

## A Famous Hymn Story

Thanksgiving Sunday, like other major Holy Days, is a day associated with specific hymns. Certainly one of the best known, and most loved is, *We Plough the Fields and Scatter*. Thanksgiving Sunday originated as a very specific harvest-ingathering celebration. God was thanked for the fruits of the earth. Though this is still a part of our focus, these days we also thank God for less tangible blessings - freedom, health, life, and above all our spiritual blessings in Christ. Just over 200 years ago, this hymn first appeared in German. It was written by Matthais Claudius as part of a harvest thanksgiving festival celebration in a German farmhouse. Like many great hymn writers, Matthais was a layman. His various jobs included Commissioner of Agriculture, newspaper editor, and bank auditor. His Faith faltered seriously under the influence of the teaching of his times - a view which held that Man was his own savior and master of his own destiny - a view not restricted to 200 years ago! However, after a very serious and life threatening illness, he concluded that he was NOT master of his own destiny, let alone his own savior. He realized that salvation belonged to another party to confer. He wrote this hymn when he was about 40 years old. His background in agriculture shines through across the years. God the Creator, the Redeemer and the Sustainer is praised for His LOVE. Matthais is also clear as to what our role is as well – “And what Thou most desirest, our humble thankful hearts.”

We plough the fields and scatter  
The good seed on the land  
But it is fed and watered  
By God's almighty hand:  
He sends the snow in winter,  
The warmth to swell the grain,  
The breeze and the sunshine,  
And soft refreshing rain:  
*All good gifts around us  
Are sent from heaven above;  
Then thank the Lord, O thank the Lord, For all His love.*

He only is the Maker  
Of all things near and far  
He paints the wayside flower  
He lights the evening star  
The winds and waves obey Him,  
By Him the birds are fed;  
Much more to us His children,  
He gives our daily bread.

### CHORUS

We thank Thee, then , O Father,  
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 thy love imparts,  
And, what Thou most desirest,  
Our humble, thankful hearts.