

9th October 2016

Preacher: Jennifer Potter

HYMNS: **99** **“All creatures of our God and King”**
 “Let us with a gladsome mind” (H & P 27)
 128 **“The harvest is here”**
 124 **“For the fruits of all creation”**
 539 **“On this baptism day”**
 130 **“We plough the fields and scatter”**

READINGS: **John 4:5-15**
 Psalm 65: 1, 9-18

As this was a Harvest Festival Service there was no sermon just an address

WATER

Each and every Sunday we give thanks to God for our life and for all that makes life not only liveable but enjoyable. Today ‘thanksgiving’ is the single focus of our service, thanksgiving for new life as we baptise Magnus, thanksgiving for the harvests of land and sea which sustains our life and health, thanksgiving for all who grow, process, distribute and sell our food remembering our dependence upon growers all over the world. We also need to recall and give thanks for those who mine the earth’s underground resources, which bring us fuels and metals which keep our transport and industry going.

Today I want to focus our thanksgiving especially on something which is so basic that we take it for granted and overlook our total dependence on it. What is this thing? WATER – H₂O – the source of life!

Water covers 70% of the earth’s surface -it is vital, essential for all known forms of life. When space research is done and rockets are sent to other planets the very first thing they seek is to know is whether there is water to sustain life.

Yes, 70% of the earth’s surface is water but only 2.35% is freshwater – water that we can drink. As population increases, as our life becomes more sophisticated we need - or at least we use – more water. Many areas of our world are water stressed – that means they do not have sufficient water for human life and basic industry. Many areas of our world do not have safe, clean water.

We humans and all animal life are more dependent on water than on any other single element.

Every human body contains between 55% and 75% of water. A human baby is 78% water. We can live without food for many days but we will become dehydrated by one day without water.

The greatest need at the moment for the hurricane-hit South West of Haiti is for water.

Here is London we take our water – quantity and quality for granted – we should not take it for granted – London is a water-stressed region, too. Thames Water supplies every customer in its area , on average with 157 litres of water per day. How many people in our world would be grateful for a tenth even a hundredth of that !

As we give thanks for water just let us recall how we are dependent on it, how we would not be here this morning without it.

We have all washed this morning – I think, I hope.

We have all had a cup of tea, coffee, chocolate, juice etc.

We have eaten food that was dependent for its growth on water.

We have heated our houses with the hot ware circulating in the radiators.

We have clean clothes because we are able to wash and rinse them

And there is something else that you have probably never thought about. Whenever you check social media, send an email or stream a video – you are exchanging data with a data centre somewhere. For many of us the transfer of information in this way happens as if by magic but it is no magic – there are storage computers all over the place. There is a data centre right next to us here in Oliver's Yard and another huge one just up City Road, which stores the data from the banks and insurance companies in the City – that is an important, strategic data back-up centre. Vast quantities of water are needed to cool these data centres. Some researchers claim that up to 200 litres of water can be needed in the download of a single gigabyte of data.

Our dependence on water is greater than we ever imagined!!

At creation God separated light from dark, water from dry land.

Water – God's good gift.

Water – a gift that is essential to us , that we cannot live without.

Water – in which we shall baptise Magnus and in which all believers have been baptised.

In the passage of Scripture that Christian read for us we heard the story of the Samaritan woman at the well. The Samaritan woman needed water to drink, Jesus needed water to drink but there was another level of conversation going on about 'living water' – the water of eternal life.

So today, let us give thanks to God for the water without which we would not be able to live and thanks to God for Jesus – the spring and source of life eternal. Amen