

Harvest 2022

THANK  
YOU

TO OUR FARMERS!



Arthur Rank  
Centre

CONFIDENT RURAL CHRISTIANS

# Harvest 2022

# THANK YOU

## TO OUR FARMERS!

During the past two years, many people have become aware – some for the first time – of the vital role UK farms play in feeding our nation, while the food shortages we experienced in the early days of the COVID-19 lockdown reminded us how fragile the supply chain can be. There have also been other factors which have come to the fore in recent times which remind us of the fragility of the food chain which presents us with a challenge to feed the world. And every nation needs to play its part.

In these past months we have become aware how Ukraine has been a key player in keeping the world fed. It provided food for over 400 million people internationally. Maximo Torero, chief economist for the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation has said, 'My greatest fear is that the conflict continues – then we will have a situation of significant levels of food rises, in poor countries that were already in a weak financial situation. The number of chronically hungry people will grow significantly, if that is the case'. Ukraine supplies 12% of global wheat and was the biggest producer of sunflower oil. We now see thousands of acres of ravaged land in the Ukraine where crops would have been growing before the invasion and will there be able to be the usual planting to enable harvests for next year? Fertilizer has been produced in both Ukraine and Russia and those prices have now rocketed alongside the knock-on effects, including reduced harvest yields.

Whilst not wishing to minimise the world effects as mentioned above, the war has focussed attention on the importance and fragility of food security both abroad and at home. British farmers continue as they have done all through the Brexit volatility, Covid 19 uncertainty, weather crisis with the highest recorded temperatures on record due to climate change and many other challenges to stand ready to do what they can to ensure the public continues to have access to high quality, affordable, climate friendly food. Yet Farmers are facing dramatic cost increases, which threaten our ability to produce food.

Climate crisis and the rising global population and political instability are not going to disappear. Suddenly in a way we have not experienced before hunger has come into sharp focus both nationally (the rising growth of food banks) and world-wide. Whilst at the moment the richer nations may not be as affected by the crisis because they have more power, we do have a moral responsibility to play our part in focusing on food production. Minette Batters of the NFU has said, 'If we don't place importance on the production of food at home, then we import more food from the rest of the world. This would worsen the global situation'. It would also aggravate climate change when we should be working towards net zero.

The nation needs a food strategy that puts sustainable food production at its heart. Rather than the Agricultural community feeling they are being undermined constantly. We need government to work with the agricultural community to produce a food strategy to increase our food production as a country as today we produce less food than we have done for many years. We need to produce a food strategy which is long term to offer food security to this country and indeed the world. As Christians we should be lobbying for this, for indeed it is important for the sake of the Kingdom.

## What does the Bible say about harvest?

Creation, land, agriculture and farming are themes which run through the whole of the Bible. We have chosen three short passages that reveal different aspects of the way the writers of the Bible explored and understood the relationship between God and his creation.

As you plan your harvest celebrations, you may want to use these passages and reflections as the basis for a short talk at a service or harvest supper.

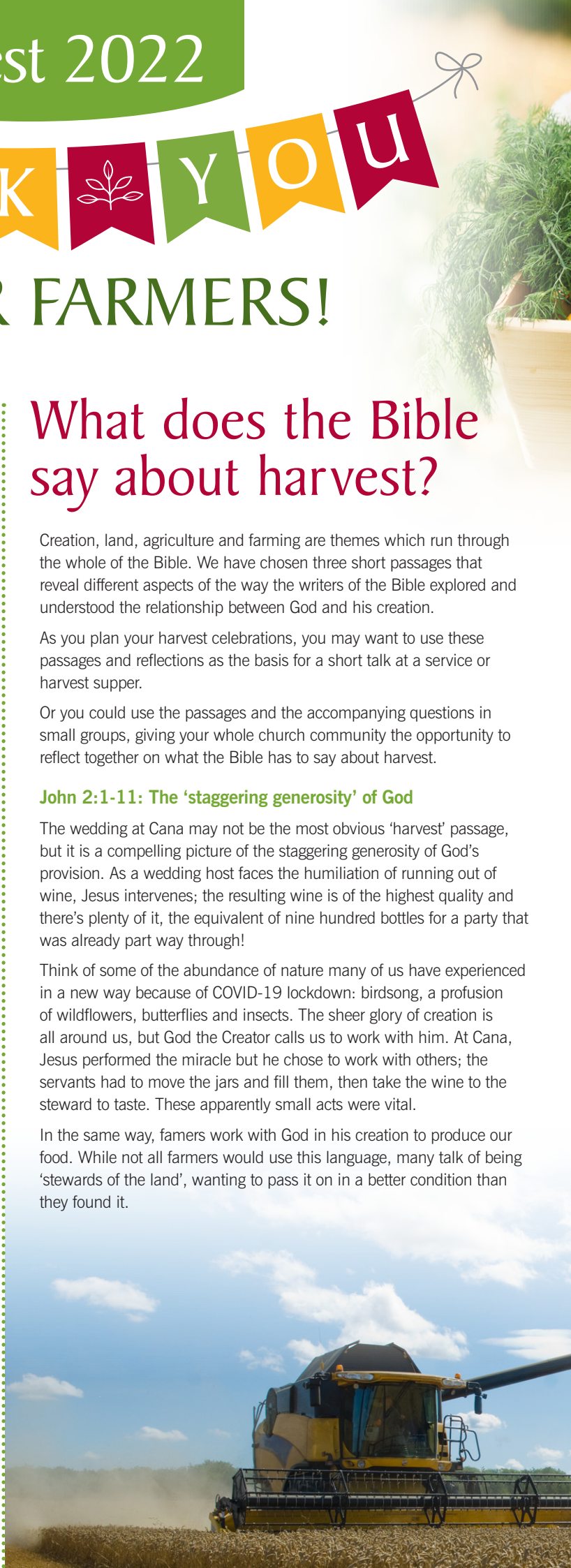
Or you could use the passages and the accompanying questions in small groups, giving your whole church community the opportunity to reflect together on what the Bible has to say about harvest.

### John 2:1-11: The 'staggering generosity' of God

The wedding at Cana may not be the most obvious 'harvest' passage, but it is a compelling picture of the staggering generosity of God's provision. As a wedding host faces the humiliation of running out of wine, Jesus intervenes; the resulting wine is of the highest quality and there's plenty of it, the equivalent of nine hundred bottles for a party that was already part way through!

Think of some of the abundance of nature many of us have experienced in a new way because of COVID-19 lockdown: birdsong, a profusion of wildflowers, butterflies and insects. The sheer glory of creation is all around us, but God the Creator calls us to work with him. At Cana, Jesus performed the miracle but he chose to work with others; the servants had to move the jars and fill them, then take the wine to the steward to taste. These apparently small acts were vital.

In the same way, farmers work with God in his creation to produce our food. While not all farmers would use this language, many talk of being 'stewards of the land', wanting to pass it on in a better condition than they found it.







# THANK YOU to our farmers!

This year, we want to encourage churches use their harvest festival celebrations as an opportunity to thank farmers for all they do for us.

As the effects of COVID-19 continue to unfold, it's impossible to predict the circumstances under which we will be celebrating our harvest festivals this year. Therefore, we've suggested ways in which you and your church community could celebrate either in individual households or as a gathered church.

Jesus chose to depend on the work of others, something we do all the time; every time we eat we depend on the farmers who produce our food. Farmers themselves work with many others to grow the food and get it to our tables. We all need to eat and so we are all dependent on this vast network of people to feed us.

But ultimately, of course, we are all dependant on the bounty of a Creator God.

As we come to understand that we are working with God's good gifts our task is imbued with a certain holiness. The things of the earth are important to God, so we should treat them and each other with respect.

- How has your view of food changed in the last months?
- Who would you like to thank today for the food that you've eaten?

## Psalm 104:1-15

This psalm reminds us of the Creator God on whom we all depend. It is a call to praise and worship God for all that he has done.

- What do you have to praise God for?
- Have you experienced creation differently in the last few months?

## Deuteronomy 26:1-11

This passage reminds us that all food is a gift from God. The offering of the first fruits also reminds the people of Israel of their history and all that God has done for them. As a response they are instructed to make sure that everyone gets a share, including the widow, the orphan and the stranger.

Farmers today are often very aware of the history of their farm and see themselves in a line of fellow stewards wanting to leave the land better than they found it.

- How has your perspective on food and creation changed this year?



## Celebrating harvest at home

- Have a special meal and include any produce you have grown yourself. Give thanks to God for the food he has given, and for the farmers who have grown it; we've written a special harvest grace which you can find alongside other prayers at the end of this material.
- Take some time to look at your buying habits and consider buying local, British and Fairtrade where you can. We realise that the economic impact of COVID-19 might make this difficult, so prioritise making the right choices for you and your family.
- Download and print out our special 'Thank you to our farmers!' poster and put it in your window ([arthurrankcentre.org.uk/harvest2020](http://arthurrankcentre.org.uk/harvest2020)).



## Gathering together as a church community

- Have a shared meal, aiming to sourcing your ingredients as locally as possible; why not see if members of your church community have homegrown produce to contribute? We've written a special harvest grace which you can find alongside other prayers at the end of this material.
- Commit to prioritising local, British and Fairtrade produce at all church gatherings wherever possible.
- Download and print our 'Thank you to our farmers!' poster and display it in a church window or on your noticeboard ([arthurrankcentre.org.uk/harvest2020](http://arthurrankcentre.org.uk/harvest2020)).

# PRAYERS

Creator God,  
the whole earth proclaims your glory.  
Field and forest, farm and garden all sing your  
praise!

As we gaze at the world around us  
we see your handiwork;  
your fingerprint is everywhere.  
This is your world; help us to enjoy it gently.  
In Jesus' name. Amen

Loving God,  
we give thanks for those who produce our food:  
for farmers and fishermen, factory and shop workers.  
We pray for those for whom this has been a difficult year:  
farmers who have battled the weather to grow food,  
delivery drivers and shop workers who kept working  
despite the pandemic.  
Help us to value and support each other.  
In Jesus' name. Amen.

## A HARVEST GRACE

Creator God,  
thank you for this food.  
Bless those who have produced and prepared it.  
Help us to enjoy it and learn to share it.  
In Jesus' name. Amen.



THANK YOU!

## Useful resources

Back British Farming ([countrysideonline.co.uk/back-british-farming](https://countrysideonline.co.uk/back-british-farming))  
Fairtrade Foundation ([fairtrade.org.uk](https://fairtrade.org.uk))



Arthur Rank  
Centre

CONFIDENT RURAL CHRISTIANS

[arthurrankcentre.org.uk](https://arthurrankcentre.org.uk)

[info@arthurrankcentre.org.uk](mailto:info@arthurrankcentre.org.uk) | 024 7685 3060

Find us on Facebook  /ArthurRankCentre • Follow us on Twitter  /ArthurRankCent

UK Registered Charity 1104300