

**Tearfund Ireland  
All Age Harvest Service**

Unexpected answers to big problems  
“What is impossible for people is possible with God.”  
Luke 18:27

**Preparation for the service**

- A Word version of this service pack is available from the Tearfund Ireland website [HERE](#)
- Download the PowerPoint for use with the service or print the images from the Tearfund Ireland website [HERE](#)
- Print off the Letter from Ethiopia for delivery during the service – (see Appendix 1)
- Prepare to show the video of Amarech (available from the Tearfund Ireland website [HERE](#)) or tell Amarech’s story (see Appendix 2)
- For additional prayers – (see Appendix 3)
- For a list of suggested hymns – (see Appendix 4)
- Ask someone to act as ‘the postman’ in advance of the service

**Service Outline**

**Welcome**

**Greeting from Ethiopia** (encourage people to say a typical Ethiopian greeting to each other)

“Tena Yistilin” (May God give you health). A casual **greeting** is to say “Salam” (Hello).

**Opening Prayers**

The heavens declare the glory of God  
**The skies display the work of his hands**

God of light and God of night  
Creator of seed and mountain  
raindrop and fountain

**We bring our offering of praise.**

God of right and God of might  
God of justice and grace,  
God who loves everyone in everyplace,

**We bring our offering of praise.**

Father, we thank you and praise you for the life you have so richly given us.  
Thank you for the incredible blessing of being your sons and daughters.  
Lord we give you all that we are and ask that we might engage with your Spirit today.  
We lift our hearts that you might fill them with new love.  
We lift our minds that you would pour fresh hope into our thinking.  
We lift our souls that they might bathe in your grace.  
We lift our hands and our voices to sing your praises, as we come to worship and adore you,  
Amen.

**Hymn/Song**

### Prayer of Confession

Father God

You have given us

a world of beauty, and we have spoilt it.

A world to feed us, and so many go hungry.

A world of riches, and we are unwilling to share.

A world to care for, and we think only of ourselves.

Forgive us, gracious God,

every time your heart is saddened by our selfishness,

every time we have no thought for others, no cares but ours.

Enable us to see this world as a gift from you

that can be shared, and those who live on it as our neighbours.

We ask this that your name

may be glorified

through the beauty of this world

and the service of our lives. Amen

### Warm Up - Quiz

**Service leader:** Today we are going think about when we have big problems – sometimes the answer isn't always what we expect

1. *If you're running a race and you pass the person in second place, what place are you in?*

**Answer:** You're in first place, right? No, you're in second place since you've simply replaced someone in the second-place spot. To be in first place, you'd have to pass the first-place person.

2. *In a lake, there is a patch of lily pads. Every day, the patch doubles in size. If it takes 48 days for the patch to cover the entire lake, how long would it take for the patch to cover half of the lake?*

**Answer:** The intuitive answer is 24 days, but the correct answer 47 days. (Since the patch doubles every day, it would only take one day to go from half covered to fully covered.)

3. *A farmer had 15 sheep and all but 8 died. How many are left?*

**Answer:** No, not 7. If "all but 8 died," then there must be 8 left

### **From the Bible:**

4. Jesus miraculously broke just a few loaves of bread and fishes and fed 5000 men, along with women and children. How many loaves and fishes did he start with?

**Answer:** 5 loaves and 2 fishes

**About Ethiopia:** (For the following questions ask the congregation to stand up. If people answer a question incorrectly they need to sit down. The last person/people left standing is/are the winners. The questions are on the PowerPoint slides that accompany this service outline)

1. About \_\_\_\_% of the mountains in Africa are located in Ethiopia.  
a. 70% or b. 44%? **Answer:** a.70%
2. Ethiopia is the fifth largest producer of what product?  
a. Salt or b. Coffee? **Answer:** b. Coffee
3. How many UNESCO World Heritage sites are in Ethiopia?  
a. Nine or b. Seven? **Answer:** a. Nine
4. \_\_\_\_% of Ethiopians have no reliable source of water or soap.  
a. 51% or b. 72%? **Answer:** a. 51.5%

5. In 2000, life expectancy in Ethiopia was 50 years. Now it is \_\_\_\_ years.  
a. 70 or b. 65? **Answer:** b. 65 years

### A Letter from Ethiopia

**The Service Leader** congratulates the winner and is interrupted by **a postman** with an urgent letter from Ethiopia:

*(The postman hands the letter to the service leader)*

**Service Leader:** Thank you - Look we have a letter – I love getting letters, does anyone here like getting letters? Who would like to hear what it says? *(Encourage children to respond positively!)* *(pictures and visual aids inserted, animals coffee ceremony)*

'Greetings from Ethiopia!

*I hope you are all keeping well during this global pandemic.*

My name is Genet and I have 2 children and I live in Ethiopia's capital city Addis Ababa. I heard that you would be holding a harvest service and thought I would write you a letter to tell you a bit more about my country.

Already today I imagine you have used some electricity, to boil a kettle or power the microwave, maybe you've watched something on a screen? Here in Ethiopia only 1 in 4 people have electricity in their homes. Can you imagine that? Worse than that even fewer people have internet access so very few people watch YouTube or Netflix! Some of you might have grandparents who remember what it was like when they didn't have electricity in their homes. I hope that during the Coronavirus pandemic that you have been able to stay in touch with older people in your family using Zoom and Facetime?

Ethiopia is a beautiful country with lots of amazing heritage sites and wild animals that you won't find anywhere else in the world like the black maned lion and the Ethiopian wolf. We have a population of nearly 100 million people and Ethiopia is 15 times the size of Ireland. You must visit here sometime. You can get on an airplane at Dublin airport and arrive in our capital Addis Ababa in less than 8 hours */or Ethiopian Airlines flies direct from Dublin to our capital Addis Ababa in less than 8 hours*. This year to celebrate International Women's Day our national airline flew with an all-female crew to the United States.

Today I know it is your harvest celebration. In your supermarkets in Ireland lots of your flower bouquets and coffee comes from Ethiopia so today with you we want to give thanks to God for all the wonderful things our earth produces.

God bless you all!

Genet and Family'

**Service leader** – ask the congregation if they learned anything new about Ethiopia so far? *(Give the opportunity for one or two members of the congregation to give their answers)*

### Song

**Video of Ethiopia or Telling Amarech's story** (see Appendix 2)

**Bible Reading – John 21: 1-14**

## Sermon – Jesus encourages his disciples to try something unfamiliar

Faced with uncertainty, we tend to cling to what is familiar. For the disciples, this was a post-resurrection world; things were incredibly uncertain. This was the third time Jesus had appeared to the disciples after the resurrection, but they didn't recognise him at first. This seems understandable; I can't imagine you get used to seeing your friend raised from the dead.

Still, they trusted him when he said "cast the net to the right side of the boat." Only then did they realise it was Jesus instructing them from the shore.

We live in a world of uncertainty, and these days in particular feel heavy and often scary. We can't go back to life as normal, because for many of us life has changed forever. The disciples felt the same way. They were still waiting for the Spirit Jesus had promised, and didn't know what to do in the meantime. Trying to go "back to normal" seemed like a good option. But then Jesus showed up and told them he knew better; he told them to trust him.

Jesus calls us to follow him to places we would not otherwise go, maybe sometimes places we don't want to go. We live in a world full of pain, grief, and brokenness. The way out is not by returning to what we are used to, but by trying new things, and trusting the voice of God.

As we saw, Amarech knew that Conservation Agriculture sounded crazy to her neighbours and friends. Even her husband Mattheos didn't believe it would work.

Amarech's story and the experience of the disciples remind us that oftentimes intelligent people do what they *know* will work, or what they've done before, but wise people do what God tells them will work, regardless of what it might look like to other people. Conservation Agriculture is the proof that casting your net on the other side of the boat might look crazy, but it works.

In these times of global uncertainty, we must trust the voice of God and support one another. As Amarech reminds us, "with God, anything is possible."

As we heard in the video, people in Ethiopia frequently go seven months with only one meal a day. Jesus shows us in this passage how important it is to share a meal with friends. This is something we take for granted in Ireland, and while we celebrate Harvest, how many of us really think about our reliance on the land? In Ethiopia, growing enough food is a daily struggle for many.

Conservation Agriculture equips communities in Ethiopia to grow enough food to have three meals a day. But it provides more than food. It provides community and dignity, as well as nourishment.

Through practices like Conservation Agriculture, we hope more people in Ethiopia will be able to celebrate abundance, like Amarech and Mattheos, who were able to celebrate an incredible harvest when they cast their net on the other side of the boat.

To help Amarech and Mattheos tried something that seemed crazy to help feed their family. But they didn't keep their new found knowledge to themselves, they have started sharing it and giving seeds to their neighbours and friends. The local church has even given some land to be used as a model farm for training local farmers.

This method of farming has carried many families through the Covid-19 pandemic with enough food to feed themselves. We want many more families to be able to do the same.

With your help more farmers like Amarech and Mattheos can be trained and join Self Help Groups:

- €35 could provide a new self-help group with a facilitator to ensure the group is successful.
- €112 could pay for a water tank, giving a whole community ongoing access to safe water.
- €90 could protect the health of 20 children, by giving each of them a nutritional supplement packet.
- This harvest time, a gift of €470 could help set up another self-help group, making a community stronger and able to support those in greatest need. Alternatively a new regular monthly gift of €25 will help maintain an existing group to continue to help women like Amarech.
- €39 could help a parent join a Self Help Group in Ethiopia, giving them life skills that can reduce their vulnerability and help them provide for their children.

### Song

#### Prayers of intercession

Lord of the Harvest,  
We thank you for your creation,  
For its beauty and fruitfulness,  
We thank you for blessing us  
With our daily bread.

Lord of Mercy,  
We confess to you our failure  
To be wise stewards of this world,  
We confess to you our selfishness  
In not sharing the earth's bounty fairly.

Lord of Justice,  
We pray for those living in poverty  
And cry out for an end to inequality,  
We pray that you help us to help others,  
That all might live a life of plenty.  
Amen  
(Written by Gideon Heugh Tearfund)

God of the impossible,  
We pray for justice, peace and reconciliation;  
When the challenges seem too many,  
Remind us of your resurrection power;  
When the task seems overwhelming,  
Remind us of the miracle of love;  
And when apathy threatens us,  
Remind us of your vision of a world made whole.  
Help us to hope that the impossible can happen  
And live as if it might do so today. Amen.  
(from *Creation Sings Your Praise*, edited by Annabel Shilson-Thomas)

We pray for the work of Tearfund Ireland. Thank you for staff, partners, and local churches here and overseas, who work to bring hope, dignity and change. We pray especially for Ethiopia and give thanks for Genet and her family.

Thank you for all that is being done through Conservation Agriculture to help farmers to feed their families and make a living, Thank you for the change it has made for Amarech and Mattheos and we pray that many more farmers will join the Self Help Groups. We ask you to bless the communities that Tearfund Ireland, seeks to encourage, equip and train.

Lord help us to be generous, to share what we have with others, to give as we have been given to, that all might share in the abundance of your creation and the plentifulness of what you supply. Amen.

Father, as we celebrate this season of thanksgiving, we give thanks for the blessing of food, provision, and plenty. Please grow in us a harvest for the world. Grow a seed of hope within our souls that we might sow goodness, kindness, and patience. Grow a seed of peace in our lives, that we might sow forgiveness, compassion, mercy, and righteousness. Grow a seed of love in our hearts, that we might sow acceptance, tolerance, justice, generosity, and joy. Grow a seed of faith in us, that we may sow trust in you and in your Word. That all may know you as the God of the impossible made possible. That all would see your Kingdom come and flourish in unity and community with you.

### **The 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

Forever and ever, Amen.

### **Sending**

Lord, your word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Thank you that we can live in your Light and walk in your truth. May the things that you have revealed and the thoughts we have shared dwell in our hearts and stir us to action. We ask all this in the precious name of Jesus. Amen.

### **Final Hymn**

### **Benediction**

## Appendices

### Appendix 1. Letter from Ethiopia

Greetings from Ethiopia!



*I hope you are all keeping well during this global pandemic.*

My name is Genet and I have 2 children and I live in Ethiopia's capital city Addis Ababa. I heard that you would be holding a harvest service and thought I would write you a letter to tell you a bit more about my country.

Already today I imagine you have used some electricity, to boil a kettle or power the microwave, maybe you've watched something on a screen? Here in Ethiopia only 1 in 4 people have electricity in their homes. Can you imagine that? Worse than that even fewer people have internet access so very few people watch YouTube or Netflix! Some of you might have grandparents who remember what it was like when they didn't have electricity in their homes. I hope that during the Coronavirus pandemic that you have been able to stay in touch with older people in your family using Zoom and Facetime?

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Today I know it is your harvest celebration. In your supermarkets in Ireland lots of your flower bouquets and coffee comes from Ethiopia so today with you we want to give thanks to God for all the wonderful things our earth produces.

God bless you all!

Genet and Family

## Appendix 2. Amarech's Story

Amarech and her husband Mattheos dropped out of school at a young age to get married, they now have seven children. Where they live in rural Ethiopia the farms are very small and the rains are erratic, so between harvests many people can only eat one meal a day - for seven months of the year. For Amarech and Mattheos overworking their land had led to sandy infertile soil and this meant that they could not feed their family from their land. Life was very hard for them and regularly their family were hungry. At her local church Amarech learned about a new method of farming called *Conservation Agriculture* and wanted to give it a try. At first her husband did not believe her efforts would change anything but Amarech insisted on trying it and agreed to do all the extra work herself. Lots of people thought she was a 'crazy woman' – but then came the harvest!

Mattheos could not believe the result – they had increased their harvest yield by 176% and so Mattheos agreed to convert all their fields to *Conservation Agriculture*. In the second year of using this new method, they were able to double their yield again and sell the additional surplus in the local market – it was time of great celebration in their home. Amarech then joined a Self Help saving's group as part of her local church. Through the group Amarech has learned how to save and got access to loans which enabled her to start her own coffee trading business. Through this business Amarech and Mattheos have been able to send their daughter to college to study English.

Mattheos is now training 15 other farmers in *Conservation Agriculture* methods and their church has set up a 'model farm' to train the community. Mattheos has described Amarech as 'the backbone of the family' who carried the family through this time of change and transformation.

Amarech says 'all we have is a blessing from God. We learned how to care for his creation and the land and to enjoy God's blessing. My favourite verse is in Psalm 121, 'I lift my head to the mountains, where does help come from? My help comes from the Lord. I never thought something so simple could change my life forever – but **with God anything is possible**'

### Appendix 3. Additional Harvest Prayers

#### **Prayers of Thanksgiving:**

**1. *"Things great have small beginnings. Every downpour is just a raindrop; every fire is just a spark; every harvest is just a seed; every journey is just a step because without that step there will be no journey; without that raindrop there can be no shower; without that seed there can be no harvest."***

William Wilberforce

In the beginning there was nothing, and out of nothing you fashioned a universe so vast, so unimaginable that we can only sigh with amazement when we stare upwards on a star-lit night. And within this universe you positioned the earth and populated it, provided for it and designed it to be a place of beauty.

Creator God: **Thank you**

In the beginning there was just potential; the seed within the packet, soil's nutrients, sunshine's warmth, rain clouds gathering. And within the tiny seed all that is our daily bread encoded, primed and ready to be planted and allowed to grow.

Creator God: **Thank you**

3. Thank you for the gift  
of sunshine and rain in due season,  
of seed, soil, and harvest,  
provision for our needs  
and the needs of others.

***If in love, we share.***

Thank you for the gift  
of living water that does not run dry  
and the nourishment of your Word  
which feeds our souls  
and the souls of others.

***If in love, we share.***

For love which endures,  
blessings which satisfy  
and the opportunity to share  
all that you have given,  
***we bring to you our thanks.***

4. Creator God, provider of all  
we bring our thanks today.  
And we bless each other  
that the beauty of this world  
and the love that created it  
might be expressed through our lives  
and be a blessing to others  
now and always  
Amen

#### **Prayers of Confession:**

**1. Genesis 2: 8-9 *'Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. And the LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the***

*ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.’*

In the beginning there was humankind, placed within your garden, made to be steward, gardener, and caretaker of this place of beauty, given responsibilities and the capacity to enjoy. And yet among the seeds we have sown weeds and crops of our own choosing, which have not shown fruit or have spread and choked the earth.

Creator God: **Forgive us**

2. Creator God, forgive our moments of ingratitude,  
the spiritual blindness that prevents us  
from appreciating the wonder that is this world,  
the endless cycle of nature,  
of life and death and rebirth.

Forgive us for taking without giving  
reaping without sowing.

Open our eyes to see  
our lips to praise  
our hands to share

May our feet tread lightly on the path we tread  
and our footsteps be worthy of following  
for they lead to you.

3. God of Love, God of Peace,  
This broken world, cries out in pain,  
Scarred by grief and tears, ignorance, and fear.  
God of Love, God of Peace, God of this world  
Softens hearts of stone, and begin with mine.  
Create within me, a heart for people, a desire for change,  
Challenge me and help me, to make a difference. Amen

### **Prayers of Intercession:**

1. By faith  
I gaze up to the heavens  
and know  
within its vastness  
that this is your creation  
planned and effected within eternity

By faith  
I pluck an ear of corn  
and know  
within its symmetry  
lies the chemistry of life  
the potential of creation within my hand

By faith  
I listen for your voice  
and know  
the whisper that I hear  
breathed a world into existence  
yet listens to the prayer within my soul

By faith  
I am obedient to your word  
and know  
that you are the God of all things  
and all things are possible in you,  
And so, I thank you Lord.

2. Lord God, you came to give honour to the least, those forgotten, overlooked and misjudged. You came to give first place to the last, those left behind, misunderstood, and undervalued. You came to give a warm welcome to the lost, the refugee, the abandoned and destitute.

Help us to be your ears to listen, your voice to speak out love and justice and acceptance. Help us to be your feet walking beside to join in the journey. Help us to be your hands to act and help and share the load. You came for the least, the last and the lost. Lord hear our prayer Amen.

### **Children's Prayers:**

Bread is a lovely thing to eat –  
God bless the barley and the wheat.  
A lovely thing to breathe is air –  
God bless the sunshine everywhere.  
The earth is a lovely place to know –  
God bless the people who come and go.  
Alive is a lovely thing to be -  
Giver of life we say - bless thee!

Father we thank you for our food. For rest and home and all things good.  
For wind and rain and sun above. But most of all for those we love.

***This prayer can be used on a large board at Messy Church. Draw a large tree with many branches. Coloured fingerprints of thankfulness can added for the leaves.***

### **Ending Prayers:**

Lord, you are faithful in all things. Your promises endure forever, and there is no limit to your miracles. In your hands all things are possible. You are the one who conquered death and made a place for us in heaven. May we never cease to sing your praise. In your name we pray, Amen.

Now all glory to God, who is able, through His mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. Glory to Him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen.

*Ephesians 3:20–21*

## Appendix 4 Suggested Hymns

### **Harvest Hymns:**

All things bright and Beautiful

All Creatures of our God and King

**Come ye Thankful people come**

Father of mercies God of love

God whose hand is all creation

Good is the Lord our Heavenly King

**Holy is the seed time when the buried grain**

**We plough the fields and scatter**

### **Other suggested Hymns:**

Brother, sister let me serve you

Dear Lord and Father of making forgive our foolish ways.

For the beauty of the earth.

Give thanks with a grateful heart

Great is thy faithfulness.

How great thou art.

I will enter his gates with thanksgiving in my heart.

Now thank we all our God.

Praise my soul the King of Heaven.

Tell out my soul the greatness of the Lord.

The seed is Christ's (Ag Criost an siol)

### **Worship Songs.**

Indescribable

10,000 Reasons.

Great are you Lord (It's your breath in our lungs)

What a beautiful Name