

2021-10-03 ... 8m Sermon for Harvest ... Revd Canon Judy Hunt

Hebrews 1: 1-4 & 2: 5-12

Prayer

As it is our Harvest Celebration and as we're coming up to the COP 26 Climate Change conference, I want to pick out just one phrase from our epistle:

Hebrews 2:10

'It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist'

For whom and through whom all things exist ...

Harvest Celebrations actually started up as a way for church and landowners to 'control' the workforce from drinking too much at Harvest Time ... and at that time, they used to be centred entirely on giving thanks to God for his provision to us. Moving onto more recent times, we started to think more deeply about the production of food in terms of sustainable methods, animal welfare and protection of wildlife habitats ... that surely is more in line with the understanding that the rest of the world, of the created order does not exist for us ... but for God.

We've also come to realise that we all have a part to play in looking after this planet

– and not only the farmers. Yet – it is good to remember their role in food production

– and of all involved in the supply chain to get the food to our shop shelves.

This has been a difficult year again for many in the farming community and the supply chain. They are negotiating a 'triple threat' of challenges.

The weather is growing ever more unpredictable and more extreme – the link to climate change.

The shape of new agricultural policy and trade deals is beginning to emerge as Britain renegotiates many of its international relationships following its exit from the European Union, but there will be a significant lack of clarity around the details of this for some time to come.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created significant challenges for the farming community. As we know, the process of harvesting many of our crops is hugely reliant on migrant labour, with people coming to the UK for a season, living and working on local farms before returning home. Much of this travel has been curtailed by restrictions in response to COVID-19. Other farms had sought to increase their income by diversifying into farm shops, holiday lets and other activities; again, COVID-19 restrictions have made much of this activity impossible for long periods of time in the last two months years.

As we meet today, as we enjoy the Harvest displays, as we eat today – let's thank God for what he still does provide and let us pray for wisdom in the way we inhabit this world – which exists for God and through God.