

Colossians 3:16

*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly,
teaching and admonishing one another
in all wisdom,
singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,
with thankfulness in your hearts to God.*



Today, March 10, 2021 is the day the Christian Reformed Church denomination designates as a day of prayer for crops and industries. The CRC is a denomination that is particularly close to the soil and those who provide for our most basic earthly needs. We have long had the custom of gathering together with our sister congregations for a day of prayer. Since Covid has made that not possible this year, I am passing on this prayer for us to remember this day in our own homes.

Prayer for Crops and Industries, 2021

O God of springtime and harvest, we give you thanks for being the Lord of all the seasons of our lives. From birth to death, you hold us in your hands and feed us with the abundance of the earth and the love of your Spirit. Especially in this day, we give you thanks for those who work in the earth you have created—farmers and gardeners, who till the soil, plant the seed, tend the crops, and harvest so others may eat. We give you thanks for those who with hard toil and long hours will fill our tables with the gifts of your gracious hand. Remind us often that every good and perfect gift comes from you and that those who live close to the land we love work with you as co-creators of the crops that feed us.

Lord, you make a pink flower from a gray seed, an ear from a kernel, a carrot from a seed the size of a pinhead, an oak tree from an acorn. You have programmed your soil to provide food for your plants, solid trees to make apples, feathered hens to lay eggs, grass-eating cows to give milk. And you, grand Creator, you have us take care of your grand creation.

In mercy, Lord, send rain to water our crops and gardens. Let your sun shine on our fields so that seeds will produce abundantly, so that vines and stalks and trees will hang heavy with fruit and grain. And Lord, let your grace be rich to our flocks and herds.

We recall as well in this day those who work in the factories and industries that produce so much we need to live and thrive. Hour upon hour, day upon day, their lives are committed to transform the gifts of the land into the goods that meet our every need. We are grateful for their hard work, their creative minds, their tireless spirits and their deep commitment to serve others as you have served them.

Lord, you saw the wheel in your mind before we saw it roll on your good earth. You put iron in the bowels of your earth and imagined the great girders that would hold up bridges over land and sea. You heard the motor in your mind before we revved it up on our roads. You saw the computer chip before we harnessed it in our offices and the laser before we discovered how to use it for blasting mines or for performing delicate surgery.

Now bless our hands as we manipulate the machines you have enabled us to make. Teach us how to use them wisely so that we will not be used by them. Bless our grinding and polishing, our honing and our hammering. Let our demands for precise and careful work be as rigorous as yours so that we may rest as safely in our cars and planes as in your arms.

In this day in which we remember with thanksgiving the crops and industry that feed our lives and our dreams, we also remember those who work with you so others may be filled. From the first garden called Eden, to the garden in the age to come where all will be healed and made whole, we live as grateful recipients of your good gifts. Receive our thanks and our lives and use us as instruments of your peace.

With our eyes and hearts focused on those who raise crops and work in industries, we cannot help but remember those who live in the shadow of poverty as they produce food and goods for others. In lands rich in natural resources, people too often wonder about their next meal and worry that their children will have too little. Mindful that all the earth is yours and all who live in it, O God, embrace with tender heart and hands those who suffer so others may be fed and live.

And Lord, teach us to share the abundance you have given us, never gloating in our excess, but always giving our first fruits to you and sharing willingly and generously with those in need. Help us to plant seeds of hope, to nurture fruits of the spirit, to be harvesters of justice and growers of grace, through Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom all blessings flow.

In the name of Jesus. Amen.

Song for Crops and Industries

Psalm 59:16 But I will sing of your strength; I will sing aloud of your steadfast love in the morning. For you have been to me a fortress and a refuge in the day of my distress.

[You can Google the hymn to hear it if you would like to sing along.]

We Plow the Fields and Scatter

We plow the fields and scatter the good seed on the land,
but it is fed and watered by God's almighty hand.
God sends the snow in winter, the warmth to swell the grain,
the breezes, and the sunshine, and soft refreshing rain.

Refrain: All good gifts around us are sent from heav'n above.
We thank you, God, we thank you, God, for all your love.

You only are the Maker of all things near and far.
You paint the wayside flower, you light the evening star.
The winds and waves obey you, by you the birds are fed;
much more to us, your children, you give our daily bread. *Refrain*

We thank you, then, Creator, for all things bright and good,
the seed-time, and the harvest, our life, our health, our food.
Accept the gifts we offer for all your love imparts,
and what you most would welcome: our humble, thankful hearts. *Refrain*

("We Plow the Fields and Scatter" text Matthias Claudius (1782), tr. Jane M. Campbell, Public Domain, CCLI #358926, Streaming License #20317932)