

Harvest Thanksgiving 2025

The church is beautifully decorated for our celebrations of Harvest Thanksgiving with fruits and foliage from gardens and fields. And as we celebrate Harvest Thanksgiving may it be given to us to uncover in ourselves all that we are thankful for. We as Christians are forever marked by the melody of thankfulness, a thankfulness that will colour our lives and that cannot be snatched away. We know our beginning and our end. That is so because God is not only for us, but also with us. We may not be good at expressing our thankfulness, but here the worship of the Church and the encouragement of fellow Christians is a support well captured in the Epiphany hymn, "Hymns of thankfulness and praise to thee, O Lord, we raise". Today we will sing these lines from different hymns,

1. Come, Ye thankful people, come. Raise the song of harvest-home.
2. Praise him for our harvest-store: he hath filled the garner-floor:
For his mercies still endure, ever faithful ever sure.
3. To thee, O Lord, our hearts we raise in hymns of adoration,
to thee bring sacrifice of praise with shouts of exultation:

Two nouns from those lines quoted stand out: harvest-home and harvest-store. And without much ado, I find myself thinking about Joseph, Pharaoh's right-hand man, and of Pharaoh's dream. Pharaoh dreams consisting first seven fat cows emerging from Nile, followed by seven lean ones. Pharaoh's dream which only Joseph can interpret means there will be an abundance of food in Egypt for seven years to be followed by seven lean years. Pharaoh, Joseph counsels, be sure to heed the vision and be sure to garner food for seven years, so that the seven lean years, caused by a draught, can be navigated. The outcome is that not only is all of Egypt fed, but also all the nations that come to Pharaoh's court are fed. Of this coming to Egypt by the surrounding nations we see only a cameo in Scripture focussing on Jacob and his other sons, Joseph's brothers. Pharaoh's dream and its interpretation by Joseph, who comes understand himself as in God's service reminds us all to be prudent in times of abundance. It calls us to be good stewards of all that God has entrusted to us as we make provision for the future, which for the most part is unknown.

Give us this day our daily bread is a prayer. Daily bread stands for our basic essential daily needs. There is always enough food in the world, but there needs to be a will to share and distribute it. For this to happen we need stability. We need peace. We need just structures. We need first however people of good will. We not only need people of good will, but also nations with the same purpose who are willing to be guided by a star.

Let us briefly recall the beginning of the reading from Book of Deuteronomy, the Second Book of the Law.

When you have come into the land that the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance to possess, and you possess it, and settle in it, you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from the land that the LORD your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place that the LORD your God will choose as a dwelling for his name.

I have quoted more than I need now to provide us a with bigger picture that is not only this-worldly. Materialistic. Next Sunday four persons will be baptised three of them adults. By their baptism they will become fellow members of the household of God with us. And by virtue of their baptism, they knowingly, unknowingly, hopefully knowingly come into a new land made ready for them by God. A land that only God can grant and whether you come from Turkmenistan, Turkey, China, Nigeria, India, England or some other country, all can inhabit it and all are invited. Through the writing of the New Testament we are granted a new vision summed up in some words from the Book of Revelation, "Then I saw 'a new heaven and a new earth,' for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away,

Today we celebrate the harvest festival of creation. It is a forerunner to that which we celebrate in less than a month's time, when we celebrate All Saints' Day, the harvest festival of the Church. In both cases we pray that all is safely gathered in and nothing is lost. This is a possible given that God is creator and sustained of all things seen and unseen. In God our future secure.

This is the new land that we are to make our home. We do not possess it, for we are taken hold of by God, but metaphorically, it is a land flowing with milk and honey. This picture of living in another land is strengthened when we cast our eye on the second reading in which Jesus proclaims that he is bread of life. How does John the Evangelist capture Jesus' words, 'I

am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.'

There is much to be thankful for in that we know God's goodness, aye endureth and his bountiful provision on this Harvest Thanksgiving Day in the year of our Lord 2025, but there is much more to be thankful for. It is the new creation of which we have a part, in which we share together. **Amen.**

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in that we know of God's goodness, aye endureth and his bountiful on the Harvest Thanksgiving Day

Or:

in that we know of God's goodness that endureth, and his bountiful mercy, on the Harvest Thanksgiving Day

It is the new creation of which we have a part of it.

NB: If this stays your last line, you might give it a bit more conclusiveness, for lack of a better term. Something like this.