

All Saints Alive

VICAR'S VIEWPOINT



Harvest: Thanking/Sharing/Giving

Dear Friends,

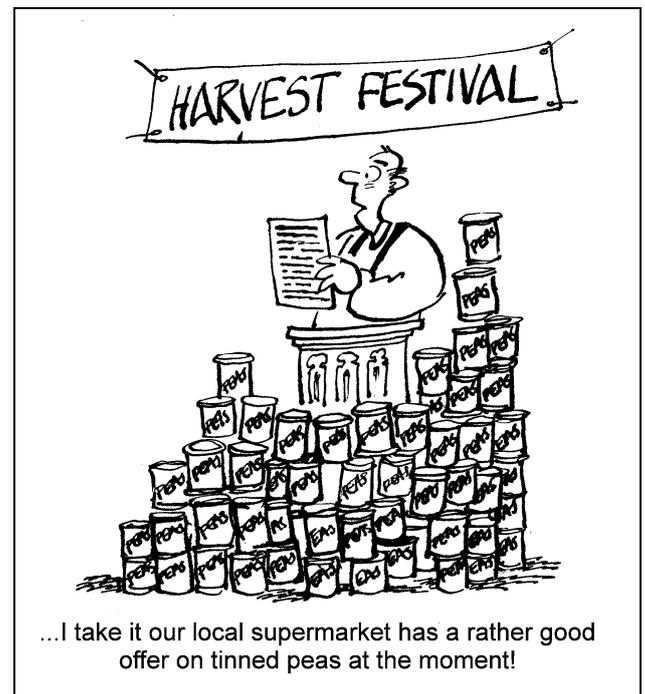
Browsing in the Oxfam bookshop I spotted a book called *The Country Store* and I couldn't resist buying it. Full of ideas on preserving and drying fruit, vegetables and flowers in a very traditional way it seemed to promise that my life could be like this, with pictures of neat rows of homemade jars of jam on the larder shelf, apples drying on strings, autumn wreaths made out of bay leaves all with that now obligatory shabby chic background.

I have since realised that I am unlikely to be able to devote my life to making the Vicarage such a paradise and in any case my family probably would not appreciate it if I did! However, the inspirational message of the book was to make do with what we have, without going out and buying a whole lot of extras from the supermarket and other shops. We should be aware of how much food is often wasted, and wary of eating too much pre-packaged and processed food when there is so much natural goodness to share.

Harvest Festival is a time to be thankful for all that we have. We can reflect on the wonder of this created order and see afresh that all that sustains us in body and spirit is a gift from God: while science can describe the process by which food germinates and grows, and how the sun and rain affect the plants and crops, there is a deep "given-ness" about what we have and all that sustains us. The responsible use and sharing of resources is part of the ethical side to Harvest, which challenges the greedy consumption of modern life.

At Harvest Festival, we bring gifts to present at the altar, symbols of our thankfulness, valuing all we have been given and with a desire that they may be shared with those in need.

In recent times we have been encouraged to do this all year round in supporting food banks. And as in past times, our prayers are both for those in need as well as trusting that the provision for our needs will continue.



The Communion service (Eucharist means thanksgiving) reflects regularly this understanding of harvest, of thankfulness for God's provision for body and soul. The bread and the wine is brought to the altar, and these elements are presented to God and blessed.

We present the gifts as signs of thanks to God and of our partnership with him in producing the food and drink which sustains human life. The bread and wine is then offered back to us as signs of our acceptance by God, of his saving power in Jesus Christ, of our spiritual reliance on the Lord to live as we should, and come to the fullness of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Our giving and sharing is an essential element of "buying into the lifestyle". My Oxfam book was a moment of wanting to have a different facet to life, some form of richness – well, at least it was a charitable donation.

In bringing our gifts of produce to church for thanksgiving, and presenting bread and wine which is the fruit of people's labour, we are buying into a lifestyle which is more valuable - of following God's way, living thankful, caring lives, and seeking the closest presence of Christ which our Communion brings home to us.

Love,
Jo

Harvest Thanksgiving

This year we are celebrating Harvest over two weeks.

Sunday 5th October 10.00 Family Service

A Thoroughly Modern Harvest: The Good Samaritan

Janet Bird will lead a Family Service reflecting on the work of the Foodbank movement. The collection will be items for the Foodbank in Hertford – please note the list opposite.

Tuesday 7th October 8.00-9.00pm in Church

A time to get together, learn and reflect. (Yes, this was formerly known as Bible Study but we thought that this did not really quite reveal how much discussion there was!)

This month Geoff Oates helps us to examine the subject of Harvest. (See page 5)

Saturday 11th October

Harvest Supper with Quiz

Sunday 12th October

A Traditional Harvest Festival at Parish Communion. The Church will be decorated with fruit, vegetables and harvest flowers.

The cash Collection will be given to the Bishop's Harvest Appeal, part of Christian Aid's work for literacy; Learning for Life.

Looking ahead to 2015

Dates for your diary.

Bishop Alan, the Bishop of St Alban's, will be with us for our United Team Eucharist at All Saints' at 10.00 on January 18th in 2015. Our Team services have been very well attended and really inspiring so we are looking forward to Bishop Alan's being with us to celebrate our unity.

The Archbishop of Canterbury will be visiting the Diocese in June next year and will be at the Cathedral to celebrate St Alban's Day and 900 years of the Abbey.

I wondered whether we all might have a parish day out on Saturday June 20th to join the festival, attend the service and hear Archbishop Justin speak and have a picnic together outside the Cathedral on the lawns.

Foodbank Shopping List

HERTFORD FOODBANK

Shopping List
September 2014

Coffee (small jar) 100g	Sugar 500g & 1kg
Long life fruit juice (1lt)	UHT milk (1lt)
Instant milk powder pkt	Rice 500g & 1kg
Instant packet soup box 6	Pasta Sauce
Instant mashed potato	Potatoes tinned
Instant custard sachets	Custard – tinned
Tinned Fruit	Fruit squash
Sweet biscuits	Toiletries
Jars of curry or sweet & sour cooking sauces	

Christmas starts
when we feed
the hungry



Let's all support
our
local foodbank

Christmas
starts with
Christ

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