



ival in innovative ways because of the pandemic.

St Albans Cathedral

Among the most popular events of the year - and a centrepiece of the Church's Season of Creation - Harvest Festival may look different this year as parishes innovate in light of the Government's restrictions on gatherings to limit the spread of the virus.

The churches of St John (Hopwood) & St Luke (Heywood) in the Diocese of Manchester have already marked Harvest Festival in an outdoor interactive service.

Providing parishioners with a pack which included paper and crayons, the Revd Kirsty Screeton had scattered food items around the church



This all-age activity encouraged people to reflect on the source of their food and how it came to be in their hands.

She said: “[The items] we see can remind us that God is incredible and that sometimes he does the work himself but at other times God needs our help.

“For the vegetables - although God created it, gave it its colour and shape, in order for it to grow God needed someone to plant the seed, care for it, water it and pick it when it had grown.

“Harvest celebration means lots of things. It means helping those in need with our food donations, it means being thankful to God and those in
d has given us in gifts too.”



In Portsmouth, the festival will be used to gather food donations through a campaign known as ‘With Thankful Hearts.’ The project brings together local government, charities and churches.

Canon Bob White, vicar of St Mary’s Church, Fratton, and chair of local charity Hive, said: “The last few months, and in particular the period of lockdown, focused our awareness of the food supply chain and the many things we so often had taken for granted.

“We looked afresh at our lives and the things we use and enjoy every day and perhaps appreciated them more.”



Another churches taking on the challenge of marking Harvest Festival in a different different way are the parishes of Seaview, St Helens, Brading and Yaverland – which form the **benefice of Haven Churches** – on the Isle of Wight.

Volunteers have been instructed to “go to town” on bringing flora and fauna into the churches by the Revd Alison Morley.



re off the menu.

Instead the benefice is focussing elsewhere. Congregants are being asked to ‘sponsor trees’ for a community orchard. After worship, parishioners will be asked to put a name against a tree to be planted in the autumn.

The Revd Morley explained: “With so much uncertainty and fear around, the planting of trees is a visible and tangible sign of hope and of patience as we wait for the harvest in three- or four-years’ time.”

The churches are also prioritising their ‘Eco Market’, which provides income and charitable donations.



“I have so many people joining us in the Market," she explained.

“They’re coming for a chat and staying as a volunteer - even just to knit dish cloths!

“We currently have a strict six-volunteers-at-a-time limit in place but since reopening the church has made more new friends than we could ever have imagined.”

Source URL: <https://www.churchofengland.org/news-and-media/stories-and-features/innovative-harvest-festivals-planned-amid-covid-19-concerns>