



Prayer

S E R V I C E

THE HARVEST TIME OF LIFE

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, 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

In the autumn of our lives, our experiences are harvested. Aging is not merely about the body losing its poise, strength, and self-trust. Aging also invites us to gather lost moments and experiences, bring them together, and hold them as one. In this way, we unify ourselves and achieve a new strength, poise, and belonging that was never available to us when we were distractedly rushing through our days. Wisdom is often associated with the harvest time of life. That which is scattered has no unity; 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.

REFLECTION

What seeds am I planting today to be harvested later in my life? Is there a unity to my life that is already emerging? What seeds is our organization sowing? What kind of harvest will they produce? How do I personally make use of the time, resources, and opportunities I have today for a future harvest? How do we as an organization make use of the time, resources, and opportunities we have today for a future harvest? What holds the life of our organization together?

CLOSING PRAYER

READER

For all that we have, for all that we have had, for all that we will have, for what we are, for what we have been, for what we can be, for what we will be, as individuals and as an organization,

ALL

We thank you, bountiful God.

READER

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. 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.

SUGGESTED MUSIC

"People of the Night," by David Haas, *Gather*, GIA Publications, Chicago.
"Wind Upon the Waters," by Marty Haugen, *Gather*, GIA Publications, Chicago.
"City of God," by Dan Schulte, *Gather*, GIA Publications, Chicago.

SOURCES

John O'Donohue, *Anam Cara*, HarperCollins, New York, 1998.
Edward Hays, *Feathers on the Wind*, Forest of Peace Publishing, Leavenworth, Kansas, 1995.
Lyn Klug, editor, *All Will Be Well*, Augsburg, Minneapolis, 1998.
Ted Loder, *Wrestling the Light*, LuraMedia, San Diego, 1991.

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