

3<sup>rd</sup> October 2021

## Harvest

**“They joy before thee as with joy at the harvest.”**

*Bible, Isaiah 9:3*

This is “Harvest Thanksgiving” time in many of our churches. Some years ago, I was leading worship in a city church, covering for a sick colleague. She’d informed me it was the “Harvest Service”, but not to worry, as all the arrangements were in hand. All that was required from me was a short sermon and an interactive time with the children. Harvest? No need to choose a theme, be concerned about visual aids, or be “over prepared”. I was an experienced practitioner. There was plenty of scope to “wing it”.

The children were responsive, especially when I invited them to think about God’s gifts and asked what they would bring to a harvest table. “Apples”, said one. “Bananas,” said another, followed by a host of other fruit-related suggestions. “Coco-pops,” shouted a child, expanding the repertoire somewhat, which started “porridge”, “Rice Crispies” and “toast and peanut butter”. I was trying to get back onto a “things-that-grow” theme, when a girl called out, “sausages”, starting a cacophony of other voices: “pizza”, “turkey twizzlers”, “cheesy pasta” and “beans on toast”.

The congregation was in stitches, and I was losing control. “OK! OK!” I said, and, when silence was restored, asked, “Now what does all of that tell us about harvest?” A forest of hands shot up, and I moved closer to an animated little lad in the front row. “Yes?” I enquired. “What do you think all of this tells us about harvest?” To which he replied, “My mum better have a big cooker if she’s going to make all *that* stuff for our tea ...”

Cue loud and lasting congregational laughter! I decided enough was enough and announced the next hymn. There was no need to say much more. The children had done the job for me that day. The prepared sermon was ditched to be replaced by a “cookers matter in harvests too” and “we give thanks for mums and others who make our tea” themes.

“The joy of the harvest”, was the message of the Psalmist. The children had got the point and had *made* the point! Harvest is wonderful, if only we can let our minds run to the amazing things we have around us every day – mums and cookers for tea-time included!

### **A prayer for today**

*Harvest! Thank you, God, for things that grow, and food to eat, and cookers to use, and people who make our tea. Your children taught me the joy of that! Amen*