- ask the Lord to help you learn to be contented with what you have.

Prayers:

You may like to use a simple prayer to end this section of the service.

Thank you, Lord, for the beauty of your creation.

We don't want to spoil it with our greed and our desire for more and more stuff, neither do we want to spoil it for others, so, help us learn to be content with what we have, and to live differently from those around us. **Amen.**

End with the Lord's Prayer

⁴ You can find "For the beauty of the earth" here: [For the Beauty of the Earth - John Rutter / HD with lyrics on screen](#) or by putting "For the beauty of the earth lyrics" into the search bar of YouTube.

Summary:

Summarize the service by saying something like:

During this Harvest Celebration we have:

- Thanked Father God for His generous provision of all that we have, and been encouraged to share what we have with others.
- We have also been challenged to guard against greed, and be content with what we have.

Please stand if you are able for our final song.

Song:

A final song as per Appendix 1. Pass around the Philippians 4:12-13 cards to every member of the congregation to take home with them.

Blessing:

Pray a simple prayer to end the service something like:

So let us go from here learning to be content with what we have as we walk with Father God through this coming week.

And the blessing of God Almighty,

the Father,

the Son,

and the Holy Spirit,

be among you and remain with you always.

Amen.

[Notices: If your church gives out verbal notices my suggestion is that you do that just before the final song. That way the flow of worship is unbroken]

Appendix 1 – Ideas for Songs and Hymns:

i) A couple of songs to draw people into worship. Ideas include:

- Come you thankful people come (Sam Hargreaves © 2009 Resoundworship.org)
- Heaven's voice brings the dawn (Joel Payne & Matt Weeks, © Joel Payne & Matt Weeks, Resound Worship, administered by Jubilate Hymns Ltd)
- Harvest Samba (Mark & Helen Johnson © 2002 & 2007 Out of the Ark Ltd)
- Let everything that (Matt Redman © 1997 Kingsway's Thankyou Music)
- We come to you with a heart of thanks (Brian Doerksen & Steve Mitchinson © 1999 Vineyard Songs)
- We plough the fields and scatter (Matthias Claudius)

ii) A song or two of songs of thanks. Ideas include:

- Blessed be your name in the land (Beth & Matt Redman © 2002 Thankyou Music)
- Come you thankful people come (H Alford)
- Give thanks to the Lord our God and King (Chris Tomlin © 2000 worshiptogether.com songs / Six Steps Music / Adm.by Kingsway Music)
- God is good, God is great (Alan Price © 1994 Daybreak Music Ltd)
- I give thanks (Vineyard Kids)
- Thank you very much (Alan Price © 1996 Daybreak Music Ltd)

iii) A song/s about justice. Ideas include:

- As the seeds are planted (© 2026 Chris Juby / Resound Worship)
- For the fruits of His creation (Fred Pratt Green © 1970 Stainer & Bell Ltd)
- God of justice (Tim Hughes © 2005 Thankyou Music)
- One World (Written by Becky Drake, Nick Drake, Alex Hart © 2022 Worship for Everyone. Admin by Song Solutions.)
- The earth is the Lord's and everything in it (Graham Kendrick © 1986 Thankyou Music)
- This world says "keep" (The upside-down Kingdom) (Sheldon Bangera © 2015 Thankyou Music)
- When I needed a neighbour (Sydney Carter © 1965 Stainer & Bell Ltd)

iv) A final song. Ideas include:

- Creation sings the Father's song (Keith & Kristyn Getty & Stuart Townend © 2008 Thankyou Music)
- Great is thy faithfulness (Thomas O. Chisholm)
- O Lord my God when I in awesome wonder (Stuart K Hine)

Appendix 2 – Dramatised Parable of the Rich Fool – Luke 12:15-21

- Cast:** Narrator, Jesus, Rich fool plus a crowd of adults and children.
[You need to prepare Jesus and the Rich fool before the service with their lines, but you can invite children and adults to form a crowd as the drama begins.]
- Props:** 1) A small cardboard box that acts as a small “barn”
2) A number of large cardboard boxes that can be used to build a large “barn”.

Enter Narrator who invites children and adults to form a crowd.

Enter “Jesus” who stands with the crowd surrounding him

Narrator: One day Jesus was teaching a crowd and said to them:

Jesus: Watch out and guard yourselves from every kind of greed; because your true life is not made up on the things you own, no matter how rich you may be.

Narrator: Jesus then told them this parable:

Jesus: There was once a rich man who had land which bore good crops. He began to think to himself:

Enter Rich fool who stands in front of the congregation and says:

Rich Fool: I don't have a place to keep all my crops. What can I do? This is what I will do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, where I will store the grain and all my other goods.

Narrator: So children please knock down the small “barn” and build a bigger “barn” using the cardboard boxes you can see.
(Children and adults remove the small barn and build a large “barn” using the large cardboard boxes available. When they have finished, the rich fool says:)

Rich Fool: I will say to myself, Lucky man! You have all the good things you need for many years. Take life easy, eat, drink, and enjoy yourself!

Jesus moves forward so that he can speak face to face with the rich fool and says:

Jesus: But God said to him, *“You fool! This very night you will have to give up your life; then who will get all these things you have kept for yourself?”*
This is how it is with those who pile up riches for themselves but are not rich in God's sight.

Narrator: Thank you everyone. Please take your seats.

(Exit all)

Scripture taken from the Good News Translation® (Today's English Version, Second Edition).
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Appendix 3 – Drama – “Greed in the 21st Century!”

- Cast:** Person (P) – this drama works if P is a female who has children and owns a dog! It can be easily amended for other scenarios.
Delivery Driver (D), Off stage voice (OV)
- Props:**
- 1) Mobile phone for Person [The script can be on the phone]
 - 2) Chair for P to sit on
 - 3) Cardboard boxes x 10
 - 4) Large cardboard box x1
 - 5) Large carrier bag with a number of plastic takeaway boxes inside it
- Staging:** Have P sit on a chair centre stage facing the congregation. As D delivers parcels, they build them up into a wall in front of P, so that eventually she is almost hidden from the congregation.

Enter P holding their mobile phone. P sits down and stares at her phone, then says:

- P: Aaah yes, I need to order some more food for my dog Fido as he is running out. There we are.....add that to the basket.
- Ooooh, look at that, a Dog Biscuit Making Kit that includes a bone shaped cutter and makes Over 70 Cookies - Banana & Pumpkin Seed flavour.
Oh, Fido would love those.....let's add that to the basket.
- And look at that – a dog birthday treat box – I have to get one of those.....add to the basket. Let's check that out. All done.

Enter D carrying 3 cardboard boxes. He piles them up in front of P to start to make a “wall”

- D: Three parcels for P (*name of person*)

Exit D

- P: While I'm on Amazon, I think I need a little treat for me. Let's have a look. Oh, here we are, personalised socks that I can wear with photos of my children on them.....let's add them to the basket.
- And there we are – just what I need – a pamper self-care kit....how lovely.....let's add that to the basket,
- And while we are at it, those pink fluffy slippers look amazing.....let's add them to the basket.

Enter D carrying 3 cardboard boxes. He piles them up in front of P to start to make a “wall”

- D: Three parcels for P (*name of person*)

Exit D

- P: I need another dressing gown now to match with those lovely slippers. Marks and Spencer – here we come.....let's see. Yes, that looks like a nice dressing gown...let's add that to the basket.....

Oh, look at those beautiful nightdresses – I need one, no make it two, oh go on let's have three of those.....add those to the basket.
I could do with a few more jumpers.....add those to the basket.....and while we're at it I could do with a new coat....mmm that blue one looks amazing.....add that to the basket.

Enter D carrying 4 cardboard boxes. He piles them up in front of P to start to make a "wall"

D: Four parcels for P (*name of person*)

Exit D

P: This shopping is making me really hungry. Let's have a takeaway....I know I had one yesterday, but I need to eat now. Where's my Just Eat app?
Here we are.

Hmmm.....I'll have a chicken tikka starter, some onion bhajis, some poppadoms, a tandoori chicken mix, a keema naan, pilau rice, a plain naan, um....oh I can't resist a chicken jalfrezi....perhaps we'd better make that two pilau rice.add to basket.....there we are.

And while I'm waiting.....just look at this chair. I've really gone off the colour... I need a new one. Let's see....

I think it needs to recline, with a head tilt, and a cup holder that would be useful. Oh, look at that I can get a charging port for my phone...I'll have that....and it should definitely have a heated seat. Perfect.....add to basket.

Enter D carrying large bag containing "takeaway" containers. He hands the bag to P

D: Takeaway for P (*name of person*)

Exit D

P: After this meal, I really need to look at cars.....next door has an amazing car....I'd like one like theirs....here it is....just look at all the extras I can have.....a double dash cam, a car fridge, and even a horn that plays, "give me sunshine".....I'll have all those....

Enter D carrying large cardboard box.

D: Large parcel for P (*name of person*)

D puts the large box on top of the other boxes and they all fall down. Exit D

OV: Jesus said: *"Watch out and guard yourselves from every kind of greed"*

St Paul said: *"godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that."*

Exit P

Appendix 4 – Cycle of Materialism

