

**Call to Worship - Psalm 105:1**

*Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done.*

**Hymn - STF124 - For the fruits of all creation**

**Watch on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IBXHDbesb7k>**

For the fruits of all creation,  
Thanks be to God;  
For the gifts to every nation,  
Thanks be to God;  
For the ploughing, sowing, reaping,  
Silent growth while we are sleeping,  
Future needs in earth's safe-keeping,  
Thanks be to God.

In the just reward of labour,  
God's will is done;  
In the help we give our neighbour,  
God's will is done;  
In our world-wide task of caring  
For the hungry and despairing,

In the harvests we are sharing,  
God's will is done.

For the harvests of the Spirit,  
Thanks be to God;  
For the good we all inherit,  
Thanks be to God;  
For the wonders that astound us,  
For the truths that still confound us,  
Most of all that love has found us,  
Thanks be to God.

Fred Pratt Green (1903–2000)  
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**Prayer**

Providing God, God of all creation, We come together in worship. We are thankful, in this Creation-Time  
For your provision of food.

There are many in the world who hungry, Some because of localised famine, Many more because of  
poverty And still more because of the politics of war.

Forgive us when our politics prevent us sharing, Forgive us when our networks break and distribution fails,  
Forgive us when we hide in our bubbles of plenty Ignoring the plight of others in their bubbles of need.

We believe that we are forgiven, And pray to be granted the blessing of the assurance of our pardon.  
We seek your grace to change, to see, To make better endeavours to respond in faith where we can be  
providers.

Be a source of blessing to us now as we read, Nurture our souls with truth and understanding,  
Strengthen our faith with the exercise of enquiring minds And surround us with your Holy Spirit always. **Amen.**

**Lord's Prayer**

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in  
heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass  
against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and  
the glory, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

**Hymn - STF475 - O God of Bethel, by whose hand**

**Watch on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v3B68-q4dQM>**

O God of Bethel, by whose hand  
thy people still are fed;  
who through this earthly pilgrimage  
hast all our forebears led.

Our vows, our prayers, we now present  
before thy throne of grace:

God of our forbears, be the God  
of their succeeding race.

Through each perplexing path of life  
our wandering footsteps guide;  
give us each day our daily bread,  
and raiment fit provide.

O spread thy covering wings around,  
till all our wanderings cease,  
and at our Father's loved abode  
our souls arrive in peace.

To thee as to our Covenant-God  
we'll our whole selves resign;  
and this not as a tithe alone,  
for all we have is thine.

Philip Doddridge (1702-1751), John Logan (1748-1788) and others (alt.)

### Reading - Exodus 16:2-15

### Reading - Philippians 1:21-30

### Reading - Matthew 20:1-16

### Hymn - STF578 - Bread of life, truth eternal

Watch on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=COo9G3V0dx4>

Bread of life, truth eternal,  
broken now to set us free,  
the risen Christ, his saving power,  
is here in bread and wine for me.

Your sacrifice, our victory  
now by your blood we are redeemed.  
Refrain

Lord, I know I am not worthy to receive you.  
You speak the words and I am healed.  
Here at your table, love's mystery,  
one bread, one cup, one family.  
Refrain

Lord, you gave your people  
manna in the desert;  
still you fulfil our every need.  
Lord, when we hunger, Lord, when we thirst,  
we come to you and we receive:  
Refrain

Lord, by your cross  
you reconciled us to the Father,  
we have only to believe.

Joanne Boyce (born 1969) and Mike Stanley (born 1965)  
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### Sermon - Enough (Exodus 16:4)

*The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day.*

We are constantly reminded of the problem of hungry people in the world. Close by and in far off places, our news tells their stories, and we worry. There is some irony in the promise of God to the Israelites in Exodus that they would have enough for each day; how was that the case then, if not now.

Or is the picture more complicated?

I think so.

There are people who do not have enough in three different but inter-related frames. The causes overlap, certainly, but they are different and get more difficult to mitigate as the perspective lengthens.

Short term shortages of food come about because of current famine and financial constraints. Both may be localised, or they may be at national level. These are the issues of the day and the month. In the medium term of the season or year, we can think of three w's, weather, weeds and war whereas the long term and overarching issue that dominates everyone now is that of climate, and climate change.

I shall come back to those causal factors later. Now, the word 'enough'.

The dictionary says it means:

- As much as is necessary; in the amount or to the degree needed.
- As much as or more than is wanted.

Enough is the word used when you want something to stop because:

- It is annoying; or
- It is inappropriate behaviour.

The parable of the workers in the vineyard challenges the definition. Its message is that justice is being paid the right amount. However, is enough what is required to avoid want, or what is required to reward effort?

Employee relationships are predicated on rewarding effort, normally defined as time spent, and yet meeting needs is the ultimate equality.

This makes me wonder what Fred Kaan really intended when he wrote in his hymn, 'For the fruits of all creation':

*'In the just reward of labour, God's will is done'.*

The Exodus reading began with the people grumbling that that they had enough to eat in Egypt, but had had enough of being hungry and tired in the wilderness. God had enough of their grumbling and so promised to give them enough. Hence today's text and furthermore the gifts of quail and manna.

The Reformation Study Bible reflects, 'as the Lord leads his people into the wilderness, he tests and delivers them in ways that reveal his purposes. The manna and quail show him as the Provider.

People called for bread and meat, and they received both. Manna is called the bread of angels and Jesus calls himself the true manna of which this provision in the wilderness is a symbol and type; providing enough just as Jesus feeding us with himself gives us enough.

The quail, those small migratory game birds of the partridge family, come from their winter habitat in north Africa in spring; sometimes, exhausted by flight, they rest on the ground and are easily caught.

Manna is thought to be similar to a honey like secretion from the insects that infested the tamarisk plants of the area, called 'manna' by the Arabs. It solidifies on cold desert nights but must be gathered early before it is melted by morning sunshine.

If these are the item provided, the miracle is in God's control of the amount and timing.

Coming back to our time, is it possible to see God's aid in our concerns for enough?

- Finance: we must balance what we are rewarded for and what we need, especially how far ahead we think we need to look.
- Famine: localised shortages are capable of resolution through distribution, but we must think about co-operation and co-ordination.
- Weather: Joseph showed in Egypt what we still know; that weather is seasonal and can be planned for in many ways, while not to belittling the challenges.
- Weeds: my word for agricultural failures caused by poor husbandry. We must wake up and work properly with God and nature: though the weeds may be political as in the tragedy of Zimbabwean agriculture today.
- War: Ukraine is vital but partially off-line because of raw sin and the stubbornness of human nature. It should be easy but is actually very hard to overcome.
- Climate: we can see it changing, and while we argue about the causes, we should be planning to mitigate the effects.

The wrong approach to all this is to throw up our hands in horror, do nothing and say, 'I have had enough'. There is nothing I can do.

We have a gospel to proclaim. A gospel of hope and of the provision of enough. We can say, 'help me play my part to see that all have enough'. What is required is multi-factorial but since when did complexity prevent God guiding his people when they are faithful?

All praise be to God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

## Prayers of Intercession

Please pray for all who do not have enough to sustain bodily health and strength.

Pray for God's blessing on all endeavours by his people to be generous in reaching out; show how best to be people who meet needs.

Think of the people in our communities drawing support from our food banks, food pantries and our other initiative aimed at sharing the provision of God.

On Peace Sunday, please pray for the many situations where relationships are strained or broken and where there is pain and hurt. Ponder this in respect of individual family, local community, or larger groups, as well as internationally between nations.

Also, please pray for the people in your world who are ill or in need, the lonely, or any who are enduring bereavement.

See also DAY24 of 'Hidden Treasures', the Methodist Prayer Handbook 2023 / 2024.

**Hymn - STF351 - In Christ alone – Watch on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=16KYvflc2bE>**

In Christ alone my hope is found,  
He is my light, my strength, my song;  
this Cornerstone, this solid Ground,  
firm through the fiercest drought and storm.  
What heights of love, what depths of peace,  
when fears are stilled, when strivings cease!  
My Comforter, my All in All,  
here in the love of Christ I stand.

There in the ground His body lay,  
light of the world by darkness slain;  
Then bursting forth in glorious Day  
up from the grave He rose again!  
And as He stands in victory,  
sin's curse has lost its grip on me,  
for I am His and He is mine -  
bought with the precious blood of Christ.

In Christ alone! - who took on flesh,  
fullness of God in helpless babe!  
This gift of love and righteousness,  
scorned by the ones He came to save:  
Till on that cross as Jesus died,  
the wrath of God was satisfied -  
for every sin on Him was laid;  
here in the death of Christ I live.

No guilt in life, no fear in death,  
this is the power of Christ in me;  
from life's first cry to final breath,  
Jesus commands my destiny.  
No power of hell, no scheme of man,  
can ever pluck me from His hand;  
till He returns or calls me home,  
here in the power of Christ I'll stand!

Stuart Townend (born 1963) and Keith Getty (born 1974)  
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## The Grace

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

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