

Service for Week 22nd -28th September
2025 Harvest Festival By Chaplain
Andy



Our Opening Prayer

Father God, we plough the fields and scatter the good seed on the land, but it is fed and watered by your almighty hand.

All good gifts around us are sent from heaven above so we thank you Lord, we thank you Lord for all your love. In the name of Jesus Christ.

Amen

The Lord's Prayer Our Father who art in heaven,..... **Amen**

Bible Reading

"Listen to another parable said Jesus: There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey. When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit. "The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third.

Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them the same way.

Last of all, he sent his son to them. 'They will respect my son,' he said. "But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him and take his inheritance.' So, they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

"Therefore, said Jesus, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" "He will bring those wretches to a wretched end," they replied, "and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time."

Holy Words, Holy Wisdom

Thanks be to God

Reflection

As Sandy and I have walked across the fields with Harvey we see that most of the harvest has now been brought in leaving just the stubble in the fields. Years ago, before the combine harvester machines, we have today men went out with horses and carts to bring in the harvest. Church bells were sounded on each day of the harvest, and the horse, bringing the last cartload in from the fields was decorated with garlands of flowers and colourful ribbons.

The end of the harvest was celebrated with a big meal at the farmer's house



called a Harvest Supper. (Some Churches still have a Harvest lunch or supper). Since those times, before people knew about Jesus Christ and Christianity farmers offered the first cut sheaf of corn to one of their gods of fertility in order to safeguard a good harvest the following year. The last sheaf cut was thought to contain this Spirit of the corn, which led to the platting of a corn doll 'Corn Dollies' which go back thousands of years.

Then Christ came and reminded us that everything we have comes from a loving God, there wasn't any spirit in the corn - it was the power of God our creator who really makes things grow. The Rev Robert Hawker in Cornwall back in 1834 started the tradition of decorating the church with flowers and fruit and singing the now well-known harvest hymns as we do today. So, Harvest is a celebration of our life-giving food and a thanksgiving to God for it. Living where we do we are fortunate in being able to see the evidence of that in the countryside around us.

In our reading we heard how the landowner expected the tenant farmers to give back to him a share of what they had harvested – that was the fair and right thing to do. But instead, they wanted to keep it all for themselves. When he sent messenger servants they didn't listen and sent them away. And when he sent to own

son to get what was rightfully his – they killed him.

The story Jesus told was of course a prophecy about himself. God who sent and inspired the prophets was not listened to until eventually God sent his own Son Jesus, so that we could hear the message that God loves us, is over all things and we owe it to Him to do His will – but Jesus too was rejected and was killed on a Cross. But Jesus rose again and Harvest time reminds us that just as Jesus came back from the dead so new life will come again.

We have so much to be grateful to God for- for the harvest and for the food that we eat – but sometimes we are like those tenant farmers – we forget who we should thank, for what we have- we are reluctant to give any time and thought of giving anything back to God who has provided so much for us.

We give time now to give something back in this our:

Closing Prayer-

In appreciation of your bounteous love,

Father God

I thank you,

I thank you for the harvest and for all you provide for me

Day after day,

I thank you

In the name of Jesus Christ.

Amen

Prayers inspired by 'Prayerfully Yours' by Nick Fawcett