

No. 11: October – “Come Ye Thankful People Come!”

On October 22nd, Holy Trinity is celebrating its Harvest Festival. This year we are focussing our support on CART, the Huddersfield based Christian African Relief Trust, one of our Mission Partners.



We have a collection box for items to be collected for CART throughout the year and these are blessed each month before being taken to be packed into shipping containers and sent out to receiving churches in Africa,

This year CART's harvest appeal is for dried and tinned food for refugees arriving in Eritrea and orphans in Malawi.

Read more about the work of CART here:
<http://www.cart-yorkshire.co.uk/>

Living in an urban area of a developed country in 2017 it can be hard to appreciate the importance of celebrating 'harvest home' when 'All is safely gathered in, ere the winter storms begin', but even a couple of generations ago, food supplies in the UK were not as reliable as today without the benefits of easy imports, frozen produce and modern agricultural techniques.

Perhaps we should sing this modernised version of the famous harvest hymn.....



*We plough the fields with tractors,
With drills we sow the land;
But growth is still the wondrous gift
Of God's almighty hand.
We add our fertilisers
To help the growing grain,
But for its full fruition
It needs God's sun and rain.*

..... or even this more honest parody by Clive Sampson, entitled 'Hymn of the Scientific Farmers':

*We squirt the fields and scatter
Our phosphates on the ground:
'Organic waste' and 'humus'
We do not understand.*

*We slaughter trees in thousands
To sell for what they're worth;
No stems to hold the water
No roots to bind the earth.*

This photo, dating from the mid-1960s shows a harvest celebration held in the Parish Hall. For many years harvest suppers for the whole church family were an important part of the church's social calendar with entertainments of all sorts.



In the church archives I came across this report from the October 1883 edition of Holy Trinity's parish magazine [which came with a national publication quaintly named 'Home News for Heart and Hearth'] which paints a delightful image of harvest from a bygone age:

"The Huddersfield Weekly News gave the following account of Trinity's Harvest Thanksgiving: 'The successful ingathering of the harvest was celebrated by a special service, last Thursday night. As is customary, great care and good taste had been displayed, chiefly by ladies of the congregation in adorning the interior of the building. At the base of the font was a collection of fruit, vegetables, ferns &c. , around it entwined a wreath of berries, and immediately above the wreath were placed flowers of many varieties and varied hue, including sunflowers, asters, ferns &c. A sheaf of wheat rising from the centre crowned a very artistic arrangement, and the whole was greatly admired. The lectern presented a very pleasing spectacle; it was exquisitely neat, and not over-decorated. Some of the choicest flowers, fruit, corn, maiden-hair fern, &c., were comprised in its embellishment. The pulpit and chancel rails, amongst other things, were adorned with heather, corn, the lushest fruit of the vine, and bullrushes, while the choir stalls had also received attention. There was a splendid display of the choicest of earth's products in the east window sill. The gas standards and the several window sills around the church had not been forgotten, and well repaid the care bestowed upon them, and the decorators are to be congratulated upon the result of their exertions.

"The service was opened by the singing of the hymn commencing 'Come Ye Thankful People Come.' The prayers were read by the Vicar, Rev. T.H. Sharpe, M.A. and Rev. C.M. Sharpe, M.A. curate; the first lesson by the Rev. Henry Askwith, Vicar of All Souls, Haley Hill, Halifax and the second lesson by the Rev. H.H. Rose, Vicar of Slaithwaite. The anthem selected was Beethoven's 'Hallelujah'. The preacher was the Rev. Henry Askwith and he chose for his text the twenty third psalm 'Praise is comely for the upright'."

Our 2017 harvest celebration may not be as grand affair as that of 1883, but we should be equally as thankful for what we have and mindful of those who are in need of aid (and fairer trade) to survive the winter's storms.

To quote another hymn we'll sing this harvest:

*In the just reward of labour,
God's will is done;
in the help we give our neighbour,
God's will is done;
in our world-wide task of caring
for the hungry and despairing
in the harvests we are sharing,
God's will is done.*

[Fred Pratt Green 1903 – 2000]

Andy Barber
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