

The Christian Story

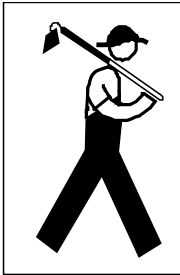
- ◆ Harvest festivals occur in many different cultures and faiths as people thank God for their harvest.
- ◆ In the Bible there are separate harvest celebrations for each of the main harvests (e.g. wheat, barley fruit). Harvest celebrations lie behind many of the Jewish festivals e.g. Sukkot and Rosh Hashanah.
- ◆ In England, Christian thanksgiving services at harvest time were invented in 1843 by Rev'd Robert Stephen Hawker of Morwenstow, Cornwall.
- ◆ Lammas (1st August) is when the bread used for Holy Communion is made from the first harvest of the year.

The Beliefs

- ◆ The natural resources of the earth are a gift of God the Creator. The strengths and skills man uses to grow and harvest crops are also a gift of God.
- ◆ The bounty of the earth is to be shared, not hoarded. Harvest is an opportunity to respond to the physical needs of others.
- ◆ Harvest imagery is frequently used when thinking about living the life of a believer e.g. the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians chapter 5 vss22f) and the Parable of the Sower (Mark chapter 4 verses 3-20).

HARVEST

Leviticus chapter 23 verses 16-20, 33-44, Genesis chapter 1 verse 28, Psalm 23,



The Customs

- ◆ Traditional harvest customs centre around the cutting of the last sheaf of corn and the making of corn dollies. The farmers would also look after and feed any poor workers who came to help with their harvest.
- ◆ Harvest Suppers are a common way of celebrating together as a community that the harvest is gathered in, and still take place in most churches, including those which have no agricultural links.
- ◆ Harvest is seen as a good time for either raising funds for charity (especially the Third World), or distributing harvest produce amongst the elderly of the local community.

The Christian Experience

- ◆ Thankfulness
- ◆ Dependency on God
- ◆ Right use of the earth's resources (stewardship)
- ◆ Sharing
- ◆ Awareness of the needs of others
- ◆ Interdependence of living things
- ◆ Unequal distribution of earth's resources despite God's provision
- ◆ Celebrating as a community
- ◆ The harvest of one's own soul (belief and behaviour)