

A HARVEST MEAL

This year we are having to do things differently.

Unfortunately, we cannot join together in Church to celebrate, give thanks and reflect on the season of Harvest. Like so much this year we are having to do things in news ways whilst still celebrating the milestones of life. Harvest is no exception.



So we want to encourage you to celebrate in your family unit, 'bubble', or on your own, the season of Harvest over one meal on the weekend of the 26th-27th September.

Two years ago I was invited to join a Jewish family celebrate 'Shabbat', the sabbath meal on a Friday night. I met with the family and found that each week the family came together from far and wide to celebrate with a meal. It was a profound and touching experience, that I think might work for our Harvest meal.

So what follows is a short service that can be held as you prepare and then eat the meal together over the weekend. I hope you enjoy it and remember that, *"all good gifts around us our sent from heaven above, so thank the Lord for all his love."*

PREPARATION

As the food is prepared in the kitchen and the table laid.

Take time to think about the coming together of all these ingredients. Look on the packs of the food and note where the food is produced, what country does it come from? Is there the name of the farm or farmer on the fruit or the milk? If so, say thank you to God for those who have worked and toiled to produce this food and for those who have transported it to the supermarket.



As you lay the table with a **Fork, Knife, Spoon, and Glass**, reflect as you lay down each item.

1. **F**orgive me for taking this all for granted.
2. Help me to be **K**ind and caring to our planet
3. How can I **S**hare and **S**upport those less fortunate?
4. **G**ive thanks for those who have been part of the journey this food has taken to your table.

THE MEAL

With the food before you, a short response to join in with. If there is more than one of you divide what is said between those words in normal type and those **in bold**.

**The earth has yielded its harvest;
God, our God, has blessed us.**

You visit the earth and water it;
you make it very plentiful.
You soften the ground with showers;
and bless the increase of it.
You crown the year with your goodness;
and your paths overflow with plenty.
The meadows are clothed with sheep;
**the valleys stand so thick with corn,
they shout for joy and sing.**

**The earth has yielded its harvest;
God, our God, has blessed us.
Thanks be to God.**

As you sit and enjoy the meal and join in conversation maybe you might want to talk and reflect on some of these questions.

- What is your favourite food and what is your least favourite?
- What surprised you most about where your food was sourced?

- How much do you think the farmers receive in payment for growing and producing this food?
- What can we do to support those less fortunate than ourselves in Paddock Wood, not only at Harvest time but for the rest of the year?

CLOSING BLESSING

After you have eaten and before you wash up the closing prayer is said.

Blessed are you, O Lord our God,
King of the universe,
who feeds the whole world with your goodness,
with grace, with loving kindness and tender mercy.
You give food to all your creation
for your loving kindness endures for ever.
Bless this food we have eaten,
nourish us with your goodness,
and help us to work for the good of all.
Through Jesus name. **Amen.**

For further information about some of the questions raised, look at the following websites.

<https://communitystorehouse.co.uk>
<https://www.christianaid.org.uk>