

Wilden with Colmworth & Ravensden St Mary Keysoe with St Dunstan Bolnhurst

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NEWSLETTER

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Harvest Festival

Whilst it is right that we should always be thankful for ‘...all God’s gifts around us are sent from Heaven above...’ and that we should ‘...then thank the Lord, O thank the Lord for all His love’, this feast has always been called Harvest Festival and ‘Harvest Thanksgiving’ is something quite different.

It is hard to be thankful in tough times such as the world is going through in this Pandemic. And whilst we are also reminded in another old hymn to ‘count your blessings name them one by one...and it will surprise you what the Lord has done’, celebrating with happy thankfulness doesn’t always come easily. We’ve also had very strange weather this year that most would see as evidence of climate change, and we know from the news that nationally (and in our Parishes locally) our farmers have struggled with the Harvest, especially wheat, and we are warned the price of bread and other flour based products may well increase.

But the church uses the words ‘Festival’ and ‘Feast’ to mark all sorts of occasions in the church’s year. The ‘Easter Anthems’ inspired by words from the New and Old Testaments in the Bible state ‘Christ our Passover Lamb has been sacrificed for us – therefore let us celebrate the feast’. It always seemed strange to me as I was growing up hearing these Easter Anthems that we should *celebrate* a sacrifice, especially a human sacrifice, and most especially the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. But we celebrate and mark the Festivals of the church whether they are joyful and happy like Easter and Christmas, or sad like Good Friday when Jesus was crucified, or many saints days remembering those martyrs who died for their faith – St Paul, St Peter, St George, St Margaret to name a few of the many who suffered. And as I lead Holy Communion Services, I am reminded I am the ‘Celebrant’ even as we mark the death of Jesus in His broken body and shed blood. So this year, as we celebrate Harvest Festival perhaps more soberly than usual in these difficult times, we can still be thankful for all God’s love and blessings to us. But also the hope that is at the heart of the Christian faith that even in suffering and death there is also glorious resurrection and eternal life.

As the ‘Easter Anthems’ continue – ‘Christ has been raised from the dead; the first fruits of them that sleep. For as by man came death; by man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die; even so in Christ shall all be made alive!’

So I continue to pray and wish you God’s peace and His blessings at this time and especially as we celebrate together our Harvest Festival.

Timothy Wilson