



Farmers will speak of their commitment to fighting climate change during the Church of England's national online service.

Filmed across the Diocese of Leeds the service will feature reflections on climate change, farming and the beauty of nature. The reflections will be from clergy, those who work in agriculture, and a local artist.

A reflection led by farmer and chair of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, Neil Heseltine, will explore the role agriculture can play in tackling climate change.

Mr Heseltine who has been farming in Malham since 2001 has been working alongside local environmental group to promote biodiversity.

He will tell the national online service his work “promotes nature and promotes biodiversity on the farm.”

Reflecting on the existential threat climate change poses for those in rural communities he will add: “We could farm... but at the same time do it in harmony with nature to promote biodiversity and get a balance between the food we produce and the natural environment we are working in at the moment.”

The service, with the theme of harvest and connection to nature, is to be broadcast from 9am on Sunday on the [Church of England’s website](#), [Facebook page](#) and [YouTube channel](#).

The Bishop of Ripon, Helen-Ann Hartley, who will lead the service, filmed the reflections in rural areas including at the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

“We’re celebrating Harvest and Season of Creation mindful that for those who work in agriculture this is a very busy time of year – right in the middle of Harvest,” she will say.

“Our rural communities in their diversity offer us as many opportunities as challenges – connectivity; housing; schools; hidden poverty; and loneliness.

“There are many examples of the witness and value of faithfulness to place over many generations.”

Bishop Helen-Ann will pray for farmers and all those who care for the land. During the intercessions, prayers will be made for victims of climate change’s impacts.

She will highlight [“A Time For Creation”](#), a new collection of environmentally focussed prayers, which will be used during this year's Harvest Festival.

Further reflections will include Kate Dale, a farmer in the heart of the Vale of York and part of the Yorkshire Rural Support Network.

"Farm life goes on whatever," she will say. "We have to learn to be flexible," she will say.

"My experience of church has always been, they have there for us and whether we are deeply religious or [not], everyone still feels a deep sense of faith because we've had to have faith as farmers and growers."

She will add that farmers "keep half an eye" on churches in villages as they are "symbols of hope."

Across England, parishes have been marking Harvest Festival during the Season of Creation. **The innovative services**, which are often among the most popular events of the year both in rural and urban areas, are being adapted this year because of the pandemic restrictions.

Notes to editors

Explore the full range of digital resources provided by the Church of England.

Source URL: <https://www.churchofengland.org/farmers-mark-harvest-festival-call-climate-change-action-national-online-service>