



# Beyond Consumerism CELEBRATING LAMMASTIDE

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Arthur Rank  
Centre

CONFIDENT RURAL CHRISTIANS

A photograph of a wicker basket filled with fresh bread and vegetables. The bread includes a large round loaf with a scored top, a baguette, and several smaller rolls. The vegetables include red and green bell peppers, tomatoes, and onions. The basket is lined with a red and white checkered cloth.

# Reflecting on FOOD & SACRAMENT

There is nothing quite like the smell of freshly cooked bread straight from the oven! The supermarkets know it, tickling our taste buds with their onsite bakeries. The smell entices us to buy! Here, I hope the smell and taste of fresh bread will encourage an attitude of thankfulness and a desire to share what we have with others, as we worship and eat together.

## What is Lammas?

Lammas is an ancient festival, dating back to Anglo-Saxon times. It is thought to be derived from an old English word for loaf followed by mass, suggesting a service in which the Eucharist is celebrated. It is fitting therefore to focus on 'Food and Sacrament' in this particular *Beyond Consumerism* resource. However, many rural services are lay-led, so an alternative approach might be helpful. Although there are two sacramental foods, bread and wine, here we explore the loaf in terms of our daily bread and *mass*, in terms of the mission of God and being sent out at the end of a service 'to love and serve the Lord' within our local communities and beyond.

Lammas corresponds to the Hebrew Festival of Weeks when a sheaf of the first of the barley harvest was offered (Leviticus 23. 9 - 14). Traditionally the first fruits belonged to God and were offered to God in an attitude of thanksgiving. In Medieval England, tenant farmers were required to present freshly harvested wheat to their landlords. In early summer, grain ran low, while fresh crops were still growing, but Lammas heralded the beginning of a season of plenty, reward for hard work in a spirit of celebration.

In recent years, the celebration of Lammas has been revived in some rural communities. Lammas always falls on 1

August in the school summer holiday and often on a week day, so this might be just what we need to worship in a completely different way: an intergenerational Messy Church focusing on bread; or a 'Family Bake and Picnic' Church out on the farm. You could arrange a visit to a local bakery or even a full church day out combining the picnic with a visit to a local flour mill: Worsborough Mill in South Yorkshire, [www.worsbrough-mill.com](http://www.worsbrough-mill.com); Lethringsett Watermill in Norfolk, [letheringsettwatermill.co.uk](http://letheringsettwatermill.co.uk); also check out [www.sourdough.co.uk/british-artisan-flour-mills-by-region](http://www.sourdough.co.uk/british-artisan-flour-mills-by-region) for a working mill near you.

## The Open Table

Looking back over the years, I have many happy memories of farmhouse kitchens, helping with the baking, and then sitting at a large kitchen table to sample the results with an extended family of farm workers, friends and taggers on. Everyone was welcome and somehow there was always plenty of food to go round. This seems to be in keeping with the ministry of Jesus in the Gospels from intimate meals with his close friends to the feeding of crowds of five thousand plus.

The Son of Man came eating and drinking, a friend of tax collectors and sinners (Luke 7. 34). No one was excluded. Breaking bread with others was central to Jesus' ministry, his signature tune, as it were. What Jesus did at the 'last' supper was to repeat something he did all the time. The disciples on the road to Emmaus were not two of the twelve and yet they still recognized Jesus in the breaking of the bread because it was something they had seen him do many times before. It was a place of welcome, acceptance and friendship, expressing the beauty of forgiving love. Around the table, broken and hurting people are restored and healed through sharing bread. In his reflections on the Eucharist, Timothy Gorringer suggests in the final reckoning what really counts is feeding the hungry and showing hospitality to the stranger with joy and thanksgiving. (*The Sign of Love*, 1997, SPCK, p.17)

## Gathering and giving

Offering the first fruits of the harvest in worship is a sign of our dependence on God for our daily food. In one of our rural Northamptonshire churches, St Peter and St Paul, Scaldwell, we hold an annual 'Bread' Service. Admittedly, this happens at the beginning of December, but the sentiment is clear and resonates with Lammas.

In 1665, Thomas Roe, a Scaldwell churchgoer and benefactor, left money in his will "to be yearly bestowed in bread and given to ye poor of Scaldwell". For over three hundred and fifty years, on 5 December or nearest Sunday, bread was brought into church and a sermon of thanksgiving preached. The bread was then distributed to the poor. Nowadays, most of Scaldwell's resident population is well-heeled, so a token loaf is presented during the service and the money is given to the local food bank.

# Worship resources

Here are some suggestions, which could be used as Messy Church activities or as part of a Family Bake and Picnic. Why not ask permission to hold your picnic in a newly harvested field to raise awareness of what is happening on our local farms and to focus on thanksgiving for the first fruits of this year's harvest.

## Quick quiz

to discover what the Bible says about bread. Look up the verses to find the answers.

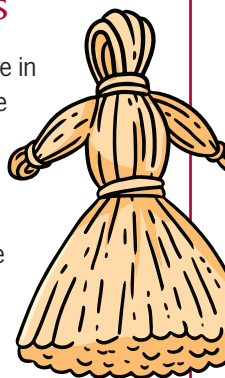
1. What kind of bread did God provide for the Israelites in the desert? (Exodus 16. 31)
2. What did David ask for at Nob and what was he given? (1 Samuel 21. 1 – 6)
3. What happened when the prophet Elijah visited the Widow of Zarephath? (1 Kings 17. 8 – 16)
4. What place name in the Bible means House of Bread in Hebrew? (Micah 5.2)
5. What was the first temptation of Jesus? (Matthew 4. 3 – 4)
6. What do we ask God to provide in the Lord's Prayer? (Matthew 6.11)
7. How many people did Jesus feed with how many loaves and how much was left over? (Matthew 14. 13 – 21; also Matthew 15. 32 - 37)
8. In John's Gospel, Jesus describes himself as what? (John 6. 35)
9. After the resurrection, who recognized Jesus in the breaking of the bread? (Luke 24. 13-32)
10. How did the early believers remember Jesus? (Acts 2. 42)

## Many parts, one body – food chain paper dolls

In many churches, we will hear these words: We break this bread to share in the body of Christ, to which we all respond: 'Though we are many, we are one body, because we all share in one bread.'

Many different people contribute to the food chain. Create a line of paper dolls and see how many people are involved to turn grain from the field into bread on your table. Begin with the farmer who harvests the grain and finish with yourself. You should be able to come up with at least six different people and processes.

Coming together to eat, we enter into the lives of each other. We start to talk about the things that matter, not being preached at but learning how to live together and appreciate the contributions we all make to the common good.



## Quick wholemeal bread from 'down under'

Making bread can become a spiritual experience as we bake with others and reflect on the Scriptures. This New Zealand recipe makes two large loaves with no kneading required!

### Ingredients:

500g wholemeal bread flour  
250g strong white bread flour  
1 dessert spoon salt  
700mls warm water  
2 dessert spoons dry active yeast  
1 dessert spoon golden syrup or treacle

1. Mix together flours and salt.
2. In a separate bowl mix water, yeast and syrup.
3. Add dry ingredients to wet.
4. Mix well and divide into two greased large loaf tins.
5. Put in a warm place for 30 minutes.
6. Bake at 190 degrees C, 375 degrees F or Gas Mark 5 for 40 minutes.



## Give us today our daily bread A prayer graffiti board

Every time we pray the Lord's prayer, we pray 'Give us today our daily bread'. Bread is a staple. Staple foods are principal raw ingredients grown in a region, the basic dietary items, which we eat every day. Bread is a significant food around the world in its different forms from a basic white or brown loaf to local artisan bakes. How many different types of bread from how many countries can you come up with? Write or draw them on a large sheet of paper.

Too often we take the basic things for granted, forgetting to recognize God's faithfulness, provision and generosity. Use your graffiti board as an aid to thanksgiving and prayer, especially for those who don't have enough to eat on a daily basis.

## A Poem: 'Bread' by Freda Elton Young

Be gentle when you touch Bread.  
Let it not lie  
uncared for,  
unwanted.  
So often Bread  
is taken for granted.

There is such beauty in Bread.  
Beauty of sun and soil,  
beauty of patient toil.  
Wind and rain  
have caressed it.  
Christ often blessed it.  
Be gentle when you touch Bread.

### Coming to the table

What do you bring to Christ's table?

**We bring bread, made by many people's work,  
from an unjust world where some have plenty  
and many go hungry.**

At this table all are fed, and no one is turned away.

**Thanks be to God.**

What do you bring to Christ's table?

**We bring bread, made by many people's work,  
from an unjust world where some have leisure  
and many struggle to survive.**

At this table all are fed, and no one is turned away.

**Thanks be to God.**

At Christ's table we share bread  
with open eyes and hearts on fire:

**Our witness against hunger,  
our cry against injustice,  
and our hope for a world  
where God is fully known  
and every child is fed.**

**Thanks be to God.**

### A Closing Prayer

*(based on 2 Corinthians 9. 10)*

Now may God, who gives seed for the sower  
and bread for the eater,  
give us all that we need to make us fruitful  
in body, mind and spirit,  
so that we may produce a rich harvest  
in faith, love and justice,  
to the glory of God's name.  
Amen.



## Music Suggestions

'A gift each day, our daily bread', Ally Barratt, Tune: Kingsfold.

See [reverendally.org/reverendallys-hymns](http://reverendally.org/reverendallys-hymns)

'As we gather, Father, seal us' (Refrain: 'Who share one living bread'),  
Graham Kendrick, StF 570

'As your family, Lord, see us here', African Spiritual, Tune: Kum ba yah, StF  
571, HON 43

'Break Thou the bread of life', AM 378, StF 153, HON 76, SoF 50, MP 64

'Bring to God the first fruits', Tony Ingleby, Tune: Camberwell, available  
from Arthur Rank: [www.ruralmatters.org.uk/seasons/hymn.html#3](http://www.ruralmatters.org.uk/seasons/hymn.html#3)

'Guide me, O Thou great Redeemer', AM 652, StF 465, HON 240, CH4  
167, SoF 148, MP 201

'In the Lord I'll be ever thankful, a short chant from the Taizé Community,  
AM 334, StF 776, HON 766, MP 865

'I the Lord of sea and sky', Daniel L. Schutte, v. 3: 'Finest bread I will  
provide', AM 494, StF 586, HON 324, CH4251, SoF 830, MP 857

'We break this bread', Chris Rolinson, 1988, verse 1, SoF 573, MP 721

*Ancient and Modern: Hymns and Songs for Refreshing Worship*, (AM)  
*Singing the Faith* (StF)

*Hymns Old and New: One Church, One Faith, One Lord* (HON)

*Church Hymnal 4th Edition* (CH4)

*Mission Praise* (MP)

*Songs of Fellowship* (SoF)

## Further resources for Lammas

*Common Worship Times and Seasons*, Seasons and Festivals of  
the Agricultural Year, p. 619ff or at: [www.churchofengland.org/  
prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/  
common-worship/churchs-year/times-and-seasons-4#mmm372](http://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/common-worship/churchs-year/times-and-seasons-4#mmm372)

'First Fruits: Lammastide – Offering the best of ourselves', Chris  
Thorpe, a fully worked service in *Ploughshares and Firstfruits*, 2020,  
Canterbury Press

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