



Prayer

S E R V I C E

Seeds of a Bountiful Harvest

CALL TO PRAYER

Leader Creator God, God of changing seasons,
of shorter days and longer nights,
of gray skies and brisk winds,
of fallen leaves and faded flowers.

All We gather this day in your Name, mindful of
the seasons of our lives and of our
organization, mindful of the passing of time
and of the shortness of time in which to plant
the seeds and harvest the fruit of your
Kingdom. Be with us this day. Heighten our
awareness of the abundance of gifts and
opportunities you have given us to carry out
your healing work in this world. Strengthen our
commitment to take the fullest advantage of
the precious but ever fleeting time you have
given us so that the harvest of our lives and
that of our organization will be abundant. We
ask this in faith. Amen.

READING

It is customary to understand autumn as synchronous with old age. In the autumn of your life, your experience is harvested. This is a lovely backdrop against which we can understand aging. Aging is not merely about the body losing its poise, strength, and self-trust. Aging also invites you to gather lost moments and experiences, bring them together, and hold them as one. In this way, you unify yourself and achieve a new strength, poise, and belonging that was never available to you when you were distractedly rushing through your days.

Wisdom is often associated with the harvest time of life. That which is scattered has no unity, whereas that which is gathered comes home to unity and belonging. Wisdom is a way of linking the whole of life together in a new and deeper unity. Older people are great treasure-houses of wisdom.

(Adapted from *Anam Cara*, John O'Donohue, Harper Collins, New York, 1998.)

CLOSING PRAYER

Reader 1 For all that we have,

All We thank you, bountiful God.

Reader 2 For all that we have had,

All We thank you, bountiful God.

Reader 3 For all that we will have,

All We thank you, bountiful God.

Reader 4 For what we are,

All We thank you, bountiful God.

Reader 5 For what we have been,

All We thank you, bountiful God.

Reader 6 For what we can be,

All We thank you, bountiful God.

Reader 7 For what we will be, as individuals and as an organization,

All We thank you, bountiful God.

Leader Let the darkening days, the chill of a Fall night, and the smell of fallen leaves remind us of the changing of seasons and the passing of time—the changing of our seasons and the passing of our time.

Grant us the wisdom to not take the precious gift of time for granted or any of the many other gifts you have given us. Rather, awaken in us a keen sense of how short is the time in which to sow the seeds of a bountiful harvest.

All We ask this in your name. Amen.

CLOSING SONG

Choose a Thanksgiving theme; for example, "For the Beauty of the Earth" or "For the Fruits of this Creation."