



Peters Green News Sheet Issue No: 30

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Harvest

We've had a glorious summer – warm, dry and sunny and we're now going neatly into Autumn. The trees are beginning to change colour and the conkers are falling to the ground. The hedgerows are becoming colourful with hips, haws and sloes and the harvest has been gathered in. This is all as it has been for as long as anyone can remember – the amazing circle of creation which we give thanks for every year.

Being historically minded, I thought it would be interesting to investigate the origin of the Harvest Festival, so I went to that fount of all knowledge, Wikipedia! The word 'Harvest' is from the Anglo-Saxon word 'haerfest', 'Autumn'. It then came to refer to the season for reaping and gathering grain and other farmed products. The full moon nearest the autumn equinox is called the Harvest moon, so in ancient tradition Harvest festivals were held on the Sunday nearest to the Harvest moon (September). An early Harvest Festival used to be celebrated at the beginning of the Harvest season on August 1 and was called Lammas, or loaf mass. Farmers made loaves of bread from the fresh wheat crop and these were given to the local church as communion bread, to be used during a special service thanking God for the Harvest.

The British tradition of celebrating Harvest Festival in churches began in 1843, when the Rev. Robert Hawker held a special thanksgiving service at his church in Morwenstow in Cornwall, Victorian hymns such as 'We plough the fields and scatter' and 'All things bright and beautiful' helped to make his idea popular and spread the custom of decorating churches with homegrown produce for the Harvest Festival service.

This year, however, Harvest is unlike any other in the last hundred years. The COVID19 pandemic has meant that farmers have had a much harder time gathering their crops. Many have had to furlough staff and seasonal labourers haven't been able to work. In our churches, we are unable to have the glorious displays and donations which we normally have. In the depth of the pandemic, Church services are quite different and much prayer, thought and imagination has gone into continuing to thank God for the Harvest. This year in particular we need to be very aware of the needs of others. One positive consequence of the pandemic is that there has been a great outpouring of kindness, but food banks need more donations and we must continue to give generously.

And so – back to the beginning – whatever trials happen in our lives, be sure that the God who is creator of all loves and cares for us.

We bless you,
God of Seed and Harvest
And we bless each other
That the beauty of this world
And the love that created it
Might be expressed though our lives
And be a blessing to others
Amen

With love
Gill Short

God, whose farm is all creation,
Take the gratitude we give;
Take the finest of our harvest,
Crops we grow that all may live.

Take our ploughing, seeding, reaping,
Hopes and fears of sun and rain,
All our thinking, planning, waiting,
Ripened in this fruit and grain.

All our labour, all our watching,
All our calendar of care,
In these crops of your creation,
Take, O God: they are our prayer.

(John Arlott, 1914 – 1991)



**GREETINGS FROM
PERRY GREEN CHAPEL
AT THIS TIME OF
HARVEST FESTIVAL**



AT HARVEST TIME WE GIVE THANKS TO GOD FOR HIS PROVISION THROUGHOUT THE YEAR



These photographs are of previous years Harvest Festival Services at Perry Green Chapel but this year we celebrate Harvest at home still thanking God for His provision.

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