



ST PETER OFFHAM AND HAMSEY NEWSLETTER

Harvest Festival, or Harvest Thanksgiving, is still one of the best loved church festivals and has certainly been well observed in our communities over the past few weeks. First at Plumpton College, then at All Saints Plumpton Green and then at Offham where we collect for Foodbank and will again have overflowing boxes en route to the depot.

In the days when rural communities worked together to bring in the harvest, there must have been a much more connected feeling. People would have been acutely aware of how a crop was developing and far more alert and engaged than most of us are now. With human co-operation, nature

glorifies God through cultivated fields of different grains and fruits of the earth and tree.

Since living here, in a small way I have engaged with the harvest by helping to gather grapes in a local vineyard. I understood a little how much the weather impacted the timing of the picking, how much it affected the growth and health of the crop, and just how hit and miss it all is. This year I understand the weather has produced an abundant harvest of apples, but the sweetcorn has not been so good.

Such festivals afford us a time to reflect and respond to our creative role within God's creation and our responsibilities under God, for all creatures. Harvest reminds us that we are all a community. This should make us pause and be thankful for the creatures which move in the waters, fly in the sky and live on the land. Nature matures in autumn without human help. Wild creatures as well as we, enjoy the fruits of the season.

How our food is produced is a topical issue. Even people who have never grown a radish are worrying about pesticide residue on carrots, growth hormones in milk and genetically engineered soya. Many feel that current farming practices are providing cheap harvests today by putting at risk the natural processes set in place to ensure there will be harvests tomorrow. We are encouraged to buy locally and seasonally. Living where we do this is easier than for those who live in towns, and I am sure lots of you take advantage of what is on our doorstep. Even so many farmers are on the margins of

economic survival in this country and even more acutely worldwide.

Earlier this year Plumpton churches pledged to become Fairtrade users, so our tea, coffee and sugar (and boring things like loo-rolls) are all Fairtrade.

We now sell a small selection of Fairtrade produce and encourage everyone to look for the Fairtrade label before they buy.



Consumer pressure is considerable, and these small steps can encourage the big supermarkets to take Fairtrade seriously. There is a market for these goods which are fairly traded supporting the growers rather than exploiting them.

At the joint parish event 'The Great Village Harvest Lunch' (which has acquired the status of 'traditional' because it has happened twice), not only did we enjoy more food than we could imagine, and was probably good for us, we also raised over £700 for the charity Ripple Effect which supports and empowers farmers in Africa.

Thank you to all who supported us and for the willing souls who did all the work. An especial thank you again to Ashurst Organics whose gift of a bursting box of the most wonderful (and some unknown!) vegetables helped considerably in the equally now 'traditional' auction. Yet again I managed to sell an onion for £10! Your generous giving will join with others in supporting the work of this charity.

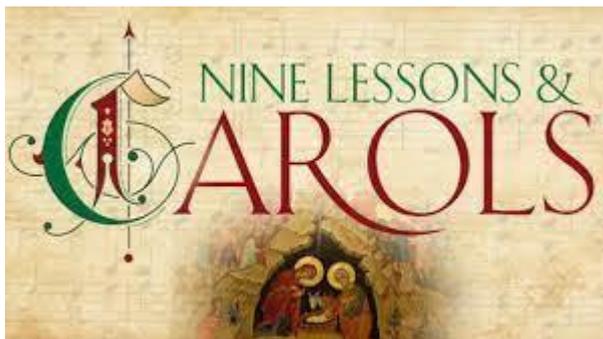
As the year moves on our attention turns to November, the month of remembrance. Early in the month at All Saints and All Souls, we will remember not only the saints of old but the everyday loved ones whom we see no more especially those who have died in the past year. On the Sunday 13th we will commemorate Remembrance Sunday as usual.

It is not too soon to begin to think about Christmas Services.

11th December at 3.00 p.m. the service of **Carols by Candlelight** at Old Hamsey church. Wrap up warm and bring a torch.

13th **Carols at the College** 6.00 p.m. follows on from the Plumpton College Christmas Fayre. Children from Plumpton school will sing to us. Last year we had visiting goats – hopefully a donkey they year. Refreshments.

18th December 6.00 p.m. **Carols by Candlelight** All Saints Plumpton Green. Refreshments

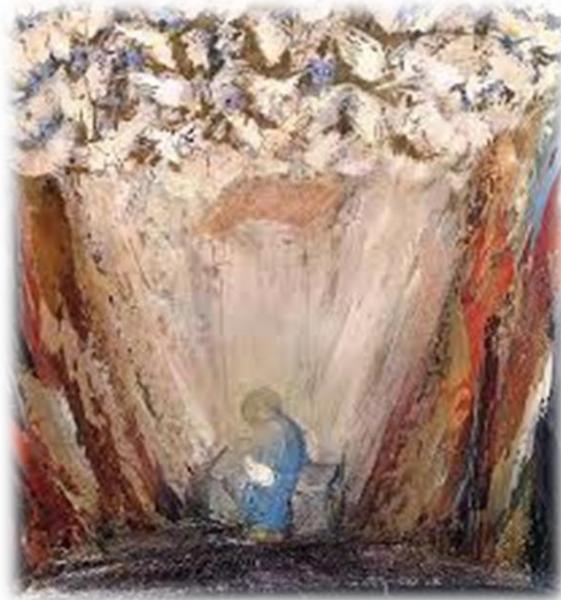


23rd December 5.00 p.m.
The traditional service
of **Nine Lessons and Carols**,
St Peter
Offham. Refreshments.

24th December Christmas
Eve – **Crib Service** All Saints Plumpton Green – a service for
children but all welcome! Refreshments.

24th December 11.30 p.m. **Midnight Mass** All Saints
Plumpton.

25th December **Christmas Day Eucharist** 9.45 a.m. St Peter Offham, 11.00 a.m. All Saints Plumpton.



William Congdon 'Nativity'

But before I sign off – a little silliness from another Parish Magazine:

A letter was received at a village church from TV Licensing addressed to the 'The Present Occupier' and wondering why there was no record of a TV licence. The churchwarden replied: 'The Present Occupier is God. He took up residence in 1870 when His house was opened and consecrated. As He is an all-seeing God, He really has no need for a television set.'

Rev Anne

revannedunlop@gmail.com

Parish Office 01273 890006

