

Reflections for Harvest Festivals 2020

Being Thankful

It is good to be thankful. At this time of year we hold our harvest celebrations at our churches, and, as we give thanks for the harvest and all the ways that God provides for our needs, it also reminds us that it is good to be thankful every day, and to remember to say 'thank you' and show our appreciation to one another. Our gospel story may seem an unlikely reading for harvest services, but it tells us about ten people who were healed by Jesus, and about the one of those ten who took the trouble to come back to Jesus to thank him for what he had done.

But being thankful does not mean that we should try to be cheerful or positive in a false or superficial way. We have all faced difficult challenges this year, and it is now clear that they will continue for some time to come. Some among us are experiencing more serious problems, in the loss of loved ones, serious illness, losing jobs, and major financial problems. As we give thanks in our harvest services, we will also make time to pray for all those who are in particular need at this time.

And we can try to look at the real challenges, hurts and losses that we face, in the light of all the good gifts that we receive from God. When we start by being thankful, all the difficult things are still there – the grief and loss, the hurts, the worries and struggles, the questions and the anger, and the way our hearts ache for those we love and care about – but we may see them in a new way.

So the best way to face those things is to start from a place of gratitude, and see them in the light of all the ways that we are blessed through the generosity of God's love, and all the ways that people are reaching out to help and support one another.

Even in the most challenging times, the best place to start, as we do at our harvest celebrations, is to start by being thankful.

Revd John Waller

Generous God,
who sent your Son to save us:
remind us of your goodness,
and increase your grace within us,
that our thankfulness may grow,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Bible readings: Deuteronomy 8: 7-18; 2 Corinthians 9: 6-15; Luke 17: 11-19

Story: 'The Man Who Came Back' (based on the gospel reading)