

Greater Whitbourne Harvest Festival

10.30am 20th September 2020 – an outdoor Covid19 safe service.

All attendees at the outdoor service need their own chair and a mask. Please sit 2 meters apart on the churchyard and remain in household groups only (no more than 6 in a group)

Offerings of gifts for the Bromyard food bank may be put on a table during the service when you are asked to come forward to do this – please remain 2 meters apart when this happens.

A plate offering of your envelopes from the last 6 months may be given. Someone will come to you who is safely dressed in personal protective equipment for your monetary offering

10.30 am Young at heart - activity led by Marion Symmons

10.45 service begins

Reading

Angus Stormonth Darling reads Ex 23 14-16 and 19

The Three Annual Festivals

¹⁴ “Three times a year you are to celebrate a festival to me.

¹⁵ “Celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread; for seven days eat bread made without yeast, as I commanded you. Do this at the appointed time in the month of Aviv, for in that month you came out of Egypt.

“No one is to appear before me empty-handed.

¹⁶ “Celebrate the Festival of Harvest with the first fruits of the crops you sow in your field.

“Celebrate the Festival of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you gather in your crops from the field.

¹⁹ “Bring the best of the first fruits of your soil to the house of the LORD your God.

NOTICES ARE ON THE BACK PAGE!

Introduction

What a strange an unusual time we are living in. Who would have imagined this time last year, us all sitting here together but isolated from one another. The normal 4 Whitbourne churches harvest festivals have become a Greater Whitbourne celebration of the first fruits of our labours, here out of doors. We have representatives of all our churches taking part and contributing to this service. We also have Chris Allsop our new organist, playing the organ inside the church for you all to hear through the speaker system. The guidelines on singing are not yet clear so we will not be singing today but hopefully that may have changed by next week. We will have another outdoor service next week for the whole parish. That will be on the churchyard at Upper Sapey church where we will celebrate a communion service for the patronal festival of St Michael's.

Today we will hear readings for the scriptures and we will think about the first fruits being offered to God in thanks giving for all the good things we have been given.

You may feel at the moment that doesn't feel so good but as we examine all that we have and that we are there will be many wonders we can thank God for.

As we pray let us confess our sin, and the sins of our society, in the misuse of God's creation.

God our Father, we are sorry for the times when we have used your gifts carelessly, and acted ungratefully.
Lord forgive us and help us.

We enjoy the fruits of the harvest, but sometimes forget that you have given them to us.
Lord forgive us and help us.

We belong to a people who are full and satisfied, but ignore the cry of the hungry.
Lord forgive us and help us.

Parish of Greater Whitbourne – Notices for Sunday 20th Sept '20

Interim Minister: Rev'd Dawn Hyett 01885 483747, hyetttdawn@gmail.com
Ministers with Permission to Officiate: Rev'ds Doiran Williams, Andrew Bullock, Jan Webb
Send notices to john@icicland.f9.co.uk please by Friday latest!
Notices are on-line at whitbourne.org.uk/files/WeeklyNotices.pdf

These are difficult times for many of us. Rev'd Dawn Hyett writes "If you have a pressing need then I may be contacted, in complete confidence, and may be able to sign-post you to help if that is required. You may contact me on 01885 483747 or hyetttdawn@gmail.com."
Note that Zoomed coffee mornings are suspended until further notice.

This week:

TUESDAY 22nd September – Morning Prayer by Zoom at 9.00am Ask Dawn for an invitation, click [HERE](#) for the service ON THE DAY!

WEDNESDAY 23rd September - Morning Prayer by Zoom at 9:30am Ask Dawn for an invitation, click [HERE](#) for the service ON THE DAY!

SUNDAY 27th September 11am Upper Sapey Patronal Festival Communion at St Michael's in the churchyard. We hope to Zoom it, as well (ask Dawn for a Zoom invitation). **This service is allowed as long as:**

names and contact details recorded for track and trace;
no more than 6 from one household in a group;
groups stay 2 metres apart; masks worn at all times except when a person is speaking to the whole congregation; no socialising or picnic afterwards.

In the meantime, each of our four churches is handling re-opening in its own way. In all cases you **must** follow the procedures on the church's door.

Whitbourne:

Thursdays 9am-1pm; Sundays 2-6pm

Upper Sapey:

Wednesdays & Sundays only: a single slot each day for one household, by prior arrangement with a churchwarden: David (01886 853665) or Ian (01886 853441)
Edvin Loach and Tedstone Delamere: Remaining closed for now.

We are thoughtless,
and do not care enough for the world you have made.
Lord forgive us and help us.

We store up goods for ourselves alone,
as if there were no God and no heaven.

Lord forgive us and help us.

Amen

Many of you have brought gifts to offer, our church wardens will guide you to bring these to this table on my left. Please try to remain 2 meters apart and take the route you are guided on to return to your seats. After you have offered your gifts Chris will come around for you to offer your monetary offering for the church and to collect your weekly envelopes which you have had to hold on to for the last 6 months. Thank you for your generosity.

Whilst all this is happening Chris will be playing
“Pastorale” from Organ Sonata no. 1 – A. Guilment played by Chris Allsop on the church organ

Music played as gifts are placed on a table, attendees guided to the time and direction of movement

Three of our community of Greater Whitbourne - Gillie, Helen and Alex - will tell us how they have contributed their Fruits of the Spirit to others.

How we contribute our first fruits;-

- Gillie SD,
- Helen Read,
- Alex Heyward,

Thank you so much for sharing your gifts with us today now let us reflect on how we as individuals have gifts we can offer to others and how the first fruits we have been given can be shared with others as we listen to

Music – “Alla Gigue” from “Pastorale” – J. S. Bach Chris Allsop

Readings from the Old and the New Testaments

Sylvia Bland reads Joel 3.13a

Put in the sickle,
for the harvest is ripe.
Go in, tread,
for the wine press is full.
The vats overflow

Maisie Read reads Matt 9 35-38

The Workers Are Few

³⁵ Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. ³⁶ When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷ Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. ³⁸ Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

Address

A tramp knocked at the farmhouse door. "I can't let you in, my husband is not at home," said the woman of the house. "And I haven't a thing to offer you," she added. Her voice showed unmasked scorn for the man she held to be a beggar.

"Then you could make use of my soup stone," he replied, pulling from his pocket what appeared to be an ordinary stone.

"Soup stone?" said she, suddenly showing interest in the tattered stranger.

"Oh yes," he said. "If I just had a potful of water and a fire, I'd show you how it works. This stone and boiling water make the best soup you've ever eaten. Your husband would thank you for the good supper, if you'd just let me in and put my stone to use over your fire."

Blessing

May God our creator,
who clothes the lilies and feeds the birds of the air,
bestow on you his care
and increase the harvest of your righteousness;
and the blessing of God the father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you now and always.

Amen

Freely you have received, freely give.
Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Amen.

Chorale-Improvisation on "Now thank we all our God" – S. Karg-Elert played by Chris Allsop

Give us such reverence and gratitude for the created order that we may conserve and not destroy our rich inheritance, and share its bounty with the needy peoples of the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

At this time of Covid-19 social restrictions let us pray for those who live in our major cities and those who administer them

O Lord our God, we pray for all who administer or live in our major cities. In this time of Covid-19, help the police and magistrates to be just in their actions to maintain social distancing. Also help the press and media to be accurate in their reporting, and to encourage decisions based on truth. In this time of recession and increased unemployment, help both the Government and Opposition to be sober and sensitive in their public pronouncements and effectively work together for the common good: through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Let us pray for ourselves as we do our best to help others during this time of Covid-19. Help us to show leadership within the community; to be alert, to be thorough in taking measures to minimise the spread of the disease. Let us give thanks to those who continue to support our churches during this period of reduced income. In this time of restricted church opening let us pray for those seeking to take the church to the community through innovative methods

Lord and heavenly Father, we thank you for our home and families
Make us aware of your loving care of us day by day.
Make us thankful for all the blessings we receive which we take for granted
And make us mindful of those who are lonely and less fortunate than ourselves; for the sake of Christ our Lord..

The woman's suspicions yielded to her desire for an easy meal, and she opened the door. A pot of water was soon brought to a boil. The tramp dropped in his stone, then tasted the watery gruel. "It needs salt, and a bit of barley," he said. "And some butter, too, if you can spare it." The woman obliged him by adding the requested ingredients. He tasted it again. "Much better!" he said. "But a good soup needs vegetables and potatoes. Are there none in your cellar?"

"Oh yes," she said, her enthusiasm for the miracle soup growing, and she quickly found a generous portion of potatoes, turnips, carrots, and beans. After the mixture had boiled awhile, the man tasted it again. "It's almost soup," he said. "The stone has not failed us. But some chicken broth and chunks of meat would do it well."

The woman, recognizing the truth of his claim, ran to the chicken yard, returning soon with a freshly slaughtered fowl. "Soup stone, do your thing!" she said, adding the chicken to the stew.

When their noses told them that the soup was done, the woman dished up a healthy portion for her guest and for herself. They ate their fill, and -- thanks to the magic stone -- there was still a modest bowlful left over for her husband's supper.

"My thanks for the use of your pot and your fire," said the tramp as evening approached, and he sensed that the husband soon would be arriving home. He fished his stone from the bottom of the pot, licked it clean, and put it back into his pocket.

"Do come again," said the thankful woman.

"I will indeed," said the tramp, and disappeared into the woods

The messages in this story seem to me to be all the wrong messages the woman did not want to help the man, but then, for an easy meal and what she would get out of it, changed her mind. The tramp had clearly experienced life and many negative responses to his requests was using a tried and tested formula to get what he most needed – a meal, which worked. The whole story has always left me feeling just a little uneasy. Is this what life is like

most of the time or is it what I am like? What then do I want to be like and what can I do about it?

This year we know that the weather has been strange with an unusually warm mild Spring and June and some of July with heavy rains and flooding. The crops in our gardens and the farmers have suffered right from the beginning of planting in the spring until recent days and the harvest. Crops have had to be gathered whenever there has been a lull in the poor weather. Crop yields are down. What should we do, what can we do?

We can certainly give thanks for the hard work of the gardeners and farmers who have tried so hard to bring in a crop. We can give thanks for the small patches of good weather to gather what has grown.

We may well all now have to tighten our belts to pay the increased prices forecast for our bread and other crops. How much harder that will be for the thousands who have lost their jobs because of Covid and the shrinking economy and what about those still waiting to hear if they have work in October. We may find it harder to get our 5 a day on a limited budget but all this can be done with a smile on our faces the diet will be easier to stick too and there will be others who have far less than we have, with whom we can share what we have.

The Helping Hands scheme seeks to do this for families in the Bromyard area who are in difficulty. The refugees in Lesbos, whose tent homes burnt down in the camp they were using need immediate help and People in Motion will be taking our gifts for them, to them in containers in a week's time. What would Jesus do for these people? He would not have ignored them!

As we give thanks for the harvest this year, as poor as it may seem, remember the comedian Les Dawson from the 1980's and 90's who would always end his act by saying. "Don't forget there is always somebody worse off than you – me!"

Give thanks for the harvest and all who have gathered it in and with the love of God in your hearts share what you can of your first fruits.
Amen

As we reflect on this and give thanks we listen to:-

Music - "Salix" (Willow) from "Plymouth Suite" – P. Whitlock Chris Allsop

Our final reading is from Revelations and tells of how we are part of the harvest which will in turn lead to the eternal Kingdom promised by God to all people.

Reading

Sheila Dodd reads Rev 14 14-15

Harvesting the Earth and Trampling the Winepress

¹⁴ I looked, and there before me was a white cloud, and seated on the cloud was one like a son of man^[a] with a crown of gold on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. ¹⁵ Then another angel came out of the temple and called in a loud voice to him who was sitting on the cloud, "Take your sickle and reap, because the time to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is ripe."

Prayers led by William North

Let us pray for all those who work the land and be mindful of those who are particularly stressed by a shortage of resources to gather in the harvest as a result of Covid-19.

Almighty God, who in the beginning set man on the earth to cultivate the soil and to have dominion over created things: we give thanks today for all who work on the land and for those who market their produce and manufacture our food. So direct and prosper their work that the fruits of the earth may be wisely cultivated, safely harvested, and generously shared; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord

At this time of harvest, let us pray that the leaders of the world achieve a balance between the demands of food production and protecting the world's environmental biodiversity.

Almighty God, Creator and Lord of all things, we praise you for the marvels of the world you have made, for the varied beauty of earth and sky and sea, and for your provision of all things needful for our bodies.