

OUR DAILY BREAD

FOOD IN GOD'S CREATION

Re-imagining Harvest

for Creation Time 2011



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Photo: [Susy Morris](#)



These materials are built around a new form of Harvest Festival service and a Harvest community event, which come together as a proposal for an eight day festival. This festival could have a wide appeal as churches and communities re-imagine harvest for the 21st century.

The complete celebration takes place over eight days and in this sense is modelled after the primary festivals of the Hebrew community - e.g. the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Exodus 12 v 1-20) and the Feast of Tabernacles (Leviticus 23 v 33-43). The themes for these days are based on the days of creation in Genesis 1. Each day introduces a new theme and evokes both practical and contemplative response. A full description of the Lectio Divina element can be found at www.earthabbey.com/chapel

A Prayer (for each day of the week)

God of all life
from whose gracious hand all
creatures are fed
humble our hearts in wonder of
your creation
inspire in us praise for the good
things you give
and lead us into peace with all
that you have made
Amen

Although the full Harvest Festival celebration is planned to take place over 8 days, for those who are not able to do this it is possible to use the harvest festival service on its own.

The Days of Observanceⁱ

Sunday

Services on this day should include an introduction to the week ahead and the theme for the first day which is **'Let there be light'**

Themes that can be explored:

- Creation, the sun, the energy from God that supports all life
- Dancing in the light, music, movement
- Introducing the liturgical week based on the hymn of creation in Genesis

Readings may include:

Genesis 1 v 1 to 2 v 4 (can be read to music or to the beating of hands as the sound of a heartbeat)

Monday

Theme: **Earth**

Aim: to recognise our dependence on the thin layer of earth that supports life across the planet

Exercise: Touch the soil, pray for people who work the soil across the world and the complex creatures and organic matter which make up its life:

Or ... put a spade into the earth, take time to observe the life within the soil and the changes in texture and colour that occur as you go deeper

Lectio Divina: The parable of the soilsⁱⁱ

Tuesday

Theme: **Plants**

Aim: to appreciate the growth of plant life

Exercise: Pick some fruit and eat it, and give thanks to the creator for the gift of fruit or make some bread

Lectio Divina: I am the vine

Wednesday

Theme: **Seasons**

Aim: to appreciate how the seasons structure our lives

Exercise: Watch the sunrise and the sun fall, eat a meal outside and notice signs of seasonal change around you, observe the stars

Lectio Divina: Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades – Job 38



Thursday

Theme: **Fish and birds**

Aim: to use the senses to appreciate food and beautiful sound

Exercise: Take a slow walk and listen to/ observe the birds, or eat a fish that you do not usually eat and, as a grace, pray for the fish of the sea

Lectio Divina: See the birds of the air – Don't be anxious (Matthew 6 v 25 – 33)

Friday

Theme: **Creatures of earth**

Aim: to appreciate other creatures and gain a sense our own creaturehood

Exercise: Take time with a pet and appreciate their consciousness, or seek out a wild animal and observe it living out its life.

Lectio Divina: The wolf shall dwell with the lamb (Isaiah 11)

Saturday

Theme: **Humanity**

Aim: to appreciate the creativity of human beings, share produce, encourage primary production

Exercise: A home-made festivalⁱⁱⁱ, including music, arts, home made goods, preserves, fruit and veg harvest.

Lectio Divina: What are human beings and why does God lavish such gifts upon them? (Psalm 8)

Sunday

Theme: **Harvest**

Aim: to celebrate the themes of the week in an act of worship

Exercise: Harvest festival service involving the whole community^{iv}

The Home-made Festival

to be celebrated on the Saturday of Harvest Week

Aim: To encourage people and communities to celebrate their own creativity and to share in a home-grown harvest of food.

Where and when: Outside in August/early Sept.

The Process:

Different groups within the local community will be invited to have a presence at the festival. The theme is 'homemade', which means that the people of the community are encouraged to grow their own produce, make things and develop music and arts for the festival. They organise their own contributions according to their culture within the aims of the event. Some will provide homemade food traditional to their people and culture. Some will knit, sculpt or make things from wood. Others may play music or show artwork, like as in an arts trail. Some will want to sell their wares for the benefit of the group they represent. This is good, so long as they are home-grown or home-made, but try to make any selling low key and cultivate an atmosphere of celebration and generosity.

List potential groups in your area that might be interested in taking part and approach them in plenty of time so they can get ready for the event in August/early Sept. Make sure they understand the ethos of the event.

Examples of activities that can be represented:

- growing food
- cooking and preserving food
- making clothes and household items
- making music
- exploring the arts and contemplation
- celebrating particular cultures

Outcomes:

It is anticipated that the process will

- Promote personal resilience as people learn to make things, and to grow and process food.
- Celebrate the creativity of the different cultures within the area and so promote confidence within groups that present at the festival.
- Contribute to community cohesion as people experience the diversity of culture within the community and own their common bond through living in the neighbourhood together.
- Allow the church to be present among the wider community and to integrate this day into a week of harvest celebration to which all are invited.

The Harvest Festival

The second Sunday of Harvest Week

*The following materials are designed to be shaped and filled out into a service that suits a particular church's context. All the elements should be considered optional except the **Presentation of Creation**.*

*The heart of this festival service is the **Presentation of Creation**, which can form part of the offertory prior to the prayer of Thanksgiving in a service of Holy Communion, or can provide for the centrepiece in other forms of services. It is an opportunity to offer the worship of each day of the preceding week to God in this community celebration, and should creatively engage a large number of people in its preparation. The leader should identify people to take part in this at an early stage.*

Introductory liturgy – can be used at the beginning of the service

The time has come

Peace be to the whole creation

The time has come

For swords to turn into ploughs

The time has come

For spears to become pruning hooks

The time has come

For lands to be returned

The time has come

For slaves to be freed

The time has come

When each one shall dwell in safety

And no one shall make them afraid

Peace be to the whole creation

Confessional (if required)

Made in God's image^v

You have given us eyes...

But we have not always looked at Creation's beauty

You have given us ears...

but we have not always listened to nature's speaking

You have given us tongues...

but we have not always joined earth's song of praise

You have given us hands...

but we have not always been makers and menders

You have given us feet...

but we have not always shared in the dance of life

You have given us minds...

but we have not always thought beyond ourselves



You have given us wills...

but we have not always chosen the good

You have given us hearts...

but we have not always loved without reserve

You have made us in your image...

forgive us that we do not always display your likeness

Readings^{vi}

- Deuteronomy 8 v 7-18
or Deuteronomy 28 v 1-14
- Psalm 65
- 2 Corinthians 9 v 6-15
- Luke 12 v 16-30
or Luke 17 v 11-19

Alternative readings:

Leviticus 23 v 39 – 44 or Joel 2 v 21 – 29

Psalm 95

Romans 12 v 1-8

Matthew 13 v 24 - 33

Interviews

These may include

- An interview with someone who has grown some food for the first time
- An interview with someone who has cooked or preserved something for the first time

The Presentation of Creation

To consist of a parade of gifts with people or groups representing each of the days of harvest week

- Earth – (e.g. some soil presented as a treasure)
- Plants – (home grown veg, home made bread in serious quantity)
- Seasons – (four people each dressed to represent one of the seasons)
- Fish and birds - (e.g. dancing representations of fish and birds)
- Creatures of earth (pets)
- Human Beings – (a deliberately diverse group of people by age, gender, ethnicity, etc., dressed in traditional costume)

Each one presents themselves in turn and is asked by the leader **'What is this?'**^{vii}

To which they reply, each in turn

- **We are the earth – and the soil that makes for life**
- **We are the plants – which bring forth such beauty and goodness**
- **We are the seasons - which make up the cycle of life**
- **We are the fish and birds – which dance in freedom and are fed by the gracious hand of God**
- **We are creatures of earth – who share our planet**
- **We are human beings – made to praise the Creator of all things**

Each time a declaration is made the congregation responds with **'Peace be to you and all creation'**

In a Eucharist this parade of gifts can take place in the offertory and lead into the peace. The people may return to their seats during a hymn such as 'Dance and Sing'.

Eucharistic prayer

If the service is to include an act of Holy Communion, various forms of Eucharistic prayer are available, if appropriate and allowed, to suit the theme of this day. See the 'Season of Creation' website and their liturgies.

Prayers

May be offered before the bread that has been presented and each prayer may be concluded with a refrain - **Give us this day our daily bread**

The prayer for the week may be used:

God of all life

**from whose gracious hand all creatures are fed
humble our hearts in wonder of your creation
inspire in us praise for the good things you give
and lead us into peace with all that you have made
Amen**

Other prayers may be used:

Praise to you, ever-present One

Singer on the Wind all around

Reminding me of your nearness.

Praise to you Wild Goose,

flying through the sky above

reminding me how far can be our horizons

Praise to you holy Dove

reminding me of your gentleness

when you come in peace assuring overhead

'This is my Beloved in whom my soul delights'^{viii}

God over me, God under me,
God before me, God behind me,
I on thy path O God
Thou, O God in my steps^{ix}

A Blessing

You shall go out with joy
And be led forth in peace
and the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you
and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit
go with you now and always
Amen

Hymnody

Local and fresh music should form at least some part of the hymnody. Musicians from the Homemade festival may be involved. Each church will want to choose its own music. Fresh resources on this theme can be found from Wild Goose publishing (e.g. Dance and Sing - Wild Goose Songs Vol 1 p 20) and from the Seasons of Creation resource. (<http://seasonofcreation.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/habel-hymns-volume-one.pdf>)

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ⁱ The themes for these days are based on the days of creation in Genesis 1. Each day introduces a new theme and evokes both practical and contemplative response. A full description of the Lectio Divina element can be found at www.earthabbey.com/chapel

ⁱⁱ A full description of this series of the Lectio Divina practice will be found on the EarthAbbey website at www.earthabbey.com/chapel

ⁱⁱⁱ Separate notes follow for the Homemade Festival. It requires preparation over the summer period.

^{iv} Separate notes follow for the Harvest Festival service.

^v *Made in God's Image* © Pat Bennett 2010. Taken from *A Heart from Creation* by Chris Polhill. Wild Goose Publications, Glasgow

^{vi} These are taken from the Anglican provision for Harvest Thanksgiving, Common Worship, Year A. Alternative readings are also indicated.

^{vii} This question is modelled after the finding of the 'manna' in the wilderness. The word manna is roughly translated 'What is this?'

^{viii} *The Celtic Wheel of the Year* © Tess Ward 2007 published by O Books an imprint of John Hunt Publishing, Hants.

^{ix} From the *Carmina Gadelica* by Alexander Carmichael p 321 Republished 2007 by Forgotten Books