

**Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2022**

**An all stage Harvest Festival**

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God is love, let us adore God by sharing God's love.

God is ever present, around us and within us, we worship together in God.

### **Harvest 1**

Today we are celebrating our Harvest Festival, something that has been done every year right back to the time of the Israelites when God spoke to them.

Exodus 23:16

Harvest challenge – how many words can you find from the letters in the word HARVEST

It would be rash to think only of what we have. Or to say never mind the rest. We might hate rats who scavenge but people matter. Too many people starve, we can help stave off hunger. In our hearts we know we should share not stare. Share what we have, even our vest, for God's harvest is for everyone.

### **Harvest 2**

God provides. When the Israelites were in the desert God provided even when the people did not trust God.

The Israelites had escaped from Egypt where they had been slaves and Moses was leading them to the promised a land, a land of abundance, but they had to travel through a wilderness where nothing grew and there was little or no water. The people found it hard and they soon forgot how hard it had been in Egypt and they began to moan at Moses.

We're thirsty, we're hungry, are we there yet.

Moses encouraged them reminding them of how difficult life had been in Egypt and how wonderful life would be in the promised land. They journey on but still the people moaned.

We're thirsty, we're hungry, are we there yet.

Moses listened but he did not know what to do. He prayed to God for inspiration and heard God speaking. He was to strike a rock with his stick. He did this and the rock cracked and water poured out. The Israelites drank, and then carried on their journey, but it wasn't long before the moaning began again.

We're thirsty, we're hungry, are we there yet.

Moses was hungry too and so he prayed again, and this time he heard God saying that he would provide food, meat in the evening and manna in the morning. But, he warned that people should not take more than they needed for that meal, they must not hoard the food. That night as the people settled in camp a flock of quails settled and the people were able to catch them and bake them and eat them. The next morning the ground was covered in a soft white substance which tasted like bread and the people ate before they left to journey on. Their moaning stopped but some people were tempted to try and keep some of the food and found that before they could eat it turned to maggots.

God loves everyone and provides enough food for all people if we learn to share, and not take more than we need.

Leviticus 23:22

What is your favourite food and where does it come from? We are really lucky that we can share food from around the world, what foods do we not grow in Britain? Now imagine if all ships and flights stopped and we could not get these foods, life would be very different. We would not be

without food but it would lack the variety we view as normal. Variety is the spice of life – SPICE-special products introduce colour and experience.

**Song** It's harvest time ([watch here](#))

### **Harvest 3**

We are very fortunate to live surrounded by the opportunity to experience food from around the world, but not everyone can afford to try all these things.

Lots of us enjoy growing food in our gardens but this year we experience a long period without rain and many of us found that our crops did not grow as they should, and flowers and plants withered. It was disappointing but we could go and buy the things we needed from the shops. Imagine if you were depending on those crops, you were going to sell them so that you could buy warm clothes for the winter, send your children to school, buy the food you could not grow.

We are one with creation and one with everyone, held in God's love, when someone is thirsty, or someone is hungry we are called to share what we have so all can be healthy.

2 Corinthians 9:6-12

Story – The Soup Stone by Anthony de Mello ([Read here](#))

When we share the world is a better place. As we celebrate the good things that God provides we bring gifts to share with those who are struggling. Our gifts will be divided between Women's Aid, and the Luton and Dunstable Foodbanks. So let us bring our gifts forward as we sing together Let there be love shared among us.

### **Prayers**

We pray for our hurting world: for all the times when fear means nothing is done, when greed means lives are held cheaply, when simple answers are chosen over complicated truth. In our living may we draw on the strength of the Spirit and choose love.

We pray for our church: in our worship, our faith and our lives, when we think that we know best, and are tempted to count the cost, may we draw on the strength of the Spirit and choose love.

We pray for ourselves: deepen in us the desire to be generous with our time, our judgements, and our material wealth. Help us to give abundantly, so that your love may be seen and we become more like Christlike.

Loving God, when the rain batters the windows may we remember it waters the earth and value water as a precious commodity, remembering all whose land is dry and whose crops are failing, and for whom clean water is a luxury not often experienced.

When the sun shines and the we experience warmth help us remember those for the whom the world is a dark and cold place, and those for whom the heat of the sun is a danger and threatens life and harvest.

When we receive a letter or postcard, a phone call from family or friends may we remember all those who feel isolated and lonely and in your love reach out to be a friend.

As we enjoy the world's harvest, may we remember all who have played a part in producing our food, may we be responsible in our shopping and generous in our sharing, supporting those whose basket is empty and who fear that they cannot feed their children.

When we can enjoy a holiday may we remember those who must work continuously to provide for their family. As we celebrate harvest may we remember all who have experienced the disaster of a crop failure.

As we give thanks for another day dawning may we remember those who have lost a loved one and for whom the morning brings more pain.

In our daily living may we follow the way of Jesus, draw on the strength of the Spirit and choose love. Amen