



HARVEST LITURGY CELEBRATION OPTIONS

The Abundant Life Garden Project® VBS offered by Episcopal Relief & Development

Arranged by Jerusalem Greer

In this final group time of the **Abundant Life Garden Project® offered by Episcopal Relief & Development**, your group is asked to both celebrate your time together and give Gifts for Life to others in need. You are encouraged to plan a celebration that will be safest option for your group.

You may also want to send information on how families can donate to Episcopal Relief & Development online or through your church communications.

Here are three ideas for how to celebrate:

Community Farm to Table Meal - Using locally sourced produce, dairy products, and meat, create a meal that is the direct result of the gifts of abundant life in your community. You could prepare this meal yourself with help from volunteers, or you could make the meal preparations part of the experience, asking children and families to help with everything from cooking the food as they arrive to setting the table. Set out bowls with the items from each of the five weeks in the center of the table(s) – the water, soil, seeds, feed, and fresh produce. During the meal have children share about each of the bowls and what they learned for that week. Set up a table near the entrance where families can lay their gifts. Include a prayer of thanksgiving for these gifts during your meal.

Holy Eucharist

As Episcopalians, our primary form of celebration is the sacrament of Holy Eucharist. A fitting conclusion to this program would be a service of Holy Eucharist that includes the children, teachers or leaders who have participated in this program and preferably the children's families. Families should be assured that this will be a "child-friendly" service, with small children and babies welcome.

We have included a Eucharist option, which includes Rogation Prayers and Eucharist service modeled after the Last Supper, in which the sharing of the bread and wine are separated by a meal. Feel free to use the service as it is, or to borrow elements that best fit your congregation. If you are doing the service virtually or with social distancing precautions, please follow the guidelines as set by your diocese.

Home Agape Meal

The Agape Meal is a Christian fellowship meal recalling the meals Jesus shared with disciples during his ministry and expressing the community enjoyed by the family of Christ. This meal will feel familiar as it has similar elements to a Eucharist meal, but they are not the same thing. Agape meals can be led by any Christian and held in any home or gathering place. They can include a meal or just include the bread and the wine. If you have small children, please feel free to adapt and shorten as needed.

Intergenerational Harvest Family Feast and Eucharist

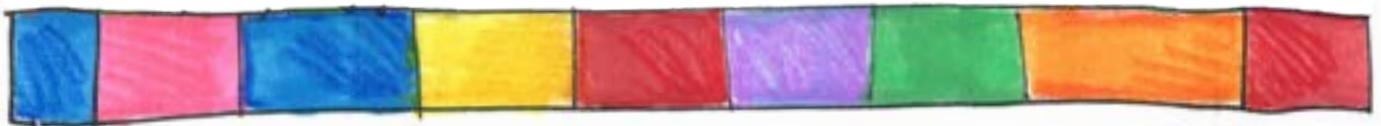
Preparations for in-person gathering:

- Invite members to bring elements from their gardens, or soil from their yards to be blessed.
- Print a service leaflet for each guest and include the Feast coloring sheet in the back.
- Set one long table or, if space doesn't allow, a series of tables close together.
- Cover them with brown kraft paper.
- Scatter markers and crayons down the center of the table(s)
- Place service leaflets at each place.
- If you are sitting at one long table, set the elements for Eucharist in the middle.
- Consider using a homemade loaf of bread or a bread brought for the meal.
- Because not everyone will bring soil from their garden or fresh produce, consider having some potting soil and locally grown items on hand for the blessing.
- Also, make sure to have small plastic or paper envelopes that people can take the soil home in.

Virtual Harvest Eucharist

Preparations for virtual gathering:

- Create a service leaflet that can be sent ahead to each household attending.
- Gather soil, seeds, water and other locally grown items and place them where they are visible for to those participating virtually.
- Ask families to also gather elements each day's lesson.
- During the prayers each member of the household may touch the elements or hold some in their hands.
- You may want to either cut the meal portion out of your worship or consider having a virtual potluck.
- If you want to have a prayer service instead of the Eucharist, you can use the Agape Meal form minus the Bread and the Wine.



The Gathering Liturgy – With Eucharist

Everyone is invited to gather around the dinner table.

Welcome

*Where it says **All** everyone is invited to speak in unison.*

*Where it says **One** anyone may lead as the Spirit moves. If two or more people began reading at the same time, they are to continue together.*

***Children** are encouraged to read.*

Song: All Things Bright and Beautiful

Deacon or Lay Minister:

This is the Welcome Table of our Redeemer, and you are invited. Make no excuses, saying you cannot attend; simply come, for around this table you will find your family.

One:

Come not because you have to, but because you need to.

Come not to prove you are saved, but to seek the courage to follow wherever Christ leads.

One:

Come not to speak but to listen, not to hear what's expected, but to be open to the ways the Spirit moves among you.

All:

So be joyful, not somber, for this is the feast of the reign of God, where the broken are molded into a Beloved Community, and where the celebration over evil's defeat has already begun.

Psalm 104:1, 13-15, 25-32

One: Let us read the Psalm in unison

All: Bless the Lord, O my soul.

O Lord my God, you are very great.

**You are clothed with honor and majesty,
From your lofty abode you water the mountains;
the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work.**

**You cause the grass to grow for the cattle,
and plants for people to use,
to bring forth food from the earth, and wine to gladden the human heart,
oil to make the face shine,
and bread to strengthen the human heart.**

**May the glory of the Lord endure forever;
may the Lord rejoice in his works—
who looks on the earth and it trembles,
who touches the mountains and they smoke.**

Amen.

The Meal

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

All: **And also with you.**

Celebrant: Lift up your hearts.

All: **We lift them to the Lord.**

Celebrant: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All: **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

Celebrant continues

We praise you and we bless you, holy and gracious God, source of life abundant. From before time you made ready the creation. Your Spirit moved over the deep and brought all things into being sun, moon, and stars; earth, winds, and waters; and every living thing. You made us in your image and taught us to walk in your ways. But we rebelled against you, and wandered far away; and yet, as a mother cares for her children, you would not forget us. Time and again you called us to live in the fullness of your love. And so this day we join with Saints and Angels in the chorus of praise that rings through eternity, lifting our voices to magnify you as we sing (say):

All: *Sanctus (may be sung)*

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Glory and honor and praise to you, holy and living God. To deliver us from the power of sin and death and to reveal the riches of your grace, you looked with favor upon Mary, your willing servant, that she might conceive and bear a son, Jesus the holy child of God. Living among us, Jesus loved us. He broke bread with outcasts and sinners, healed the sick, and proclaimed good news to the poor. He yearned to draw all the world to himself, yet we were heedless of his call to walk in love. Then, the time came for him to complete upon the cross the sacrifice of his life, and to be glorified by you.

On the night before he died for us, Jesus was at table with his friends. He took bread, gave thanks to you, broke it, and gave it to them, and said: "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

All: **Glory to you for ever and ever.**

Now gathered at your table, O God of all creation, and remembering Christ, crucified and risen, who was and is and is to come, we offer to you our gifts of bread and wine, and ourselves, a living sacrifice. Pour out your Spirit upon this bread that it may be the Body of Christ. Breathe your Spirit over the whole earth and make us your new creation, the Body of Christ given for the world you have made.

All: **Amen!**



All: **The Lord's Prayer (sung)**
Our Father (echo)
Who art in Heaven (echo)
Hallowed be thy name (echo)

Thy kingdom come
Thy will be done
On Earth
As in heaven

Please give us
All that we need
And forgive us
All our sins

As we forgive
Those who harm us
And lead us not
Away from you

But deliver us
From all evil
Hallowed be thy name

For thine is
The kingdom
And the Power
And the Glory

Forever
Alleluia
Hallowed be thy name
Hallowed be thy name

Celebrant: Holy food for Holy people. Share in the meal.

Tonight we will be serving each other. After you receive the bread, pass it to your neighbor, tearing off a piece for them saying, "The Body of Christ."



Song: Let Us Break Bread Together

Let us break bread together on our knees.
Let us break bread together on our knees.
When I fall on my knees
With my face to the rising sun
O Lord, have mercy on me.

Let us drink wine together on our knees.
Let us drink wine together on our knees.
When I fall on my knees with my face to the rising sun
O Lord, have mercy on me.

Let us praise God together on our knees.
Let us praise God together on our knees.
When I fall on my knees
With my face to the rising sun
O Lord, have mercy on me.

The Peace

Celebrant: The peace of the Lord be always with you.

All: And also with you

After you have passed the peace, please feel free to fix your plates from the potluck. We will spend the first part of our meal in conversation. As the meal ends, we'll hear a reading from Scripture and a meditation.

The Word Luke 16:1-13

Celebrant or Deacon: The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

All: Glory to you, Lord Christ.

Jesus said to the disciples, "There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was squandering his property. So he summoned him and said to him, 'What is this that I hear about you? Give me an accounting of your management, because you cannot be my manager any longer.' Then the manager said to himself, 'What will I do, now that my master is taking the position away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. I have decided what to do so that, when I am dismissed as manager, people may welcome me into their homes.' So, summoning his master's debtors one by one, he asked the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' He answered, 'A hundred jugs of olive oil.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it fifty.' Then he asked another, 'And how much do you owe?' He replied, 'A hundred containers of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill and make it eighty.' And his master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly; for the children of this age are shrewder in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light. And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth so that when it is gone, they may welcome you into the eternal homes.



“Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much. If then you have not been faithful with the dishonest wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own? No slave can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.”

Deacon or Celebrant: The Gospel of the Lord
All: Praise to you, Lord Christ

A Reflection on the Abundant Life Garden Project® offered by Episcopal Relief & Development
(this could be done by the Celebrant, Leader of the Program, or a child or two who participated)

The Prayers of the People

One: Let us pray
Eternally Gracious Creator,
As we thank you for our food we remember all those who do not have enough for even one proper meal each day. Bless all those, Lord, who suffer because of the greed of others. Help us to share the harvests of the world more fairly so everyone can be fed and there will be no more starvation. Lord of all creation:
All: hear our prayer

One: At this harvest time we thank you for the hard work of all those who grow, protect and prepare our food; for the shopkeepers, the transport delivery drivers, the processors and the farmers. Bless all those, Lord, who do not earn a fair day's pay for their hard work both at home and in other countries. Place in us a greater desire to buy local produce and fairly traded goods wherever we are able, so that everyone can work with dignity and there will be no more poverty. Lord of all creation:
All: hear our prayer

One: At this harvest time we thank you for the world we see around us; for the flowers, the trees and the animals. Bless all those who care for them, Lord. Help us to protect your creation by being careful about how we use your resources so that there will be clean water, clean air and plenty of wild birds, mammals and insects to maintain the ecological balance of the earth.
Lord of all creation:
All: hear our prayer

One: As we give thanks for all that is good in your creation and all who bring in the Harvest of the sea and the land, we are conscious of so much that we get wrong. So we give thanks too for your grace and patience with us when we fail to look after your world as we should. Help us to change so that we too become a new creation walking in the light of your Gospel. Lord of all creation:
All: hear our prayer



One: At this harvest time we ask for your blessing on our families, friends and neighbors, on those who are sick and those who have died. Help us to recognize the interdependence of all of life and the importance of just relations and responsible stewardship of all you continue to give us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Lord of all creation:

All: hear our prayer

One: Let us now name before God those for whom we offer our personal prayers, either silently or aloud.

Deacon or Lay Minister: Lord, you have called us to serve you.

All: Grant that we may walk in your presence: your love in our hearts, your truth in our minds, your strength in our wills, until, at the end of our journey, we know the joy of our homecoming and the welcome of your embrace, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Blessing the Cup

We bless our cup at the end of our meal, just as Jesus did when he was at table with the disciples.

Celebrant: As supper was ending, Jesus took the cup of wine. Again, he gave thanks to you and said: "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is poured out for you and for all for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me."

All: Glory to you forever and ever.

Celebrant: Pour out your Spirit upon this wine that it may be the Blood of Christ. In the fullness of time bring us, with all your saints, from every tribe and language and people and nation, to feast at the banquet prepared from the foundation of the world. Through Christ and with Christ and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, to you be honor, glory, and praise, for ever and ever.

All: Amen!

After you receive the cup, wipe the side, and pass it to your neighbor, saying, "The Blood of Christ." Make sure to wipe the cup after each sip.

Communion Hymn: This Pretty Planet

Blessing of the Harvest

At this time you are invited to bring any seeds, produce, or home canned items forward to be blessed as we are lead in song. Children are welcome to sit at the foot of the table so they can see the blessings up close.

Song: For the Beauty of the Earth

Prayer for Seeds

Celebrant: Creating God, you have given seed for the sower and bread to the people. Nourish, protect, and bless the seeds which your people have sown in hope. By your loving and bountiful giving, may they bring forth their fruit in due season, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.



Prayer for the Soil

Celebrant: Giver of life, we give you thanks that in the richness of the soil, nature awakens your call to spring. We praise you for the smell of freshly tilled earth, the beauty of a cleanly cut furrow, and a well-plowed field. We ask that you help us to be good stewards of the land. In the name of the one who gives us new life, Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Prayer for Water and Rain

Celebrant: Sustaining God, we receive the fruits of the earth from you. We give you thanks for the smell of the earth after rain, for its welcome cooling, and its necessary hydration for the land. We ask that the rain come as often as it is needed so that crops may flourish and the coming harvest be indeed bountiful.

All: Amen.

Prayer for the Harvest

Celebrant: Almighty and everlasting God, Creator of all things and giver of all life, let your blessing be upon this harvest and grant that its bounty may serve your glory and nourish your people; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Thanksgiving Prayer

Deacon or Lay Minister: Accept, O Lord, our thanks and praise for all that you have done for us.

One: We thank you for the splendor of the whole creation, for the beauty of this world, for the wonder of life, and for the mystery of love.

One: We thank you for the blessing of family and friends, and for the loving care which surrounds us on every side.

One: We thank you for setting us at tasks which demand our best efforts, and for leading us to accomplishments which satisfy and delight us.

One: We thank you also for those disappointments and failures that lead us to acknowledge our dependence on you alone.

Celebrant: Above all, we thank you for your Son Jesus Christ; for the truth of his Word and the example of his life; for his steadfast obedience, by which he overcame temptation; for his dying, through which he overcame death; and for his rising to life again, in which we are raised to the life of your kingdom. Grant us the gift of your Spirit, that we may know him and make him known; and through him, at all times and in all places, may give thanks to you in all things.

All: Amen.

Doxology (sung)

Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;

Praise Him, all creatures here below;

Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Deacon: Live in peace, and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you now and always.

All: Amen.

Everyone is welcome to take a small sample of the blessed soil or seeds home.



Home Agape Meal

All gather round the table. Decide who will lead the prayers and each of the speaking parts. If you have small children, please feel free to adapt and shorten as needed.

If you want to incorporate a meal such as lunch or dinner into this meal, you may choose to eat your meal between passing the bread and passing the cup, or after the Thanksgiving Prayer.

Song: All Things Bright and Beautiful (may be played or sung)

Opening Prayer

Psalm 104:1, 13-15, 25-32

Leader: Let us read the Psalm in unison as our opening prayer

All: Bless the Lord, O my soul.

O Lord my God, you are very great.

You are clothed with honor and majesty,

From your lofty abode you water the mountains;

the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work.

You cause the grass to grow for the cattle,

and plants for people to use,

to bring forth food from the earth, and wine to gladden the human heart,

oil to make the face shine,

and bread to strengthen the human heart.

May the glory of the Lord endure forever;

may the Lord rejoice in his works—

who looks on the earth and it trembles,

who touches the mountains and they smoke.

BLESSING OF THE MEAL

Leader: Welcome to this meal of Abundant Life. We are all invited to the common table to share in an Agape Feast.

People: At this table we come as brothers, sisters and siblings in the Holy Family of God.

Leader: Taste and see that God is good.

People: We come to share in God's love. We come to share our food and our lives.

Leader: We come to break bread together and open ourselves to each other.

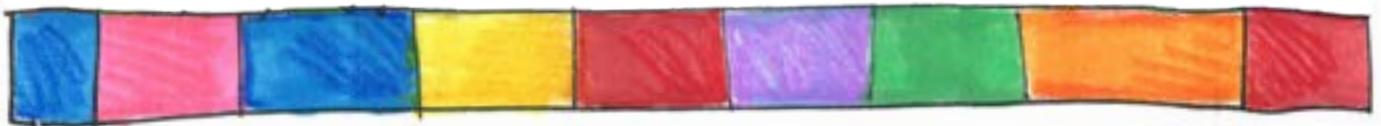
People: We come to express our faith and our thanks for the gifts of water, soil, seeds, animals, the harvest, and all of creation.

Leader: May God bless this food and this fellowship.

People: As we share our food, we give thanks for this abundance, and we remember those who do not have enough.

Leader: May God give food to those who are hungry.

People: We give thanks for the work of Episcopal Relief & Development and the communities we all serve together.



Leader: May God give us a hunger for justice, and a determination to serve those who hunger for food.

People: May we use our gifts for the good of all creation.

Leader: We thank you, God, for our daily bread for the food which delights and nourishes us and for the companionship that sustains us. We give thanks for this feast which we share, a foretaste of the Kingdom of God.

People: Loving God, we welcome your presence with us. May the food and companionship we share nourish our bodies, hearts and minds. And may our spirits be refreshed. As we live in the light of your presence. With us now, and at all times and places. Amen.

PASSING OF BREAD AND WINE

Leader: Blessed are You, Lord our God, who brings forth bread from the earth.

Bread is a symbol to remind us of God's love, "I am the bread of life.

The bread that I shall give is myself for the life of the world."

The bread is passed from person to person – each breaking off a small piece to feed their neighbor.

Option: You may choose to pause and share a full meal here. If you do so consider asking each household member to share their favorite lessons or memories from their VBS experience.

Leader: Blessed are You, Lord our God, who creates the fruit of the vine. We drink this wine in remembrance of Jesus so that all who partake may be blessed and protected.

A glass of wine is passed from person to person, each taking a sip.

Here is a story about Jesus:

Mark 12:28-34 (to be read aloud)

²⁸ One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, "Which commandment is the first of all?" ²⁹ Jesus answered, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; ³⁰ you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' ³¹ The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." ³² Then the scribe said to him, "You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that 'he is one, and besides him there is no other'; ³³ and 'to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength,' and 'to love one's neighbor as oneself,'—this is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." ³⁴ When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." After that no one dared to ask him any question.

All: The Lord's Prayer (can be spoken or sung)

Our Father, who art in heaven,

hallowed be thy name;

thy kingdom come;

thy will be done;

on earth as it is in heaven.

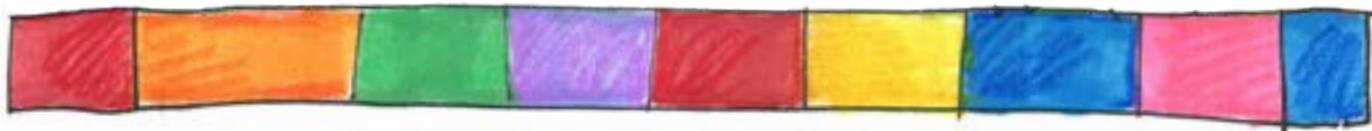
Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation;

but deliver us from evil.



For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.

Optional: Asking for God's Blessing of the Harvest

At this time gather elements from the weeks learning together. Have in the center of your table or nearby a small sample of water, seeds, soil, and produce and place them on the table. During the prayer each member of the household may touch the elements or hold some in their hands.

Song: For the Beauty of the Earth

Prayer for Seeds

Creating God, you have given seed for the sower and bread to the people. We ask you to nourish, protect, and bless the seeds which your people have sown in hope. By your loving and bountiful giving, may they bring forth their fruit in due season, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Prayer for the Soil

Giver of life, we give you thanks that in the richness of the soil, nature awakens your call to spring. We praise you for the smell of freshly tilled earth, the beauty of a cleanly cut furrow, and a well-plowed field. We ask that you help us to be good stewards of the land. We ask you to bless the land. In the name of the one who gives us new life, Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Prayer for Water and Rain

Sustaining God, we receive the fruits of the earth from you. We give you thanks for the smell of the earth after rain, for its welcome cooling, and its necessary hydration for the land. We ask that the rain come as often as it is needed so that crops may flourish and the coming harvest be indeed bountiful. We ask you to bless the water that quenches the thirst of the earth. In the name of the one who makes all things refreshed, Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Prayer for the Harvest

Almighty and everlasting God, Creator of all things and giver of all life, we ask your blessing be upon this harvest and grant that its bounty may serve your glory and nourish your people; through Jesus Christ our Lord, whose love feeds us all.

All: Amen.

Thanksgiving Prayer

Leader: We thank you for the splendor of the whole creation, for the beauty of this world, for the wonder



of life, and for the mystery of love.

People: We thank you for the blessing of family and friends, and for the loving care which surrounds us on every side.

Leader: We thank you for setting us at tasks which demand our best efforts, and for leading us to accomplishments which satisfy and delight us.

People: We thank you also for those disappointments and failures that lead us to acknowledge our dependence on you alone.

Leader: Above all, we thank you for your Son Jesus Christ; for the truth of his Word and the example of his life; for his steadfast obedience, by which he overcame temptation; for his dying, through which he overcame death; and for his rising to life again, in which we are raised to the life of your kingdom. Grant us the gift of your Spirit, that we may know him and make him known; and through him, at all times and in all places, may give thanks to you in all things.

All: Amen.

Option: You may choose to pause and share a full meal here. If you do so consider asking each household member to share their favorite lessons or memories from their VBS experience.

Doxology (may be said or sung)

Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;

Praise Him, all creatures here below;

Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

All: Let us live in peace, and may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit who gives us abundant life, be with us now and always. Amen.

