

Harvest Service

Hymn - We plough the fields and scatter

Welcome - family news
3 part service -

Turn to your neighbour..
What did you have for breakfast
Where did it come from?

Hymn - bringing up gifts - **come ye thankful people come**

Generosity

Reading - Older brother

I love the prodigal son - I am the prodigal son!
But we often don't read the rest of the story - the older brother.

The older brother hears the party, and doesn't join in. He's determined to be sulky and resentful
And stay on the outside. The father welcomes one son in, and the other one goes - not likely!

His problem is he doesn't know what he'd got.
The father says - all I have is yours - everything!
But the older brother seems unable to realise that, or be happy with it.
Does he want more? Does he not like it?

And Jesus parables get in the heart of our humanity. - if we are not the prodigal, then we can turn into
the elder brother.

Look at God's Generous harvest. Look at how much God has given us!
Do we deserve it? Not really?

Harvest is what we have produced, been given - apples, carrots

In the old days we all saw how much grain or apples or whatever was brought in
It was 6 haystacks worth, the potatoes were good this year, or hit by blight

But perhaps people also bragged or were fake humble - I don't really have enough potatoes,
I get by.

Rounder here I've noticed people not wanting to admit to having enough, I often hear - I'm getting by!

I knew an undertaker in Salisbury, not Ian Newman - who said - I'm doing ok. And then he sold the
business for more than £1million pounds.
I thought - if he's only getting by, then I must be on the breadline!

What if modern harvest were about money??

We are ashamed or shy of telling people our money situation
Yet everyone can see what clothes we wear, what car we drive
What house we live in - people can see if we're getting by, or doing better than that.

And here's why its important.

If you don't own up to what you really have - you end up like the older brother!
Like someone in a big old house, with loads of money in the bank - but unable to enjoy any of it!
I haven't really got enough - so you can never be grateful.
And if you can't be grateful - you're in trouble.

Its scientifically proven, not just good bible wisdom, that gratitude is the one thing you can do to make life happier.

Wake up each day and say - thank you!

Lets try it - thank you!

And lets think about how to respond to God's generosity ...

Hymn -Take my life.. -

Response - what to do with all this supply

Reading - bigger barns

Get a volunteer - Here's a fluffy chick - very special...
You might keep it, cherish it - the vicar gave me this, I've no idea why.

But what if I give you another... thanks but.. and another.. er...
And more and more...
Now you've got more than you know what to do with!
If I gave you enough perhaps you'd start a shop!

I had the same with apples. One apple is lovely, 10 is ok.
But I have wheelbarrows full (Well I did before the deer have nearly killed the trees and the badgers ate the fallen ones..)
The only thing I can do is give them away - put a bucket out. Free apples.
A sign I see everywhere.

This over generous God, appears everywhere.

Again, Jesus knows what we are like - what is one response to having more than enough?
Keep it, store it, lock it up! Its mine!! Hands off! Even though I've got more than enough!

We love to do that - we do it with our money all the time
I've got money, and you're poor and you'd like some?
Well, great I've got the power -
I choose who gets it - are they deserving?
Come and make your case - poor man number 1, poor woman number 2
I love the power and control wealth gives me.

But God gives us too much, so that we can give it away.
So we can enjoy being generous and blessing others.

One of Jesus most ignored sayings - its better to give than to recieve!
And here's another -
The measure you use, will be the measure you get..

In other words - give generously, and in fact you will receive even more
Give meanly or not at all, and even what you have will run out, and become a curse, not a blessing.

The response to Gods' generous giving - is to give our lives- it demands nothing less.

Hymn - I will offer up my life

This harvest - think about how God has given you so much - not just fruit and veg, or friends and love, but even money. You have enough - every one of you.

Think about your response of gratitude for having enough.
And that as you have freely received, so you should freely give -
Join in with God in giving stuff away - see what a blessing it is - what a reward it is.

And I would ask you to think about giving some of it to the Church. To St James.

I know whenever we ask for money we're always talking to the wrong people!
You're all the ones who give regularly, give generously and give sacrificially!
But maybe you know some others who don't yet give.
Maybe you'd like to be encouraged to know what a difference your money makes?
Because it really does.

Thanks to you -

There is a building here for 175 years, still standing, still waterproof and warm, still providing a sanctuary for people to come and pray and find God, and for God's people to worship.

We're here for Baptisms, wedding and funerals - if we close.. where will you go, where will the connection be?

We're the place for Remembrance, Christmas, Easter

Thanks you to

We run Recreate, Forest Edge Cafe, and employ a Children and Families worker

St James is our Church School, and we run assemblies and help on Governance.

We manage the magazine as a community link - a vital grapevine connecting village.

But we also..

support various members of the community in financial trouble.

We visit the elderly and infirm, keep them in the loop, make sure they're not the forgotten.

We support the sick and dying - walking alongside them in that journey, and offer comfort and support to the family.

YET

We receive no money from the Government or State

We receive no money from the Church of England

We receive no money from the Diocese of Salisbury.

We have no Trust funds, legacies or other money tucked away.

It cost us £78,000 last year to do that.

That's £1500 a week.

I don't really know how we do it - except I know it's gone down a lot since some people died.

£1500 if there's 50 of us is £30 each a week.

And we have to raise it all locally - from those who come to church and those who live in the village

Church is worth it, I believe especially in Alderholt, that we make a difference, money is not wasted or lost in the national church.

If you can't give any more, and I totally understand the constraints and costs of living have gone up, Then please take a leaflet to give to a neighbour who can.

Just as the church is here for people when they need it - you don't need to be a member to have a wedding or funeral or help..

So people can give to the church even if they don't come regularly. Your neighbour may want a place to be buried, or a place to come, or just want to see the church continue. Please take a leaflet and drop it in and pray that God will continue to help St James be the place for all the people of Alderholt.

Prayers

Notices /

Hymn - wonderful, so wonderful