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ORIGIN
Harvest is from the Anglo-Saxon word hærfest, "Autumn". It then came to refer to the season for reaping and gathering grain and other grown products. The full moon nearest the autumnal equinox is called the Harvest Moon. So in ancient traditions Harvest Festivals were traditionally held on or near the Sunday of the Harvest Moon. This moon is the full moon which falls in the month of September.

An early Harvest Festival used to be celebrated at the beginning of the Harvest season on 1 August and was called Lammas, meaning 'loaf Mass'. Farmers made loaves of bread from the fresh wheat crop. These were given to the local church as the Communion bread during a special service thanking God for the harvest.

Nowadays the festival is held at the end of harvest, which varies in different parts of Ireland. Farmers celebrated the end of the harvest with a big meal called a harvest supper. Some churches and villages still have a Harvest Supper.

The modern tradition of celebrating Harvest Festival in churches began in 1843, when the Reverend Robert Stephen Hawker invited parishioners to a special thanksgiving service at his church at Morwenstow in Cornwall. Victorian hymns such as "We plough the fields and scatter", "Come ye thankful people, come" and "All things bright and beautiful" but also Dutch and German harvest hymns in translation helped popularise his idea of harvest festival and spread the annual custom of decorating churches with home-grown produce for the Harvest Festival service. Wikipedia

INTRODUCTIONS

For use by lectors, in order of service, parish bulletins and magazines

Deuteronomy 8: 7 -18
The people of Israel are exhorted that when they prosper materially they are not forget the Lord their God.

2 Corinthians 9: 6 - 15
Christians are instructed to give thankfully and cheerfully to God’s work. They are not to do so grudgingly.

Luke 17: 11 - 19
Only one of ten lepers healed by Jesus returned to thank him and he was a Samaritan.

COLLECTS OF THE DAY

Collect one

Almighty and everlasting God, who hast graciously given on to us the fruits of the earth in their season; We yield thee humble and hearty thanks for this thy bounty; beseeching thee to give us grace rightly to use the same to thy glory, and the relief of those that need; through Jesus Christ our Lord,

www.churchnewsireland.org 2
who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, 
one God, world without end.

or

O almighty God and heavenly Father; 
We glorify thee that thou hast fulfilled to us thy gracious promise, 
that, while the earth remaineth, 
seed-time and harvest shall not fail. 
We bless you for the kindly fruits of the earth, 
which thou hast given to our use. 
Teach us, we beseech thee, to remember 
that it is not by bread alone that man doth live; 
and grant us evermore to feed on him 
who is the true bread from heaven, 
Jesus Christ our Lord, 
to whom with thee and the Holy Spirit, 
be all honour and glory, world without end.

Collect two

Eternal God, 
you crown the year with your goodness 
and give us the fruits of the earth in their season: 
Grant that But we may use them to your glory, 
for the relief of those in need 
and for our own well-being; 
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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

PRayers of the people  1

Let us pray for our world and all the people in it.

We pray for ourselves as we celebrate the harvest. We are thankful for the good things 
that have come to us. We may not till the fields, but we have been busy all year, whether in 
workshops or at workstations, in the office, the shop, the kitchen, the community or the 
classroom. Our achievements have been both great and small, but all are of value and we 
thank God for them. 
Lord, in your mercy: Hear our prayer.

We pray for those for whom there is no harvest; those who have no work or who are 
dispossessed by acts of war or natural disaster. We pray for all those for whom life is a
struggle against starvation, disease, terror or oppression. We pray for the wisdom to husband the earth's resources wisely and to hand them on to the next generation in good order.
Lord, in your mercy: Hear our prayer.

We pray for our Church, its clergy and its leaders, that the will of the Lord may be done. We pray for all people of faith throughout the world that they may live in mutual respect and harmony. May we and be recognised as Christians by our love and not be ashamed to confess our faith.
Lord, in your mercy: Hear our prayer.

We pray for the sick in body and mind and for those who care for them; may they be comforted and strengthened in their troubles. We pray especially for any known to us who are in special need of our prayers at this time. We remember them now and lift them to the Lord in a moment of silence...
Lord, in your mercy: Hear our prayer.

Jesus Christ is the light of the world, a light which no darkness can quench. We remember before God those who have died and light a candle to symbolise the light of Christ, which eternally shines and brings hope. We remember...

You turn our darkness into light: in your light shall we see light.
Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 2

Almighty and everlasting God, creator of all that is seen and unseen, of all we can understand and all that is yet to be revealed. You have placed us in a universe with breathtaking splendour and with an ability to constantly surprise and amaze us; and so hear us as we humbly come before you to seek your help and guidance in our lives. We come to you in simple trust and, as Jesus taught us, in the certain knowledge that you are our heavenly father and will listen to the prayers of us, your children.

Lord have mercy upon us
Christ have mercy upon us
Lord have mercy upon us

At this special thanksgiving time of the year we pray for all who work so that we have food to eat and share. We remember the farmers, both in this country and overseas, who work with animals and crops often overcoming the extremes of weather, insect pests to get their produce to the marketplace. Also the fishermen, whether in the North Sea or in the Pacific Ocean who fight wind and waves to land their catch safely. We must also in our prayers remember those in the transport, distribution and the retail sectors, for without them our shop and supermarket shelves would be empty.

Lord bless all who labour to satisfy our needs and we pray that all trade between peoples may be done openly and fairly and with due regard for the environment and for human dignity.
Lord have mercy upon us
Christ have mercy upon us
Lord have mercy upon us

We pray now for areas of our world where hatred and wars make the efforts of daily life even more difficult. Merciful Father, who gave your son that we should have life in all its fullness; we pray that those who see armed conflict as a way to self glorification and supremacy may hear and respond to the words of Jesus, who spoke of peacemakers being blessed and of treating our neighbours as ourselves.

We pray for the work of the United Nations and its Secretary General Kofi Annan. Let a longing for peace, truth and justice be the only motives in the action of UN delegates and representatives as they face difficult days ahead in dealing with arms inspections in Iraq.

We continue to pray for peace in other parts of the Middle East especially in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, for the disputed Kashmir province in the Indian sub-continent and nearer home in Northern Ireland.

Lord have mercy upon us
Christ have mercy upon us
Lord have mercy upon us

We pray for this, our own, country with its cultural and ethnic diversity, for Queen Elizabeth, our head of state, her ministers and all in authority, that they will govern wisely and with due regard for the needs of all people. For the President of the Irish Republic....

We pray for the work of both Houses of Parliament, Party Political Conferences, the meetings of Borough, County, and Town Councils and for all centres of debate; that men and women will listen to and understand each others views with respect so learning more of the needs of the people they serve.

Lord have mercy upon us
Christ have mercy upon us
Lord have mercy upon us

We pray for all families represented here today. Each one is made up differently and faces the normal ups and downs of family life in different ways. We pray that each family finds a place in it for the love of Jesus Christ and that special peace which it brings.

We pray especially for families known to us who are coping with illness, poverty, racial hatred or tragedy. Show us where we can lend a sympathetic ear, speak a word of comfort or offer practical help and so show your love in action.

Lord have mercy upon us
Christ have mercy upon us
Lord have mercy upon us

We think now of our Church here at St............... We pray for our minister/s............... Guide and support our ministers, leadership team and all who lead, organize and contribute to the Church's vision of service and witness.

We thank you Father for the wide variety of different groups that meet on these premises every day and for the opportunities thus presented to both serve the community and to
witness for your kingdom. Help us to be worthy of this work, in your name, and of the
challenges that lie ahead.

Lord have mercy upon us
Christ have mercy upon us
Lord have mercy upon us

We pray for the sick, both at home and in hospital, or hospice. We think of the elderly, the
housebound and those in care homes. And we pray for all who minister to their needs.
Lord Jesus who responded to the needs of all those who had faith; comfort and sustain
those who are in need of your grace at this time. As we share a moment of silence
together, we bring before you those known only to us and name them in our hearts.

Lord have mercy upon us
Christ have mercy upon us
Lord have mercy upon us

Especially do we pray for those who mourn the loss of loved ones, whether recently or
long ago. Let the knowledge of your resurrection in glory be comfort to all those who
mourn.

Jesus Christ is the Light of the World, a light which no darkness can quench. We
remember before God those who have died and light a candle to symbolise the light of
Christ, which eternally shines and brings hope. Today we remember Joy H--

You turn our darkness into light,
in your light shall we see light.

Lord have mercy upon us
Christ have mercy upon us
Lord have mercy upon us

A final prayer for ourselves: - As you so freely gave of yourself help us to use our God-
given gifts freely in the service of others and to do so with joy in our hearts.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus
Christ. Amen

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE   3

Leader Creator and sustainer of all, at this harvest season we gather as your
people to offer you our heartfelt thanks and praise.

Voice 1 We praise you for the bounty and variety of your creation,
the succession of the seasons,
the productiveness of the soil,
the harvest of land and sea.

Creating and sustaining God .... with wonder in our hearts, we thank you.

Voice 2 Thank you for allowing us to be co-creators with you,
developing new strains of plants and cross-breeding animals,
controlling pests and diseases,
carefully enhancing the fertility of the land,
growing flowers, fruit and vegetables in garden and allotment,
trying out new recipes in the kitchen.

Creating and sustaining God ..... with wonder in our hearts, we thank you.

Voice 3 We give thanks for all who play their part
in producing, harvesting, preparing and distributing
the varied and delicious food that we eat.

Creating and sustaining God ...... with wonder in our hearts, we thank you.

Leader We praise you for feeding us with spiritual as well as material food.
May we learn to live, not on bread alone, but on your every word.
May we be nurtured by Christ the Bread of Life,
and be fruitful branches of Christ the True Vine.
May we offer his lifegiving water to refresh your world.

Creating and sustaining God... recreate us in the image of your Son, our Lord, in
whose name we pray. Amen.

By Jenny Carpenter

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE  4

Lord of the harvest, we praise you for the world you have created, the food that sustains
us, the relationships that nourish us, the love that feeds us.
Lord, in your mercy: Hear our prayer.

Lord of the harvest, may the earth be fruitful for all. May its resources be shared fairly, that
the horrors of extreme hunger and poverty might come to an end. Where wealthy and
powerful nations invest little in justice for the oppressed, may justice take root and blossom
into joy for all who share this earth.
Lord, in your mercy: Hear our prayer.

Lord of the harvest, may the leaders of this world also become good stewards of the earth.
Where greed and selfishness wreck our environment, where the lust for power and the
spirit of empire destroy precious lives, bring a hunger and thirst for righteousness, and
cultivate a spirit of compassion for others.
Lord, in your mercy: Hear our prayer.

Lord of the harvest, may your church be fruitful. May your people be active in seeking
justice, to devote heart and mind and possessions to establish your ways on earth. May all
people see from the actions of your church, that Jesus is alive. Send us into the world as
labourers who, with word and action, will be a living message of good news to all your
creation.
Lord, in your mercy: Hear our prayer.
Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen

PRAYERS

Creator God,
you made the goodness of the land,
the riches of the sea
and the rhythm of the seasons;
as we thank you for the harvest,
may we cherish and respect
this planet and its peoples,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Good God, Creator of the world, draw us into prayer and celebration as we gather to remember the gifts of your earth and the stewardship you have entrusted to us as tillers and tenders in your image. We know that in the gathering of the people, power is present among us; your Holy Spirit stirs and moves and gives us courage to remember that all good gifts come first from you. We praise you for this creation in the words of the Psalmist, sung by our ancestors in faith for generations: "God speaks: the heavens are made; God breathes: the stars shine. God bottles the waters of the sea and stores them in the deep All earth, be astounded, stand in awe of God." Keep us faithful to this gathering in faith and "bless this vine your right hand has planted." Now and forever. Amen

O Lord of the harvest and giver of our daily bread, we rejoice in all thy fatherly goodness; and pray that thy loving-kindness may so prevail in the hearts of thy children everywhere, that the earth may be filled with gladness and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Almighty God, our heavenly Father who dost feed the birds and clothe the flowers, and who carest for us as a father for his children: We beseech thee of thy tender goodness to save us from distrust and vain self-concern; that with unwavering faith we may cast our every care on thee, and live in daily obedience to thy will; through thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

O Almighty God, whose dearly beloved Son, after his resurrection, sent his apostles into all the world to preach the gospel to every creature: We beseech thee, O Lord, to look upon the fields now white unto harvest, and to send forth more labourers to gather fruit unto eternal life; and grant us grace to labour with them in prayers and offerings, that we, together with them, may rejoice before thee, according to the joy in harvest; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

O almighty and everlasting God, who hast given unto us the fruits of the earth in their season: Grant us grace to use the same to thy glory, the relief of those that need, and our own comfort, through Jesus Christ, who is the living bread which cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world; to whom with thee and the Holy Ghost be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen

O Almighty God and heavenly Father, we glorify thee that thou hast again fulfilled to us thy gracious promise, that while the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest shall not fail. We bless thee for the kindly fruits of the earth. Teach us, we beseech thee, to remember that it is not by bread alone that man doth live; and grant us evermore to feed on him who is the
true bread which cometh down from heaven, Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with thee, O Father, and thee, O Holy Ghost, be honour and glory for ever and ever.  Amen

O Almighty God, we pray thee, sow the seed of thy Word in our hearts, and send down upon us thy heavenly grace; that we may bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, and at the great day of harvest may be gathered by thy holy angels into thy garner; through Jesus Christ our Lord.  Amen

O most merciful Father, who of thy gracious goodness hast heard the devout prayers of thy Church, and hast granted us to gather in the kindly fruits of the earth in their season: We give thee humble thanks for this thy bounty, beseeching thee to continue thy loving-kindness towards us, that our land may yield her increase; through Jesus Christ our Lord.  Amen

O Lord God of hosts, who dwellest in the high and holy place, and yet hast respect unto the lowly: We yield thee hearty thanks that thou hast safely brought us to the season of harvest, visiting the earth and blessing it, and crowning the year with thy goodness. We praise thee for the fruits of the ground which thou hast bestowed upon us, filling our hearts with food and gladness. For these and all thy mercies we laud and magnify thy glorious name; beseeching thee to give us also the increase of all spiritual gifts, and the dew of thy heavenly blessing, through Jesus Christ our Lord.  Amen

O Almighty God, whose dearly beloved Son, after his resurrection, sent his apostles into all the world to preach the gospel to every creature: We beseech thee, O Lord, to look upon the fields now white unto harvest, and to send forth more labourers to gather fruit unto eternal life; and grant us grace to labour with them in prayers and offerings, that we, together with them, may rejoice before thee, according to the joy in harvest; through Jesus Christ our Lord.  Amen

O Almighty God and heavenly Father, we glorify thee that thou hast again fulfilled to us thy gracious promise, that while the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest shall not fail. We bless thee for the kindly fruits of the earth. Teach us, we beseech thee, to remember that it is not by bread alone that man doth live; and grant us evermore to feed on him who is the true bread which cometh down from heaven, Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with thee, O Father, and thee, O Holy Ghost, be honour and glory for ever and ever.  Amen

O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches. The eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing. Our mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord; and let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever.  Amen

We thank you, Heavenly Father, for providing for all our daily needs. We thank you, in particular, for the good food that is available to us, and for the promise that while the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest .... shall not cease .Help us to remember the needs of others, and to play our part in seeing that none go hungry in a world of plenty.  Amen

Thank you, Father, at this harvest time, for all the beauty and colour in our world. We thank you for the trees and flowers that make our surroundings bright and beautiful. Help us to appreciate the parks and gardens and hanging baskets that contribute to tidy towns and a beautiful countryside. Thank you for the flowers that decorate our homes and churches, and that bring joy to those in homes and hospitals.  Amen
For greater consideration for others
Lord, we know how boring it is to talk of rubbish, but it is something we all have to consider, because we all contribute to the problem daily. Forgive us our selfishness in wanting the necessary dumps and incinerators placed somewhere rather than in our neighbourhood. Help us to realise that we must all share in finding solutions to the world’s problems.  

Thanksgiving - for clean water
Thank you, Heavenly Father, for the rivers and lakes and streams that we enjoy in so many ways. We thank you for the rain that falls, and irrigates our crops, and makes our gardens bright with flowers. We thank you, too, at this harvest-time, for the clean water we enjoy, that is so important for life and health. Help us to value this provision, and to see that it is not polluted or wasted.  

Thanksgiving - for clean air
Thank you, Lord, for the air we breathe. We know that it is something that we take for granted, but we know that polluted air causes misery and illness in other countries, and we need to be more conscious of our environment, and do our part to maintain it.  

For care in using scarce energy resources
Thank you, Lord, for providing for our needs for energy. We think of the electricity that we could not live without. We think of the fuel that heats our houses, and that allows us to travel by air and sea and on land. We cannot imagine life without cars and buses and trains. Help us to remember that much of the time we are using scarce resources. Make us more grateful, and more aware of the need to avoid wasting what we cannot replace. Help our scientists and engineers and others who are seeking renewable sources of energy. 

Of Lands and Waters
Gracious Father, you open your hand and fill all living things: Bless the lands and waters, and multiply the harvests of the world; let your Spirit go forth, that it may renew the face of the earth; show your loving-kindness, that our land may give her increase; and save us from selfish use of what you give, that people everywhere may give you thanks; through Christ our Lord.

ONLINE SERMON SOURCES
Thank you - a sermon on the origin of Harvest Thanksgiving and Meister Eckhart’s advice "If the only prayer you ever say in your entire life is thank you, it will be enough." Don’t be put off by the fact that the lessons at the beginning of the text are not those for Year A. The preacher doesn’t refer to them! A good sermon nevertheless from St Edward King and Martyr in Peas Hill, Cambridge.  

Thanksgiving and a liturgical way of looking at the world - A sermon preached at the eucharist in St John’s, Edinburgh. Starts by highlighting the desert experience out of which comes the first lesson for today - Deuteronomy 8. There is a short reference to a different Gospel reading (that for the C of I in Year C), but that is not crucial to the thoughts presented. The preacher relates the desert experience to the choices regarding sustainability and life style which confront the thinking Christian of today. He concludes, “Harvest Thanksgiving is less about the actual Harvest than about thanksgiving. Remembering our blessed state that we can turn on a tap and get as much water as we
A sower went out to sow
A sermon based on Mark 4. The theme is the potential of seeds - in the natural harvest; in growing justice in this world; in fragile seeds of love and hope; the seeds of the Spirit. This is a good basic sermon which does not ignore the political or practical realities of world development. It concludes with the words of Oscar Romero, the RC Archbishop RC AB of El Salvador martyred in 1980 -

One person plants a seed in the soil. Another waters it.
We plant seeds that one day will grow.
We water seeds already planted knowing that they hold future promise.
We lay foundations that will need further development.

(what we do) may be incomplete, but is a beginning,
a step along the way, an opportunity for God’s grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results,
but that is the difference between the Master Builder and the worker.
We are workers, not master builders;
ministers, not messiahs.
We are prophets of a future not our own.

So let us sow the seed
and trust God for the Harvest!

http://www.themint.org.uk/z089.htm

CHILDREN

ACT OF WORSHIP/ASSEMBLY
For Infants and Juniors
From a trustworthy source - Culham College’s Collective worship resource -
You will need:
• 12 children (6 readers with partners)
• A circular tablecloth
• A loaf of bread
• A glass of water
• A pot plant
• A fish
• Lump of coal

This is an easy to do presentation which could be used in both church and school.
http://cowo.culham.ac.uk/assemblies/003p_harvest.php

Primary school age and whole school assembly
See two downloadable documents at:
http://www.teachingideas.co.uk/more/assemblies/contents.htm
HARVEST PRAYERS FOR USE BY YOUNG PEOPLE

Thank you, God, for our food
Thank you for the world so sweet;
   Thank you for the food we eat;
   Thank you for the birds that sing;
   Thank you, God, for everything.

Thank you for our senses
Thank you, Lord, for our eyes to see,
   Thank you, Lord, for our ears to hear;
   Thank you, Lord, for our nose to smell,
   To smell the beautiful harvest feast.

For all living creatures
Thank you, God, for all the animals and birds and fish that you created and gave to us. We thank you for the farm animals, and animals that live in zoos and parks, and for horses and ponies, and the pets that live with us. Help us to be kind to all living creatures and to prevent all cruelty to animals.

That we may keep God’s world looking beautiful
Lord, we know that everyone hates to see papers and rubbish, and all the things that litter our streets, and even, sometimes, our homes and classrooms. Help us to remember that we all must help to see that things are kept beautiful, and that means that I have to put my sweet papers and drinks cans in the bin! Please, Lord, help me to remember, even though it may be hard.

That we should be careful not to waste what God gives us
Thank you, Lord, for using harvest time to remind us that you give us, each day, all the things we need for life. We thank you for the food we need to keep us healthy and happy, and for all the things that make our lives interesting and exciting. Make us grateful for all that God has given to us, and to remember those who are not so fortunate. Above all, we ask that we should remember not to waste anything that is is given to us. Make us remember not to waste water or paper or food or heat, or any of God’s gifts to us.

HARVEST HYMN

– by Richard Bowers (to the tune of “Love Divine”)

God of harvest, God of sharing,
God who meets us in our need.
Fill us with a love of caring,
Save us from our hidden greed.
Jesus gave away his glory
Help your people do the same,
Help your people live his story,
Sharing riches in his name.

God of harvest, God of sharing,
Gave a world for all to share.
Yet we burn our planet’s riches,
For our comfort, without a care.  
Living lives that sicken creation,  
Farms turned into barren land,  
Hungry ones, made voiceless, helpless,  
Bread is taken from their hand.

God of harvest, God of sharing,  
Gave good news for us to share.  
Gives, and helps us give to others,  
Love and friendship, time and care.  
By your Spirit, by our living,  
Help us all your truth proclaim,  
In our hearing, in our helping,  
Offer love in Jesus’ name.

**SOURCES OF HARVEST RESOURCES**

**Christian Aid**  

**CMS**  
**Food for thought** - Lifting the lid on food and faith, the CMS Harvest resource for 2011. Includes: Harvest Thanksgiving service • All Age/Messy Church ideas • Small group Bible Study materials • Fact sheet • Stories from CMS mission partners • Information about the Timothy Fund • PowerPoint presentation  

**USPG**  
**Come dine with USPG** - this year’s resource is “ideal for Harvest. Our new fundraising campaign includes worship resources. On these pages you will find all you need for hosting mouth-watering events – whether a church banquet, dinner party or coffee morning.”  
http://www.uspg.org.uk/resource.php?id=54

**Arthur Rank Centre**  
Articles/Resources from the Arthur Rank Centre - some available online, some to download and some to request.

Resources for harvest, including:  
- Farm, food and countryside produced by the Voice of British Agriculture  
- A Harvest Pack called Sharing the Fruits from the Charity Harvest Help. This includes a full order of service, sermon and ideas for music as well as fundraising, drama and suggestions for children’s activities.  
- A prayer from the resource pack Bringing Food to the Table.  
- Harvest resources from 2004, 2005 and 2006, including prayers, enactment and praise.

http://www.arthurrankcentre.org.uk / publications_and_resources / rural_worship_resources /