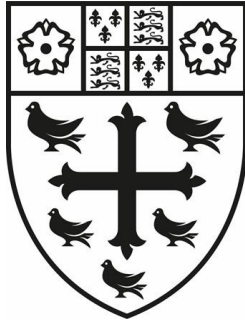


Westminster Abbey



National Harvest Service

Thursday 16th October 2025
Noon



BUCKINGHAM PALACE

Today is a most wonderful way to celebrate our Lord's bounty through this year's National Harvest Service in the magnificent setting of Westminster Abbey.

It is a time of year to give thanks to the custodians of our land in a tradition that stretches back centuries, yet remains ever relevant. Their labour is the foundation of our food production, the heartbeat of rural communities and vital to the protection of the natural landscapes we all treasure so dearly. The particular resolve and resilience they have demonstrated through the challenges of our changing climate in recent years deserves our utmost admiration and gratitude — particularly in a year in which the weather has made growing anything so very difficult. Our hearts go out to those who are struggling especially, as Winter approaches, those with livestock.

I am so pleased that there are so many volunteers and others at this Service who are working to deliver surplus food to those most in need. This includes those working tirelessly with my Coronation Food Project. Your ingenuity, kindness and determination that no one should go hungry creates a life-line of food supply to thousands every week.

Celebrating the harvest by gathering together to give thanks for the food from the land is something that is shared by communities all over the world and I am so delighted that this tradition is continuing with a National Harvest Service in a different part of the country every Autumn. As you honour that tradition here today, may it be an opportunity to reflect anew on the refrain from that great harvest-tide hymn:

*All good gifts around us are sent from heav'n above;
Then thank the Lord, O thank the Lord, for all His love.*

CHARLES R.

INTRODUCTION

The first National Harvest Service was inaugurated at Westminster Abbey in 2013 by Her Majesty The Queen, when Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Cornwall, as part of Love British Food's campaign to rekindle the tradition of celebrating the Harvest. It was the first harvest service to be held here in half a century, since 1966. Since then, the service has taken place in a different part of the country every autumn, returning to the Abbey today on World Food Day.

The tradition of celebrating Harvest Festival in churches began in 1843 when, at Morwenstow in Cornwall, The Reverend Robert Hawker conducted a special thanksgiving service at his church and blessed the crops, revitalising the festival of Rogation, a feast-day especially devoted to asking for God's blessing on agriculture. A year later, The Reverend Henry Alford's hymn, 'Come, ye thankful people, come, raise the song of harvest-home!' was published, and we will be singing this hymn today.

Today's service gives thanks to our farmers for the food they produce, whilst also acknowledging that many people do not have enough to eat. Love British Food, the social enterprise that has led the organisation of the service, has teamed up with food redistribution and food bank charities - Trussell, The Felix Project, the Coronation Food Project, and City Harvest - to thank the many volunteers and others who serve in this sector, and to pray for the relief of hunger and suffering.

There is much to celebrate. We are fortunate to live in a country with four seasons, 'the warmth to swell the grain, the breezes and the sunshine, and soft refreshing rain'; a wonderfully varied topography with fells, dales, moors, plains, valleys, marsh, pasture, and coast; and a vibrant farming community that, despite relentless challenges, continues to succeed in producing some of the highest quality food in the world. From our cattle and sheep breeds - which are the envy of the world - to our wonderful dairy farmers, to the abundance and rich variety of fruit and vegetables, to nature's harvest, we are indeed truly blessed.

*Alexia Robinson
Founder and CEO, Love British Food
Director, National Harvest Service*

Members of the congregation are requested kindly to refrain from using private cameras, video, or sound recording equipment. Please ensure that mobile phones and other electronic devices are switched off. The whole of the church is served by a hearing loop. Users should turn their hearing aid to the setting marked T.

The service is conducted by The Very Reverend Dr David Hoyle KCVO MBE, Dean of Westminster.

The service is sung by the Choir of Westminster Abbey, directed by Andrew Nethsingha, Organist & Master of the Choristers.

The organ is played by Matthew Jorysz, Sub-Organist.

Music before the service:

Paul Greally, Assistant Organist, plays

Nun danket alle Gott BWV 657 Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

Tree of peace Judith Weir (b 1954)

Ich dank dir, Dieterich Buxtehude (1637–1707)
lieber Herre BuxWV 194

The trees unfold Judith Weir

Gelobet seist du, Jesu Christ IGB 15 Georg Böhm (1661–1733)

The Mayor of Southwark, Councillor Sunny Lambe, and the High Sheriff of Greater London, John Garbutt, are received. Presentations are made and they are conducted to their seats.

The Right Worshipful the Lord Mayor of Westminster, Councillor Paul Dimoldenberg, is received. Presentations are made and he is conducted to his seat. All stand and then sit.

All stand.

Her Majesty The Queen is received. Presentations are made.

ORDER OF SERVICE

The choir sings the Introit

OCULI omnium in te sperant Domine
et tu das escam illorum in tempore opportuno.

Gloria tibi Domine. Amen.

*The eyes of all wait upon you, O Lord,
and you give them their food in due season.*

Glory to you, O Lord. Amen.

Charles Wood (1866–1926)

Psalm 145: 16

All sing the Hymn, during which the procession, together with Her Majesty The Queen, moves to places in Quire and the Sacrarium.



COME, ye thankful people, come,
raise the song of harvest-home!
All be safely gathered in,
ere the winter storms begin;
God, our Maker, doth provide
for our wants to be supplied;
come to God's own temple, come;
raise the song of harvest-home!

All the world is God's own field,
fruit unto his praise to yield;
wheat and tares together sown,
unto joy or sorrow grown;
first the blade and then the ear,
then the full corn shall appear:
grant, O harvest Lord, that we
wholesome grain and pure may be.

For the Lord our God shall come,
and shall take his harvest home;
from his field shall purge away
all that doth offend, that day;
give his angels charge at last
in the fire the tares to cast,
but the fruitful ears to store
in his garner evermore.

Then, thou Church triumphant, come,
raise the song of harvest-home;
all be safely gathered in,
free from sorrow, free from sin,
there for ever purified
in God's garner to abide:
come, ten thousand angels, come,
raise the glorious harvest-home!

St George's Windsor 259 NEH
George Elvey (1816–93)

Henry Alford (1810–71)

The Very Reverend Dr David Hoyle KCVOMBE, Dean of Westminster, gives the Bidding

NOW, our God, we give thanks to you and praise your glorious name, for all things come from you, and of your own have we given you. +

With harvest home, we gather in this holy place to praise God who creates, redeems, and sustains us. We meet to celebrate the richness of creation and the careful stewardship that precedes the harvest. This is a day of thanksgiving. Yet we must also acknowledge that, in the midst of such plenty, there is hardship, hunger, and the slow suffering of food poverty. In penitence for a responsibility that we all share; we gather here to renew our commitment to justice. The gifts we are given are given for us all. The great in-gathering of harvest must surely be given out to all. So, this is also a day to proclaim a renewed hope and determination. We look and pray for a harvest of righteousness.

All sit. Charles Dance OBE, actor, reads

LET'S gather as a band of one, in symphony across the land
To thank our Lord for Harvest reaped and gratefully as one let's stand
To think of those, for all their toil who've readied plough, who've nurtured soil
The farmers in the fields, the cold; the hardened hands, the fens, the wold
So many aspects of a life, a challenge most will never know
For we in houses snugly sleep, whilst in the biting winds and snow
The men and women of their earth prepare a ground for springtime seeds
That one day will produce our bread, our milk, our food, our daily needs
And through this nation memories walk, a depth of image ever strong
Of distant days and innocence; of man and Shire Horse ploughing on
Of wheatsheaves standing in the sun and laughing land girls coming home
The orchards, meadows, hedgerow birds; the pitchfork and the haystack dome
Though now they rest in picture form, the people, beasts and tools long gone
The land they worked is constant still; the boundaries, fields, the far off hill
The skylark's song remains the same; a trout will rise below the mill
For all the romance of these scenes, look not through glass of tinted rose
Ask farming people what it's like and though the job is one they chose
It takes its toll; the troughs are long and cold and deep
The flattened barley, missing sheep and so much more that blights their show
But on and on and on they go, until that day of days has come
The tractor's parked, the combine's quiet; the crop is in, the Harvest done.

The Harvest

Henry Birtles (b 1966)

All remain seated for the Harvest Offertory Procession

The Harvest Torch, carried by Tom Bradshaw, President, National Farmers' Union, precedes a procession of produce through the Abbey, led by Sophie Gregory, a dairy farmer from Dorset, and carried by children from John Perryn Primary School, Ealing, and Diana Nobis, volunteer, City Harvest. The offerings are received by the Dean and placed near the High Altar, during which the choir sings the Anthem

FEAR not, O land, be glad and rejoice; for the Lord will do great things. Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field: for the pastures of the wilderness do spring, for the tree beareth her fruit, the fig tree and the vine do yield their strength. Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord, your God. The floors shall be full of wheat. And ye shall eat in plenty, and praise the name of the Lord your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you. Amen.

Edward Elgar (1857–1934)

after Joel 2: 24, 26

The Dean says

ALMIGHTY God, Father of all mercies, we thank you for all the blessings of the harvest. Accept, we pray, these humble gifts, and the labours of all who have worked the land, which we here offer with thankful and joyful hearts, to the praise of your holy name. **Amen.**

Matt Baker MBE, broadcaster & producer, reads

FOR the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land with flowing streams, with springs and underground waters welling up in valleys and hills, a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey, a land where you may eat bread without scarcity, where you will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron and from whose hills you may mine copper. You shall eat your fill and bless the Lord your God for the good land that he has given you.

Take care that you do not forget the Lord your God, by failing to keep his commandments, his ordinances, and his statutes, which I am commanding you today. When you have eaten your fill and have built fine houses and live in them, and when your herds and flocks have multiplied, and your silver and gold is multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied, then do not exalt yourself, forgetting the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, who led you through the great and terrible wilderness, an arid waste-land with poisonous snakes and scorpions. He made water flow for you from flint rock, and fed you in the wilderness with manna that your ancestors did not know, to humble you and to test you, and in the end to do you good. Do not say to yourself, 'My power and the might of my own hand have gained me this wealth.' But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, so that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your ancestors, as he is doing today.

Deuteronomy 8: 7–18

Thanks be to God.

The choir sings the Psalm

THOU shalt shew us wonderful things in thy righteousness,
O God of our salvation :

thou that art the hope of all the ends of the earth, and of them
that remain in the broad sea.

Who in his strength setteth fast the mountains :
and is girded about with power.

Who stilleth the raging of the sea :
and the noise of his waves, and the madness of the people.

They also that dwell in the uttermost parts of the earth shall be
afraid at thy tokens :

thou that makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to
praise thee.

Thou visitest the earth, and blessest it :
thou makest it very plenteous.

The river of God is full of water :
thou preparest their corn, for so thou providest for the earth.

Thou waterest her furrows, thou sendest rain into the little valleys
thereof :

thou makest it soft with the drops of rain, and blessest the
increase of it.

Thou crownest the year with thy goodness :
and thy clouds drop fatness.

They shall drop upon the dwellings of the wilderness :
and the little hills shall rejoice on every side.

The folds shall be full of sheep :
the valleys also shall stand so thick with corn,
that they shall laugh and sing.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son :
and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be :
world without end. Amen.

Charlotte Hill OBE, Chief Executive Officer, The Felix Project, reads

JESUS said, 'I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, "What will we eat?" or "What will we drink?" or "What will we wear?" For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.'

Matthew 6: 25–33

Thanks be to God.

All stand to sing the Hymn



WE plough the fields, and scatter
The good seed on the land,
But it is fed and watered
By God's almighty hand;
He sends the snow in winter,
The warmth to swell the grain,
The breezes and the sunshine,
And soft refreshing rain:

*All good gifts around us
Are sent from heaven above,
Then thank the Lord, O thank the Lord,
For all his love.*

He only is the Maker
Of all things near and far,
He paints the wayside flower,
He lights the evening star.
The winds and waves obey him,
By him the birds are fed;
Much more to us, his children,
He gives our daily bread:

We thank thee then, O Father,
For all things bright and good;
The seed-time and the harvest,
Our life, our health, our food.
No gifts have we to offer
For all thy love imparts,
But that which thou desirest,
Our humble, thankful hearts:

Wir Pflügen 262 NEH
Johann Schulz (1747–1800)

Matthias Claudius (1740–1815)
translated by Jane Campbell (1817–78)

The Right Reverend Dr Andrew Rumsey, Bishop of Ramsbury, gives the Address

The choir sings the Anthem

WE bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; for thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. And, we beseech thee, give us that due sense of all thy mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful, and that we shew forth thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives; by giving up ourselves to thy service, and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Bob Chilcott (b 1955)

from A General Thanksgiving
The Book of Common Prayer 1662

The Reverend Helena Bickley-Percival, Minor Canon & Sacrist, says

Let us pray.

All remain seated or kneel

In this house of prayer, let us give thanks for the richness of creation; for the bounty of the earth; for the beauty and diversity of the seasons; for all who contribute to the harvest, and share its riches with the world.

Jessica Stewart, a young farmer from County Durham, says

LET us give thanks to God for our farmers; for their tireless devotion through challenges, adversity, and the passage of years; for their care for the land, livestock, and crops in their charge. Let us pray for a blessing upon their vocation and wellbeing, for their families, local communities, and all who support them in their task.

Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

Dan Frith, Manager, Wandsworth Foodbank, says

LET us give thanks to God for the power of food to bring people together; our common needs and common cause. Let us pray for God's blessing upon all that serves to build community, honour creation, and provide healthy, sustainable food for the good and flourishing of all.

Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

Pam Hutchinson, volunteer, City Harvest, says

LET us give thanks to God, the Lord of the harvest, for the commandment to love our neighbour and to share our blessings with all. Let us pray for those experiencing poverty and hunger at home and abroad; for the charities, agencies, and individuals whose creativity and ingenuity share the riches of the harvest with all.

Lord, in your mercy

hear our prayer.

Joe Bramall, a young farmer from Cheshire, says

LET us pray for good stewardship of our natural environment and resources; for the celebration and protection of all in our care; for all suffering the effects of a changing climate; that we may face the challenges of our time with the gifts of wisdom, courage, humility, and hope.

Lord, in your mercy

hear our prayer.

The Reverend David Stanton, Canon in Residence, concludes

In confidence and hope let us pray in the words that Jesus taught us:

OUR Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

All stand to sing the Hymn



ALL creatures of our God and King,
Lift up your voice and with us sing
Alleluia, alleluia!

Thou burning sun with golden beam,
thou silver moon with softer gleam:

*O praise him, O praise him,
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!*

Thou rushing wind that art so strong,
ye clouds that sail in heaven along,
O praise him, Alleluia!

Thou rising morn, in praise rejoice,
ye lights of evening, find a voice:

Thou flowing water, pure and clear,
make music for thy Lord to hear,
Alleluia, alleluia!

Thou fire so masterful and bright,
that givest man both warmth and light:

Dear mother earth, who day by day
unfoldest blessings on our way,
O praise him, Alleluia!

The flowers and fruits that in thee grow,
let them his glory also show:

Let all things their Creator bless,
and worship him in humbleness,
O praise him, Alleluia!
Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son,
and praise the Spirit, three in One:

Lasst uns erfreuen 263 NEH

Francis of Assisi (1182–1226)

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)

translated by William Draper (1855–1933)

after a melody in Geistliche Kirchengesäng Cologne, 1623

All sit. Simon Armitage CBE, Poet Laureate, reads

DRESSED with a length of lining paper
the wooden trestle table sagged and groaned
with the heavy bounty of home produce.
Cabbages mooned like the faces of saints

in da Vinci's *Last Supper*; onions
were squat bottles of precious oils
on a market stall next to sacred orbs
of beefsteak tomatoes and artichoke crowns.

But the bread was the thing, a giant loaf
in wheat sheaf form, baked and glazed
to a gold that might have glowed in the dark,
stove-heat cradled in its plaits and folds.

Alone after Sunday School in the church hall
I stood on tiptoes, poked my finger
through the toasted crust and hooked out
the plain white flesh – I wanted to taste

the words of the hymn, I wanted to feast
on food made only of summer and rain.

Bread of Heaven

Simon Armitage (b 1963)

The choir sings the Anthem

LET all the world in every corner sing,
My God and King!

The heavens are not too high,
His praise may thither fly;
The earth is not too low,
His praises there may grow.

Let all the world in every corner sing,
My God and King!

The Church with psalms must shout,
No door can keep them out;
But above all the heart
Must bear the longest part.

Let all the world in every corner sing,
My God and King!

Ralph Vaughan Williams

George Herbert (1593–1633)

All stand. The Dean pronounces the Blessing

GO forth into the world in peace; be of good courage; hold fast
that which is good; render to no-one evil for evil; strengthen
the faint-hearted; support the weak; help the afflicted; honour all
people; love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy
Spirit; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and
the Holy Spirit, be amongst you and remain with you always.
Amen.

All sing

GOD save our gracious King,
G Long live our noble King,
God save The King.
Send him victorious,
Happy and glorious,
Long to reign over us:
God save The King.

All remain standing as the procession, together with Her Majesty The Queen, moves to the west end of the Abbey church

Music after the service:

Grand Chœur in D

Alexandre Guilmant (1837–1911)

The bells of the Abbey are rung

Members of the congregation are requested kindly to remain in their seats until directed to move by the Honorary Stewards

The National Harvest Service has been kindly supported by:

C.Hoare & Co, The Fishmongers' Company,
Morrisons, and Savills

With thanks also to:

HG Walter butchers and Calluna flowers for the Floral Arch

The National Farmers' Union for the tractor and trailer of food
Morrisons for the harvest display at the Great West Doors

Tywardreath Bakery, South Cornwall for the Wheat Sheaf loaves
made with Wildfarmed flour and Cornish Heritage grain

Smithfield Market for the barrows of food

The Felix Project volunteers for
the crates of apples collected from orchards in Kent

All food is being donated by City Harvest and The Felix Project to:

The Abbey Centre

Tachbrook Youth & Social Club

King George's Hostel

Mary Smith Pantry