**A Commitment for Life Harvest Service of Worship**

**Harvesting Hope**

**Order of Service**

**Call to Worship**

Leader:
Come, people of God, bring your harvest of hope!

All: We come to worship the God of abundance.

Leader: Come with hands ready to work and hearts open to justice.

All: Receiving from our God whose justice rains into streams of living water.

Leader: Come with thanksgiving for what the earth yields, with longing for a world where all are fed.

All: Glory to God whose mercy grows like a mighty tree, whose hope is harvested in joy!

**Hymn 1: R&S 41 – “For the Fruits of All Creation”**

**Prayers of Approach and Thanksgiving**

Creator God,
You are the source of every good gift—sunshine, rainfall, seed and soil, strength, and community.
We praise you for the changing seasons,
for fields that whisper your faithfulness,
and for the call to share the harvest with joy.

At this Harvest time, we come with thanksgiving—
not only for what we have received,
but for the hope we are called to plant:
hope that justice will take root,
that the hungry will be fed,
that the exploited will be free,
and that the earth will be healed.

Make our worship be fruitful today, O God,
as you prepare us as labourers for love in your harvest of hope. Amen.

**Theme Introduction: "Harvesting Hope"**

As we gather today in thanksgiving, we remember that Harvest is not only a celebration of what we receive, but a commitment to how we live. Through **Commitment for Life**, the United Reformed Church works in partnership with the world’s poorest communities—in **Zimbabwe, Bangladesh, and Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory**—where hope is not always harvested from abundance, but from resilience and resistance.

In these places, harvest is not only about crops—it is also about justice. It is about land rights, access to water, education for girls, and peace amidst conflict. In today's service, we reflect on how hope is planted through acts of solidarity, and harvested when people stand up for dignity, equity, and sustainability.

Let us now turn our hearts to God, who calls us to plant seeds of justice in the soil of our world.

**Hymn 2: R&S 582 – “O Day of God, Draw Nigh”**

**Prayers of Confession and Assurance**

God of the harvest,
We confess that we have hoarded what you have called us to share.
We have consumed what the earth cannot sustain.
We have closed our hearts to the cries of the poor.
We have benefited from systems that leave others barren.
Forgive us.

Forgive our apathy and our excuses.
Restore our courage and compassion.
Help us turn away from scarcity and fear,
and turn toward justice and generosity.

(Silent confession…)

Hear the good news:
The earth is the Lord’s, and so are we—redeemed, reclaimed, and rooted in love.
In Christ, we are forgiven.
Let us begin again, planting hope in every furrow.

All:
Thanks be to God. Amen.

**Bible Readings**

**Hebrew Scriptures: Amos 9:13–15**
*"The days are surely coming," says the Lord, "when the plowman shall overtake the reaper… I will restore the fortunes of my people..."*

**Gospel: Luke 4:16–21**
Jesus reads from Isaiah: *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me... to bring good news to the poor... to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.”*

**OFFERING**

**Hymn 3: MP 167 – “Give Thanks with a Grateful Heart”**

**Sermon: “Harvesting Hope”**

**Textual focus:** *Amos 9:13–15* and *Luke 4:16–21*
**Theological lens:** Liberation theology, economic justice, hope through solidarity

*(The preacher may wish to start the sermon with a personal anecdote about what gives you hope. The preacher may wish to supplement the sermo further - it is usable in its current form but short. Add stories, and speak from your own experience and theological perspectives.)*

In *Amos 9*, we hear a radical promise: not just that the harvest will come, but that it will be so abundant and swift that the reaper will overtake the plower. It’s an image of God's upside-down economy—a vision where scarcity is overturned, and justice runs ahead of expectation.

But Amos is no naïve optimist. He speaks after chapters of blistering critique against injustice: the trampling of the poor, corrupt courts, and empty religious rituals. God's promise of abundance comes *after* the demand for repentance. The vision of restored vineyards and fruitful gardens is political: land returned, dignity restored, futures reclaimed.

In *Luke 4*, Jesus picks up this vision. He declares that this is the year of the Lord’s favour—a Jubilee year, where debts are forgiven, land is returned, and the oppressed go free. Jesus does not spiritualise hope; Jesus embodies it. Hope is no wishy-washy, pie-in-the-sky emotion. It is the forerunner, the guide, the promise of liberation.

Today, through Commitment for Life, our congregation shares in this work. Because of the support we offer, through prayer, education, advocacy, and giving, we are in partnership with some of the poorest people in the world. In **Zimbabwe**, we walk with communities reclaiming livelihoods after economic devastation. In **Bangladesh**, women are empowered to own land and respond to climate change. In **Palestine**, partners nurture hope in the teeth of an unjust and illegal occupation that has now turned into starvation and genocide. But our commitment to this partnership is unwavering as we seek to find hope even under the rubble, as Munther Isaac would say, through prayer, faith, hope, education, and human rights advocacy.

Hope, like harvest, is a process. It begins in the soil—with struggle, waiting, and resilience. It continues with our hands and choices. When we buy fairly, advocate boldly, and give generously, we plant seeds. And in God's time, a just harvest comes.

We are called to harvest not just snap peas and carrots, but to harvest hope—not as something we merely wish for—but as something we work for, together. I commend to you the work of Commitment for Life and its partners Christian Aid and Global Justice Now, along with Debt Justice and the Fairtrade Foundation. Let us work for the day that the reaper overtakes the plower in a harvest of joy, of justice, of equity, and of HOPE.

Amen.

**Prayers of Intercession**

*Response: Lord of the harvest,*
**Bring your justice and peace.**

**For Zimbabwe:**
We pray for those rebuilding lives after economic turmoil—
for farmers facing drought, for churches speaking out,
for women demanding equality and opportunity.

Lord of the harvest,
**Bring your justice and peace.**

**For Bangladesh:**
We pray for those on the frontline of climate change—
for families facing floods, for children seeking education,
for communities building resilience and hope.

Lord of the harvest,
**Bring your justice and peace.**

**For Palestine:**
We pray for a just peace—
for those who live under occupation, for partners in education and human rights,
for olive trees uprooted and hopes replanted.

Lord of the harvest,
**Bring your justice and peace.**

**For ourselves:**
May we be generous in our giving, persistent in our praying,
and bold in our living out of your justice.

In the name of Christ,
**who brings good news to the poor. Amen.**

**Hymn 4: R&S 90 – “Come, You Thankful People, Come”**

**Benediction and The Grace**

Go now in hope—
Hope that sows justice, waters peace, and reaps joy.
May the God of the harvest bless you with courage,
Christ the Sower walk beside you,
and the Spirit breathe in you the seeds of new life.

And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with us all, now and always.
**Amen.**