Opening responses
We gather together
with our joy and pain
with our faith and doubt
to share in thanks and praise.

We gather together
to seek and find
to learn and grow
to share in thanks and praise.

We gather together
to give thanks for abundance
to celebrate the gifts of life
to share in thanks and praise.

We gather together
with sisters and brothers
present here and across the world
to share in thanks and praise.

We gather together
to worship and give glory to God
who was and is and is to come,
to share in thanks and praise.

Song

Prayer of approach
God of the seasons,
of winter hibernation
and springtime hope
We come to be with you.

Jesus who told stories
of soil types and scattered seed
and cautioned against barn extensions
We come to learn from you.

Spirit who inspires,
agent of Creation
who moves as with the wind
We come to hear from you.

(silence)

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

Prayer of confession
God of Creation, we give thanks for the Earth
for the habitats it holds and the life it sustains.
We confess the ways we have not respected the gift of
the Earth:
deforestation, species extinction, climate change
Creator God,
forgive us.
God of Creation, we give thanks for soil
for the nutrients it holds and the life it sustains.
We confess the ways we have not respected the
gift of the soil:
chemical farming, soil exhaustion, aggressive mining
Creator God,
forgive us.

God of Creation, we give thanks for water
for the diversity it holds and the life it sustains.
We confess the ways we have not respected the
gift of water:
plastic pollution, overfishing, chemical poisoning
Creator God,
forgive us.

God of Creation, we give thanks for your grace
for your willingness to forgive and restore.
Move us from despair to hope
from overwhelm to action.
Creator God,
transform us.

Bible reading

Naboth’s Vineyard – a dramatised reading of
1 Kings 21:1–22

Cast: Narrator; King Ahab; Naboth; Jezebel;
Scoundrels (x2); Word of the Lord; Elijah.

Narrator: Naboth had a vineyard beside the palace of King Ahab.
And Ahab said to Naboth,

King Ahab: Give me your vineyard, so that I may have it for a vegetable garden,
because it is near my house; I will give you a better vineyard for it; or, if it seems good to you, I will give you its value in money.

Narrator: But Naboth said to Ahab,

Naboth: The Lord forbid that I should give you my ancestral inheritance.

Narrator: Ahab went home resentful and sullen because of what Naboth had said to him; for he had said, ‘I will not give you my ancestral inheritance.’ He lay down on his bed, turned away his face, and would not eat. His wife Jezebel came to him and said,

Jezebel: Why are you so depressed that you will not eat?

Narrator: He said to her,

Ahab: Because I spoke to Naboth and said to him, “Give me your vineyard for money; or else, if you prefer, I will give you another vineyard for it”; but he answered, “I will not give you my vineyard.”

Narrator: His wife Jezebel said to him,

Jezebel: Do you now govern Israel? Get up, eat some food, and be cheerful; I will give you Naboth’s vineyard.

Narrator: So she wrote letters in Ahab’s name and sealed them with his seal; she sent the letters to the elders and the nobles who lived in Naboth’s city. She wrote in the letters,

Jezebel: Proclaim a fast, and seat Naboth at the head of the assembly; seat two scoundrels opposite him, and have them bring a charge against him, saying, “You have cursed God and the king.” Then take him out, and stone him to death.

Narrator: The men of his city, the elders and the nobles who lived in his city, did as Jezebel had sent word to them. Just as it was written in the letters that she had sent to them, they proclaimed a fast and seated Naboth at the head of the assembly. The two scoundrels came in and sat opposite him; and the scoundrels brought a charge against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying,

Scoundrels: Naboth cursed God and the king.

Narrator: So they took him outside the city, and stoned him to death. Then they sent to Jezebel, saying,
Scoundrels: Naboth has been stoned; he is dead.

Narrator: As soon as Jezebel heard that Naboth had been stoned and was dead, Jezebel said to Ahab,

Jezebel: Go, take possession of Naboth’s vineyard, which he refused to give you for money; for Naboth is not alive, but dead.

Narrator: As soon as Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, Ahab set out to go down to Naboth’s vineyard, to take possession of it. Then the word of the Lord came to the prophet Elijah, saying:

Word of the Lord: Go down to meet King Ahab of Israel, who rules in Samaria; he is now in Naboth’s vineyard, where he has gone to take possession. You shall say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord: Have you killed, and also taken possession?’ You shall say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord: In the place where dogs licked up the blood of Naboth, dogs will also lick up your blood.’

Narrator: Ahab said to Elijah,

Ahab: Have you found me, O my enemy?

Narrator: He answered,

Elijah: I have found you. Because you have sold yourself to do what is evil in the sight of the Lord, I will bring disaster on you; I will consume you because you have provoked me to anger and have caused Israel to sin.

Song

Gospel reading


Song

Sermon

Offering

Prayers of intercession

We pray for change
for an end to social exclusion in India
that no one would be left behind
because of caste or gender
for an end to prejudice and stigma
for all your children to be included
Lord in your mercy,

Cultivate a season for change

We pray for change
for an end to agricultural practices
that damage the health of workers
that poison bodies and the soil
for an end to chemical farming
for natural farming to become the norm
Lord in your mercy,

Nurture a season for change

We pray for change
for an end to the misuse of power
that exploits and excludes
that prioritises profit over people
for an end to short-term personal gain over the long-term flourishing for all of Creation
Lord in your mercy,

Harvest a season for change

Song

Closing blessing

May the God of all seasons
send us out as agricultural prophets
To cultivate dignity
To nurture equality
To harvest justice
To stand together with all of Creation
Proclaiming that this is the Season for Change

In all we say
In all we do
In all we are
Now and forever
Amen
Notes

1. Some of the imagery in the Bible is rather strong. If young children are present, or those who might be offended by this language (which is taken from the New Revised Standard Version of 1 Kings 21), you may choose to substitute, “Thus says the Lord: ‘Just as you treated Naboth, so I shall treat you.’”

Suggested songs/hymns

A place at the table
Shirley Erena Murray

Praise God for the harvest of orchard and field
Brian Wren

Oh the life of the world
Kathy Galloway

In our lives plant seeds of hope
Carol Dixon

As a fire is meant for burning
Ruth C Duck

When the hungry who have nothing
Jose Antonio Olivar and Miguel Manzano, translated Mary Louise Bringle

God whose love is everywhere
Timothy Dudley Smith

Desert song
Hillsong – United

Seasons
Hillsong – The Peace Project

Seasons change
United Pursuit – Simple Gospel

Celebrate
Rend Collective – As Family
We Go

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