

HOPE COUNTRYSIDE

Seeds of Prayer

Harvest

This year, all three of the biblical autumn feasts ([Leviticus 23:23-43](#)) take place in September. The Feast of Trumpets on 6-7 September is followed by the Day of Atonement on 15-16 September and the Feast of Tabernacles on 20-27 September. Among much else, Tabernacles is a 'harvest festival', celebrating the 'ingathering' of the summer harvest ([Exodus 23:16](#)). Just as the spring feasts (Passover, Unleavened Bread, First Fruits, Pentecost) were fulfilled at Jesus' first coming and by the sending of the Holy Spirit, so the autumn feasts will be fulfilled by His return, the gathering of His people to meet Him, the redemption of Israel, and the Messianic Age. As we celebrate this year's harvest, both from the fields and of those who have been added to His Kingdom, *give thanks that God is working His purpose out and that the time draws ever nearer when "the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" ([Habb 2:14](#)).*

Eternal God, you crown the year with your goodness and give us the fruits of the earth in their season; grant that we may use them to your glory, for the relief of those in need, and for our own well-being.

Webinar - BOOK NOW

Countryside at the crossroads - an ABC of agricultural change. A joint Agricultural Christian Fellowship and Village Hope webinar to explore, from a Christian perspective, three critical issues that will shape the future of farming, the countryside and rural life. Saturday 30 October 2021, 10.00-15.30. For more details and to register, go to acfvhbc.eventbrite.co.uk.

The first two themes below were explored at our last online prayer gathering on 31 July. For more background, follows the links or contact us as above. For more on farming, join the webinar in October (opposite).

'Walk the Way'

The eleven weeks of Through Faith Mission's (throughfaithmissions.org) 'Walk the Way' project (bit.ly/tfmway), as featured in July's Seeds, finishes on 4 September. Give thanks for the remarkable ways in which the Lord provided for the teams' practical needs and for the opportunities they had to share the gospel with many people and to encourage many rural churches (bit.ly/tfmwtwblog) along the 'Way of Blessing' (viabeata.co.uk). *Pray that the seeds sown in the lives of those they met will sprout, grow and bear fruit ([Matthew 13:1-23](#)). Pray for renewal and unity among the village churches. Pray for the work to be continued and expand, and bring hope to much more of Britain's countryside.*

The future of farming

The Agriculture Act 2020 (bit.ly/defraagact) started a seven-year transition period from the former EU system of farm payments based on the area farmed to a new scheme, by which farmers will be paid to deliver 'public goods'. The aim is to achieve a 'green Brexit', so 'environmental goods' are at the top of the agenda. Policies will also aim to increase food self sufficiency, improve farm animal welfare, and increase collaboration among farmers. Many farmers are fearful of the impending changes; others see new opportunities ahead. *Pray for a fair and balanced integration of environmental care with food production, and for greater 'teamwork' among farmers, policy makers and other stakeholders. Pray for organisations seeking to stand with and support farmers through these difficult times, including FCN (fcn.org.uk), RABI (rabi.org.uk) and the churches.*

Rural Afghanistan

Hope Countryside's concern is to pray for rural Britain. But, in these exceptional times, let us remember our brothers and sisters in rural Afghanistan, and in the whole of that country. The small and persecuted Afghan church (which has nevertheless grown markedly in the last 20 years) now faces untold danger and suffering. Reports suggest that believers in villages are in the front line; at the same time, people are fleeing to remote rural locations in the hills. Some believers have left or are trying to leave; others are determined to stay (bit.ly/faiafgh; bit.ly/cbnafgh; bit.ly/jrafghan). *Pray for believers to be strengthened and protected and for their oppressors to turn their hearts ([Ephesians 6:19-20](#); [Matthew 5:44](#)). Pray for those seeking refuge in the countryside, for all the people of Afghanistan, and for leaders and all those seeking to bring peace in and to that nation ([1 Timothy 2:1-4](#)).*