



# Harvest Festival

## Suffolk Heights Benefice

Parishes of All Saints', Chedburgh; All Saints', Chevington;  
St Mary the Virgin, Depden; St Edmund's, Hargrave;  
St Mary's, Hawkedon; and All Saints', Rede.



**FCN** | THE FARMING  
COMMUNITY  
NETWORK

25  
YEARS

SUPPORTING THE FARMING COMMUNITY

## Order of Service

### Opening Verse:

The land has yielded its harvest: God our God has blessed us.  
Psalm 67:6

The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it

**All: Let the heavens be glad and let the earth rejoice**

**Hymn:** Come ye thankful people come

Father in heaven all good gifts come from you. You send the sun shine and the rain, and it is through your love and care that we enjoy the harvest time. Thank you for providing so richly for our needs and help us to share the good things we have with those who have little or nothing.

Lord in your mercy

**All: Hear our prayer**

Let us confess our forgetfulness of God, our failure to give thanks and the ways in which we have wasted the gifts of creation.

We confess to you  
our lack of care for the world you have given us.  
Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

We confess to you  
our selfishness in not sharing the earth's bounty fairly.  
Christ, have mercy.

**Christ, have mercy.**

We confess to you  
our failure to protect resources for others.  
Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

May God show us his mercy, restore us in his likeness and give us generous hearts and lives.

**Amen**

**Thanksgiving:**

The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it;  
the world and all that lives in it.

**Thanks be to God.**

All the animals of the forest are the Lord's  
and so are the cattle upon a thousand hills.

**Thanks be to God.**

The Lord makes grass grow for the cattle  
and plants for us to cultivate.

**Thanks be to God.**

The Lord brings forth food from the earth,  
wine that gladdens our hearts,  
oil to make our faces shine, bread  
that sustains our hearts. **Thanks be to God.**

The Lord makes springs pour water into the valleys;  
it flows between the mountains.

**Thanks be to God.**

The birds of the air nest by the waters;  
they sing among the branches.

**Thanks be to God.**

For all who cooperate and collaborate with  
God to bring food to our tables,

**Thanks be to God**

For farmers, growers, packers and processors,  
for breeders, stock people, shepherds and dairy-farmers,

**Thanks be to God**

For distributors, hauliers, retailers and stall-holders,  
for chefs, cooks and creative entrepreneurs,

**Thanks be to God**

**Amen.**

**First Reading:** Deuteronomy 8:6-10

**Hymn:** For the healing of the nations

**Second Reading:** Matthew 13 18-30

**Address**

**Hymn:** We plough the fields and scatter

**Offering of Gifts:**

We bring before you the offering of topsoil from the earth, the precious element that sustains life, and a symbol of God's whole creation and goodness.

**The land has yielded its harvest; our God has blessed us.**

We bring the offering of wheat and all cereals, the potatoes and all the crops from our fields.

**The land has yielded its harvest; our God has blessed us.**

We bring the offering of the shepherd's crook, a symbol of the flocks and herds of animals and birds that give us meat.

**The land has yielded its harvest; our God has blessed us.**

We bring the offering of flowers, fruits, berries and vegetables from orchards and gardens.

**The land has yielded its harvest; our God has blessed us.**

We bring the offering of seeds for next year's crops, symbol of the trust we put in you, O God.

**The land has yielded its harvest; our God has blessed us.**

We bring this Harvest Loaf as both a symbol of the fruits of human labour and of the means by which we have the strength to labour.  
**The land has yielded its harvest; our God has blessed us.**

We bring the offering of an empty bowl as symbol of harvests that fail and of those around the world who suffer from hunger and starvation. Keep us mindful of their needs and may your goodness towards us bear fruits of compassion and generosity.

Almighty and everlasting God, we offer you our hearty thanks for earth in their seasons. Give us grace to use them rightly, to your glory, for our own well-being and for the relief of those in need; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

**All sing:**

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow,  
Praise him all creatures here blow,  
Praise him above, angelic host,  
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen**

**Hymn:** All creatures of our God and King

### **Intercessions**

Let us offer our prayers to God for the life of the world and for all God's people in their daily life and work.

God, the beginning and the end of all things in your providence and care you watch unceasingly over all creation;

We offer our prayers that in us and in all your people your will may be done, according to your wise and loving purpose in Christ Jesus our Lord  
Lord of all life:

**Hear our prayer**

We pray for all through whom we receive substance and life; for all farming families who work so hard, often in adverse conditions, to provide our food and look after our countryside; for packers, processors, distributors

and retailers.

Lord of all life:

**Hear our prayer**

We pray for young people in farming, for Young Farmers Clubs, for those studying at agricultural colleges and for the next generation of farmers as they bring new skills, energy and vision to the care of the countryside and the production of food in sustainably ways.

Lord of all life:

**Hear our prayer**

We pray for farmers and their families who are under stress as they face uncertainty and unpredictability in global food markets, and who struggle with increasing regulation and requirements; for those who want to leave farming or retire, especially those who are tenants, but do have the wherewithal to do so; for those whose lives are affected by Bovine Tuberculosis and who find it hard to see a way forward.

Lord of all life:

**Hear our prayer**

For the Farming Help charities, especially for the work of The Farming Community Network, as they work together to alleviate stress and support farming families; for FCN volunteers who walk with farming families as friends and companions, that they may do so with integrity, insight and understanding. Pray for their safety and well-being as they work with distressing and challenging situations; may their Christian faith sustain them.

Lord of all life:

**Hear our prayer**

We pray for a just and fair relationship between the farmer and the retailer; for researchers and academics, for food writers and political commentators, for government officials and all those involved in shaping public policies and attitudes to food production and consumption; for the reduction in food waste and a new valuing and honouring of the fruits of the earth.

Lord of all life:

**Hear our prayer**

We pray for governments and aid agencies and those areas of the world where there is disaster, drought and starvation; for all involved in agricultural research who face the challenge to produce more food for a growing world, without harming the environment; and grant us all generous hearts in the face of immediate crises.

Lord of all life:

**Hear our prayer**

We offer ourselves to your service, asking that by the Spirit at work in us others may receive a rich harvest of love and joy and peace.

Lord of all life:

**Hear our prayer**

God of grace as you are ever at work in your creation, so fulfil your wise and loving purpose in us and in all for who we pray, that with them and in all that you have made, your glory may be revealed and the whole earth give praise to you, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

**Hymn:** Holy Holy Holy Lord God Almighty

**Blessing**

God the Father, who created the world, give you grace to be wise stewards of his creation. **Amen**

God the Son, who redeemed the world, inspire you to go out as labourers into his harvest. **Amen**

God the Holy Spirit, whose breath fills the whole of creation, help you bear his fruits of love, joy and peace. **Amen**

And the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you now and forever more. **Amen**

## Why does FCN exist?

Farming is not just a job – it’s a way of life. It is a wonderful industry to work in, but it can also be inherently risky and volatile. Farmers are regularly forced to deal with issues on the farm that are beyond their control, such as animal disease, fluctuating market prices and the weather. Farming can also be a very isolating and lonely occupation, with farmers often spending long hours out in the field with little or no form of social interaction.

On top of their responsibilities on the farm, farm workers also deal with issues in their personal life, such as relationship breakdowns, physical health problems and bereavement.

Furthermore, with Britain having left the European Union and significant changes in domestic agricultural policy, many farmers face great uncertainty about the future of their farm business. All of this means that farmers and farming families across the UK are highly susceptible to poor mental wellbeing, including stress, anxiety and depression.

Simply talking about your problems is often the first step towards improved mental wellbeing. But because of the stigma surrounding mental health, many within the farming community have difficulty coming forward and admitting that they need help. Farmers generally also don’t discuss their issues with a friend or relative as they don’t wish to become a burden. More often than not, they prefer to discuss their issues in confidence with someone who they have no emotional attachment to and who will treat their situation without judgment – this is where FCN can help.

## What does FCN do?

We have a network of over 400 volunteers across England and Wales, many of whom are involved in farming, or have close links with agriculture, and therefore have a great understanding of the issues that farmers, farm workers and farming families regularly face.

Our volunteers provide free, confidential, pastoral and practical support to anyone who seeks help, regardless of whether the issue is personal or business-related.

In addition to local groups of volunteers, FCN runs a confidential national helpline (03000 111 999) and e-helpline ([help@fcn.org.uk](mailto:help@fcn.org.uk)) which is open every day of the year from 7am-11pm.

Our volunteers will “walk with” anyone who seeks support and help them find a positive way through their problems.

We have helped thousands of people deal with a variety of issues, including financial difficulties, animal disease, mental health and family disputes.

## How do FCN volunteers support the farming community?

FCN volunteers provide support in a number of ways. These can include support with paperwork, building relationships with bank managers, acting as family mediators and even supporting farmers through legal issues. More often than not, farm workers just need someone who will listen to them. FCN volunteers are on hand to provide a sympathetic ear, which is why our confidential helpline is such an important asset to those who seek our help.

Approximately 40 volunteers help with the running of the FCN helpline. Cases that come through the FCN helpline are usually referred to a local FCN volunteer, who will try and organise a face-to-face meeting with the person seeking help. It is entirely up to them how much support they need or want from FCN. We work with a variety of stakeholders critical to the successful outcome of cases. These include government bodies, agricultural organisations, other charities and healthcare services. Our volunteers provide support, facilitation and direct links to sympathetic professionals.

Through our FarmWell platform we provide the farming community with useful information around business resilience and personal wellbeing, helping farmers take a proactive approach in planning for the future, managing change and staying physically and mentally well.