

## **Traditional Farming Festivals**

Farming services – thoughts & experiences

### **Plough**

If at a church, visual aids of tractors / ploughs

Invite local organisations to take part e.g YFC/NFU

If on a farm, remember accessibility issues

Follow by a ploughman's lunch

Make an all age service

### **Wassail**

? a pagan festival but we can give it a Christian meaning

Blessings of orchards

### **Rogation – beating of bounds**

Not always practical to do all of boundary

Mini prayer walk works well

Can do on farm & visit different fields

Do as a sponsored walk & include local schools

Do a tractor & trailer ride around the bounds

### **Ascension**

Works well on a hill/high ground

Well suited to the moors – attracted those who don't usually go to church

### **Lammas**

Bake bread & then deliver it after the service to those farmers in area or present at the church service

Works well using readings from more modern Bible translations

### **Wool Blessing**

To celebrate harvest of the fleece

Bring sheep to church or have on the farm

## **Harvest**

Trend to more tins & less fresh food donated at services

Good to follow with lunch & raffle or auction

Support local foodbanks & homeless shelters

Try to get people to come for service & not just the supper

Have the service during the food

## **Apple pressing/autumn service**

Have a service on farm/orchards or cider factory

Cider & pasty refreshments

## **Sea Sunday/Harvest of the sea**

Pray for safety of the crew

Pray for a bountiful catch

Good for coastal parishes

Works well with a choir/band

## **Agricultural Shows**

Devon County Show have a pre show service on Wednesday night & a service every morning

Churches have tents at most shows – how best can they serve a purpose at a show

## **Pet/Animal Services**

Include farm animals or go onto a farm & pray for a specific farm & animals on site & all others in parish

## **Christmas Service**

Works well for nativity services

Could be held on farm or film before hand on farm & show during the service

## What to consider when planning a service

- What is the key aim? Use that as the starting point – bums on seats v spreading the gospel message
- Who is the event aimed at?
- Make the service/event easy to understand – think different Bible versions in a more easily understood language, modern interpretations of the Creed. Give clear instructions on when to sit/stand, what page you are on
- Consider a specific service booklet for the event
- Put people at ease – someone friendly to welcome them & suggest where they can sit, invite them to join in the responses but feel free that they don't have to
- Make it inclusive – break bread rather than full communion
- Consider the need for hymns – consider having the music on tape to sing along to – good for small congregations where play a recorder of the song & sing along with – also good for outdoor events
- Think testimony or interview rather than a sermon in the service
- Timing – depends who aimed at, what time of day works best for them? Consider days of the week. Don't worry if you can't hold the event on the normal set / standard day e.g for Plough/Lammas
- Practical issues: access, parking, transport, mobility concerns
- Weather! Remember its Devon, where it can rain 6 days out of 7. If planning an outdoor event, have a wet weather contingency plan
- Involve children & then adults come too
- Remember to make it child/unchurched friendly
- Link with local schools/village events, so they are coming for another event & you have a ready-made congregation
- Farm can be used as a back drop for any service event – work with the farmer to help with planning, risk assessment, insurance
- Consider a sketch/play to illustrate points
- Refreshments – make it part of the service/event so people don't just come for food
- Promote it well – see if anyone in Parish has a knowledge of social media, use window display, local village newsletter/school newsletter

### **What worked well within the group**

- School children grew tomato plants & then tomatoes were used for soup at harvest supper – the whole family then came
- Linked a worship event to a cup giving ceremony for a village fete/garden show
- Good use of a window display in a café to advertise harvest events
- Window display involved a whole street for advent theme
- Village trail/walk of nativity scene/angel trail/scarecrows
- Children decorated pebbles of a theme & used to decorate the church
- Marching bands/music if moving around