

Harvest Festival, lunch and a christening

As a child, I sometimes helped to choose produce for the Harvest festival from my grandparents' garden; bringing both beans and gladioli into church with pride. There was a personal commitment to growing the crops, recognising God's generous provision in our own lives and offering a token from that abundance to be blessed then shared with others. Some foods reappeared later in the day as a delicious Harvest spread. It was a Welsh Presbyterian church so the hymns of praise raised the roof.

More recently, as Foodbanks have become established as part of the national landscape, it would appear that the Almighty now welcomes gifts of tinned baked beans and Angel Delight. It may be more difficult to recall the natural world and God's creative wonder, but people still contribute generously to support their community.

Our Gospel reading explores themes of wonder and thankfulness, and the misplaced hoarding of resources by some. What a contrast to God's abundant generosity of grace which brings forgiveness and fullness of life without any financial payment or contract.

The bringing of gifts at harvest is a symbol of a deeper truth: an offering of our lives to God. We'll reaffirm this commitment alongside the parents and godparents at this morning's christening. Then we'll all be blessed and sent out into the world; more beautiful even than gladioli!!

Revd Sarah



NEXT SUNDAY 15.10.2023 Trinity 19

10.30am Sung Eucharist in Church

READINGS: OT Isaiah 25: 1-9
NT Philippians 4: 1-9
GOSPEL Matthew 22: 1-14



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St Thomas, Exeter

8th October 2023

Harvest Festival

10.30am in Church

Today

10.30am Sung Eucharist with Holy Baptism of
Isabelle Jane Albinson

Hymn Numbers

101 Come, ye thankful people, come
137 For the beauty of the earth
534 We plough the fields and scatter
Bring & Share lunch

Wednesday 11th October

10am Holy Communion (BCP)

Thursday 12th October

9.30—11am St Thomas Tots

10.30am-12noon Knit & Natter, 19 Maple Rd
Details from Jenny on 01392 498725

Friday 13th October

9.30am Morning Prayer

10am Staff Meeting

Saturday 14th October

9am Men's Breakfast in the Sawyers



Collect

Eternal God, you crown the year with your goodness and you give us the fruits of the earth in their season: grant that we may use them to your glory, for the relief of those in need and for our own well-being; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Deuteronomy 8: 7-18

For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land with flowing streams, with springs and underground waters welling up in valleys and hills, a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranate, a land of olive trees and honey, ⁹a land where you may eat bread without scarcity, where you will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron and from whose hills you may mine copper. You shall eat your fill and bless the Lord your God for the good land that he has given you. Take care that you do not forget the Lord your God, by failing to keep his commandments, his ordinances, and his statutes, which I am commanding you to-day. When you have eaten your fill and have built fine houses and live in them, and when your herds and flocks have multiplied, and your silver and gold is multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied, then do not exalt yourself, forgetting the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, who led you through the great and terrible wilderness, an arid waste-land with poisonous snakes and scorpions. He made water flow for you from flint rock, and fed you in the wilderness with manna that your ancestors did not know, to humble you and to test you, and in the end to do you good. Do not say to yourself, 'My power and the might of my own hand have gained me this wealth.' But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, so that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your ancestors, as he is doing today.

2 Corinthians 9: 6-15

The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by

always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. As it is written, 'He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures for ever.' He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us; or the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God. Through the testing of this ministry you glorify God by your obedience to the confession of the gospel of Christ and by the generosity of your sharing with them and with all others, while they long for you and pray for you because of the surpassing grace of God that he has given you. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

Luke 12: 16-30

Then Jesus told them a parable: 'The land of a rich man produced abundantly. And he thought to himself, "What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?" Then he said, "I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry." But God said to him, "You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?" So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich towards God.' He said to his disciples, 'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? If then you are not able to do so small a thing as that, why do you worry about the rest? Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith! And do not keep striving for what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not keep worrying. For it is the nations of the world that strive after all

these things, and your Father knows that you need them.

Post Communion

Lord of the harvest, with joy we have offered thanksgiving for your love in creation and have shared in the bread and the wine of the kingdom: by your grace plant within us a reverence for all that you give us and make us generous and wise stewards of the good things we enjoy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

NOTICES

We are considering having a **warm space** again this year. If you would like to volunteer to help with this, please speak to Revd Sarah.

Community Larder There is no longer a donation point on Thursdays. There will be a collection box in church on Sundays for food donations. The need remains great so please be mindful of our wider community.

House Group has started meeting again when we will study the Book of Proverbs. Meetings will be held at Perridge Close at 7.30pm. Please ring Helen on 410400 for details.

As you may know **St Thomas Library** is having to relocate. Devon County Council would like you to have your Say about the library and potential new locations: <https://www.devon.gov.uk/haveyoursay/categories/libraries-and-heritage>
There are also feedback forms at the library and email stthomas.library@librariesunlimited.org.uk

