



*Sometimes the Best Harvests Are
Unexpected and Appear in
Unusual Ways*

One of the most ancient traditions is the celebration of the harvest. I remember seeing a black stone cup from Crete done c. 1400 B.C. All around it are singing figures carrying sheaves of grain. In the Hebrew Scriptures there are many references to those “those who sow in tears will reap in joy”. On a personal note I’ve been gifted with samples of your summer garden abundance. Given this tradition that stretches over centuries

and many cultures it is natural to have a celebration for the abundance of the earth in our church. Since I arrived in Canada 39 years ago every church I served outdid itself with the gifts of the earth decorating the altar area...and rightly so. Like any caring parent the earth continues to feed and care for us year after year.

In the midst of this it may be worth while to pause and go beyond the fruits and vegetables and connect to their source—the CREATOR God who loves us all and has entrusted us with this fragile and yet strong planet. In fact one of our Eucharist prayers refers to “this, our island home.”

When I first started doing interim ministry I knew a couple who had run an antiques business for thirty-five years but were leaving for warmer climes and so started to liquidate. I asked them how they could leave all these beautiful things that had been part of their lives for decades. Bill half smiled and said, “We don’t own these things. We’re just the caretakers who make sure they get passed on to the next generation”. I remember he paused and looked straight at me. “It’s like the earth. Each of us has a lease on our share and we have to make sure the next tenant gets the best use from our patch”.

When we look at the world and our relationship with God, using Bill’s simple understanding of objects, our Harvest Festival can be seen in a slightly different way. Yes, it is a celebration of our hard garden work and yes, it acknowledges the land’s abundance. At the same time we want to take a moment to realize that each of us is like the earth. We are meant as a gift to each of us and we are called to honour and “use” the gift of the other carefully and gently. When we do we are celebrating the ultimate Gift Giver.

Have a joy-filled and happy Harvest time and Thanksgiving.