

Sunday 4th October 2020

Little Paxton Church

9.15am – 9.45am: Harvest Thanksgiving with readings and prayers.

Great Paxton Church

10.30am - 11.00am: Morning Prayer

Southoe Church

4.00pm: Harvest Thanksgiving with readings and prayers.

Wednesday 7th October 2020

10.00am: Short Holy Communion at Little Paxton Church

Southoe and Diddington Churches are now open daily

Please observe social distancing and use hand sanitiser if visiting.

Follow us on Facebook @ ThePaxtonsBenefice.

A Prayer for Harvest

Loving God,

For the promise of Harvest contained within a seed, we thank you;

For the oak tree within an acorn,

the bread within a grain,

the apple within a pip,

the mystery of nature,

gift wrapped for us to sow, we thank you,

this and every day.

Amen.

A Blessing for Harvest

May God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ

Who is the source of all goodness and growth

Pour his blessing upon all things created

And upon you his children

That you may use his gifts to his glory, and the welfare of all peoples

Amen

Annette's latest You Tube video has a harvest theme and will be available to view from Saturday evening. If you are online, go to you Tube and search for Annette Reed. This latest video, and many previous videos, should appear. The link will also be on the Paxtons Benefice Facebook page.

FOUR

Sunday 4th October 2020: The Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity.

The Benefice of the Paxtons with Diddington and Southoe

“Keeping in Touch” Edition 28



**The land has yielded its Harvest:
God, our God, has blessed us.**

Greetings to you all.

As the evenings draw in and we begin to sense a chill in the air, we know that Autumn has arrived with all the changes it brings to the natural world around us. As you will discover from my short reflections on Harvest Thanksgiving, from ancient times human beings have celebrated the end of harvesting, sometimes in ways that now we would think rather strange and full of superstition. Harvest can be essentially, though, a time when we bring our awareness to the awesome variety of plant and animal life on planet earth, and give thanks to our creator God, for the huge variety of fruits of the season. Our communities in past centuries truly had much to celebrate if they achieved a successful harvest of crops. Without sufficient harvested foods they and their animals could so easily slip into poverty over winter.

Whilst thanksgiving has always been a strong harvest theme and celebrations of any kind, secular or spiritual have taken place along with a generous sharing with those who struggle, an urgent need to take care of planet earth now presses upon us.

Humanity needs to sit up and take on board the damage that has been done, and is being done, to planet earth and take urgent action to halt further destruction of the environment. May each one of us play our part in sharing the good things we are fortunate to have and care for our portion of 'God's Acre' that is in our care. Take care and God Bless.

With love and prayers, Annette. 01480 211048.

Email canonannettereed@gmail.com

ONE

Special Readings for the season of Harvest

Deuteronomy verses from Chapter 26

First Fruits and Tithes

When you have entered the land the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance and you have settled in it, take some of the first fruits of all that you produce from the soil of the land, the Lord your God is giving you, and put them in a basket; then go to a place the Lord your God will choose as a dwelling for his name. The priest shall take the basket from your hands and set it down in front of the altar of the Lord your God. And you and the Levites, and the aliens among you shall rejoice in all the good things the Lord your God has given to you and your household.

2 Corinthians Chapter vs 6

Remember this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly. And whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each person should give whatever he has decided in his heart to give. Not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things and at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. Now, he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your goodness. You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, people will praise God for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift.

Thanksgiving Prayer

Father in heaven, all good gifts come from you. You send sunshine and rain, and it is through your love and care that we enjoy the fruits of harvest. Thank you for providing so richly for our needs and help us to share the good things we have with those who have little or nothing.

Amen.

TWO

Reflections on Harvest from Annette

Harvest comes from an old English word *Haerfest* meaning autumn and human beings have celebrated and given thanks for the gatherings in of crops in many cultures and in different ways for centuries. The Jewish faith includes several harvest festivals and early in the history of the Christian Church, harvest was celebrated on 1st August with Lammas Tide. Lammas comes from another old world meaning *loafmass*. The first crop of newly gathered corn would be made into a loaf and taken to the priest as a thanksgiving offering for the harvest. The loaf would be used to share at Holy Communion.

As years went by, it became the custom to celebrate harvest later in September when all the crops were gathered in. Hearty celebrations took place on the Sunday after the Harvest Moon – the full moon that occurs closest to the autumn equinox on 21st September. The celebrations were called *Harvest Home*. Lavish meals would be shared by the squire and agricultural labourers alike in huge barns. Plenty of meat, fruit, vegetables, tarts and puddings would adorn the tables – accompanied by flowing ale and drinking songs.

Reports of riotous behaviour led some clergymen to bring harvest celebrations into church followed by a more genteel meal perhaps put on by the Vicar's wife. By the 1840's church harvest festivals were growing in popularity. Churches were festooned with harvest produce and collections made for good causes. Despite the efforts to sober down the harvest festivities, the good old Harvest Home Victorian meals still continued into the early 1900's.

Harvest time is a lovely opportunity to focus on the fruitfulness of God's creation and its rich diversity. It is also important to reflect that still many people across the world do not have access to sufficient food and clean water. Even in the UK there are homeless people on the streets in our cities tonight. And, as we are called, from biblical times, to be good stewards of God's creation, we need even more than ever to care for the earth and try to undo the damage we have caused in past years.

Simple things matter! Bernice Evans from Little Paxton has a quantity of wool available if anyone would like to make items to sell at future church events or perhaps make something for themselves for a small donation. Do give her a ring on 01480 215422 to collect safely. Thanks, Bernice, for the offer and happy knitting.

THREE