

‘Come ye thankful people, come’ words from a well-known Harvest Hymn. This is the time of Harvest Festival Services. Are we all thankful or do we take for granted all that grows in the harvest?

Coming together for Harvest Festival Services is a corporate way of expressing this thanks. The customary Harvest Supper or meal which often follows is a natural complement to the thanksgiving. Churches are decorated with the produce of harvest which is later distributed to those in need. In today’s situation gifts of harvest are often of a more lasting nature and given to food banks which are sadly much needed at this time. It is an opportunity to think positively about being thankful and expressing it in a meaningful way.

This puts giving thanks at the end of the season. Originally thanks were as much given for the first ‘fruits’ of harvest. August 1<sup>st</sup> is Lamas Day – meaning ‘Loaf Mass Day’ the first bread from the new harvest was taken to church to be used at Holy Communion (Mass) on that day – Thanks to God for the first fruits of Harvest!

So do we remember to be thankful in general – we no doubt remember we were reminded as children! I still hear my Mother saying to me when something was given to me (a sweet perhaps) – ‘Tony, did you say thank you?’.

So, we have an opportunity to pause, reflect on how much perhaps we take for granted. The First Fruits of Harvest – and lots of other ways people provide for us.

Harvest Festival is a time of thanksgiving for all our food, and all involved in processing it and making it available to us in our shops. We offer thanks for all the land has to offer.