20th October 2025

Harvest

"The harvest is truly great."

Bible, *Luke 10:2*

As this is the month in which many churches hold their Harvest Festivals, it's not surprising that my thoughts turn to a harvest theme. We've had our Harvest Worship in our church too, with the church appropriately decorated, and plenty groceries donated to the local Community Centre Food Pantry. And with traditional signs of the harvest of the land all around us in East Lothian, giving thought to harvest themes isn't difficult.

But there are two other harvests that we shouldn't ignore here. The first is the harvest of the sea. In the past, that would have been shoals of herring up and down the East Coast, from Peterhead to Whitby, or various white fish from the fishing grounds in the North Sea. It's mostly shellfish now. But the task is the same: to fish in all weathers; bring home a saleable catch; provide for family meals and fancy restaurants. It's a tough life being a fisherman. So as some "plough the fields and scatter the good seed on the land", let's remember the equally important harvest of the sea, and give thanks for the work of our fishing communities.

And that brings me to my second harvest – the work that people do. I was with a friend driving into Edinburgh last week, and we were stuck in a long queue of traffic on the Edinburgh City Bypass, coming up to the bottleneck that's the Sheriffhall Roundabout. The inside lane was filled with nose-to-tail trucks as we inched along. "Bloody lorries," my friend said. "It's always the same. You can't get moving for the trucks anymore." And I replied – in a more phlegmatic fashion that is normal for me when I'm stuck in a traffic-jam, I have to say – "Well, it's the price you pay for having Kiwi Fruit in the Co-op every month of the year." You want your Kiwi Fruit, there have to be deliveries? You need deliveries, there have to be trucks? You need trucks, there have to be drivers, and loaders, and packers, and factory-workers, and mechanics, and truck-builders, and …

Give thanks for the harvest of the work that so many people do, so that you can have the things you need. The harvest of work, hard work, good work, self-giving work, unheralded work. You want Kiwi Fruit every month of the year? Then thank God for the harvest your workers provide.

A prayer for today

God of the harvest – of land, and sea, and people – we praise your name. Amen

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