

CHURCH SERVICES in SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER 2026

**10.30 am 6 SEPT UNITED SERVICE
HOLY COMMUNION ANDREAS
Rev Brian Evans Smith**

**10.30 am 13 SEPT BALLAUGH
MORNING PRAYER, Elaine Aulton**

**10.30 am 20 SEPT BALLAUGH
HOLY COMMUNION,
Rev Brian Evans Smith**

**10.30 am 27 SEPT BALLAUGH
MORNING Prayer, Gill Poole**

**10.30 am 4 OCT UNITED SERVICE OF
HOLY COMMUNION BALLAUGH
Rev Brian Evans Smith**

**10.30 am 11 OCT BALLAUGH
HARVEST PRAISE Gill Poole**

**10.30 am 18 OCT BALLAUGH
HOLY COMMUNION
Rev Brian Evans Smith**

**10.30 am 25 OCT BALLAUGH
MORNING PRAYER Elaine Aulton**

HARVEST REFLECTIONS FOR COUNTRY FOLK

On Sunday the 11th October our Ballaugh village church will celebrate the Harvest thanksgiving. In a recent poll, 67 per cent of parents, from all faiths and none, expressed warm memories of taking part in Christian harvest festivals, saying that they wanted their children to do the same. The perceived benefits were: giving thanks for the good things in our lives, teaching children where their food comes from and showing generosity to people in need.

Harvest is one of farming village's best-attended services. Even the smallest child can understand. The church is lovingly decorated with flowers and fruit. We sing our well-loved hymns: We Plough the Fields and Scatter, All Things Bright and Beautiful and Come, Ye Thankful People, Come. We bring up harvest gifts to the altar, destined for our local food bank. There's nothing better than joy; and harvest exemplifies a palpable sense of community, bounty and shared exuberance. Despite some gloomy modern prayers about our destruction of God's creation, this is a festival and God is good. "Consider the lilies of the field, they neither toil nor spin," as the Bible reading goes. "[King] Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these" (Matthew, vi, 28-30).

Harvest is more than a nostalgia trip for traditionalists. Certainly, older people revisit happy childhood memories and there is the aroma of apples stored for the winter and smoke from the post-harvest burning of the fields, and people make a corn dolly to take to church. However, recognising the cyclical nature of human existence — "for everything there is a season" (Ecclesiastes, iii, 1) — has what feels like a renewed modern resonance. Farmers' reports at harvest suppers offer insight into lives lived on the land. The TV series Clarkson's Farm has engendered a wider respect for farmers and a more sympathetic understanding of the problems that they face every year. Their livelihood is dependent almost entirely on the weather and other factors beyond their control. No prayer is perhaps more heartfelt than a farmer's prayer for rain — or for it to stop raining.

Small rural churches like ours often seem rather marginalised, yet harvest allows countryside communities a big moment of celebration. Harvest conveys a feeling of handing on the baton to the next generation. Christianity has been nothing but a source of comfort and joy: indeed the author John Buchan said that an atheist was a man who had "no invisible means of support". Harvest suppers showcase the glories of nature, coming to terms with not being in control, looking after the hungry and needy and the wonderful reading from St Matthew about the lilies of the field, advising against worrying about what to wear. They add up to a message that our mental health problems could be addressed if we looked not inwards but upwards and outwards, with gratitude at all the good gifts around us.

This year in Ballaugh our Harvest Thanksgiving Service takes place on Sunday 11th October at 10.30 am. The Ballaugh Young Farmers have been invited to attend. Do please come along and join us

**BALLAUGH CHURCH COMMUNITY LUNCH
takes place on the first Tuesday of the month at 12.30 pm
To be included please contact June on Tel: 897424**