

Summer rhapsody

In the garden flowers are blooming. Bees and butterflies are gathering nectar from the herb garden. A myriad of living creatures, crawling, flying or creeping are on the move, through air, over land and across water. Roses together with apple and willow blossom scent the evening air. Then quietly the maestro takes up his position. A blackbird sits atop a telegraph pole and calls out across the garden and fields, piercing the silence with a song of beauty and simplicity. His mate responds. Within moments, as if waiting their cue, the chorus is taken up. Thrushes, tits, sparrows, robins, pigeons and doves abandon what they are doing and join the evening symphony. Late-comers fly in hurriedly to take up their positions and parts. A veritable rhapsody of spontaneous, joyous praise flows from the heart without restraint.

"Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow ... yet even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ...Therefore do not worry, saying 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. Your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matthew 6:25-33).

'Summer harvest'

In the biblical calendar, the summer months fall between the spring festivals of Passover, Unleavened Bread, First Fruits and Pentecost and the autumn festivals of Trumpets, Atonement and Tabernacles. The spring festivals speak of Jesus' first coming; the autumn festivals of His return. Summer represents the (extended) time in between. As we explored last summer (bit.ly/sopsum24), this is the time of 'gleaning', representing the gathering in of the gentiles to God's Kingdom, the 'coming near' of those who were 'far off' (Ephesians 3:11-13), the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom in all the world (Matthew 24:14; 28:19-20).

As we hear 'rumours of revival' and Christians seek to reach out to those who are 'far off' at many events and gatherings over the summer (see below), pray that the Lord of the Harvest will send out labourers into His harvest (Matthew 9:38; Luke 10:2) to preach the gospel of the kingdom and make disciples of people of all nations (Matthew 28:19), and that He will gather many into His Kingdom so that "His house will be full" (Luke 14:21-23).

Rural revival?

You may have come across the report, *The Quiet Revival* (bit.ly/bsqre), or seen videos on social media of large gatherings in city centres across the UK and abroad. We can be encouraged to see and hear of these things in other places, yet, at the same time, we might ask ourselves, 'why not here?' and 'is this even possible in my village?' We are, however, hearing stories of growth and fresh interest in villages across the UK. This is not just a city phenomenon. And it is an opportunity and incentive to be reinvigorated in our mission and emboldened in sharing our faith with others.

Pray for fresh inspiration, that the Lord will show us ways to reach our villages with the living gospel, and to be ready to receive those who respond.

Seeds of Prayer

Seeds of prayer is a resource for prayer for individuals, groups, church services and other meetings. If you would like to feed back your own insights and prayers then we would be very happy to hear from you.

Forthcoming events

'A Day on the Farm.'

Saturday 28 June 2025

9:30 AM - 4:00 PM

Southfields Farm, Coleshill, B46 3EJ

You are invited to join the Hope Countryside partnership for a 'day on the farm' on 28 June 2025.

This year's theme is **'Come, let us return to the Lord'** (Hosea 6:1), which we will explore through presentations, discussion and prayer.

As ever, the gathering will also be an opportunity for fellowship and for sharing news, joys and concerns, and to pray for one another.

All are welcome, and there is no charge. But please [book here \(bit.ly/hcdofreg\)](http://bit.ly/hcdofreg), where you can find about more about the theme and programme for the day.

Online gatherings

Wednesday 17 September 2025

7.30 - 9.00 PM

'A movement of hope in rural Britain'

Sharing stories of mission; encouraging and praying for one another.

Saturday 8 November 2025

9.00 - 10.30 AM

'Themed online prayer' (details later)

Login for all online events:

<https://web.zoom.us/join>

Zoom meeting ID: 821 1671 9194

Passcode: 905289

Hope Countryside is a partnership including Village Hope, Agricultural Christian Fellowship, the World Prayer Centre and others. 'Hope Countryside' expresses our growing vision of beacons of prayer lighting up across rural Britain, bringing hope both to the countryside and from the countryside to the whole of the nation. Our aim is to promote understanding of, and prayer for, rural life and communities, church and mission, and farming and the land.

There's more that stand on our side

This summer our countryside will again host numerous Christian outreach and ministry events: camps for young people, festivals, bible weeks, outdoor adventures, beach missions, prayer weekends, retreats and much more. Agricultural and horticultural shows and summer fetes will offer Christian hospitality, conversation and prayer. Thousands of people will spend time in the presence of God. Some may simply wander into a chapel or sit on a bench, seeking shelter from the heat or a quiet place for reflection or consolation for a burden of anxiety or loss. The countryside will be alive with God-inspired art, music and drama in worship, prayer and creativity, saturated with the presence of Christ. From the large to the small, the carefully planned or spontaneous encounters to groups and personal pilgrimage, many will meet Jesus personally for the first time or gain new hope.

Praise God for all these encounters and opportunities. Pray for all those giving time, gifts and love to make these possible, for all preparing bible teachings, praise and worship, for all practical arrangements, travel and safety, and invitations to non-Christian friends. Pray that visitors will respect the countryside, its residents and businesses and be good witnesses. May the Lord bless those giving hospitality to ministries and visitors on their land.

When Elisha's servant despaired at the sight of the Aramean army invading the land, Elisha prayed for his eyes to be opened ([2 Kings 6:8-17](#)). Pray that we, like him, will see the fiery army of the Lord vastly outnumbering and out manoeuvring the enemy and give thanks (bit.ly/donfran).

"The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved"

As we see above, summer represents a time of opportunity, of gathering in a harvest. In ancient Israel, the harvest season (mostly from April to September) was a time of hope and expectation (of a good harvest) and preparation (by laying up stores) for the days to come. But the season of opportunity is time bound; opportunities can be missed. In the Bible, harvest symbolises both blessing ([Deuteronomy 28:4,4,8](#); [Psalm 65:11-13](#)) and judgement ([Matthew 13:30](#); [Revelation 14:15](#)). The words above ([Jeremiah 8:20](#)), tell of the outcome of God's people missing the opportunity to repent and turn back to Him and receive the blessings of the harvest, and, instead, coming under His judgement: "When I would gather them, declares the Lord, there are no grapes on the vine, nor figs on the fig tree; even the leaves are withered, and what I gave them has passed away from them" ([Jeremiah 8:13](#)).

Our own nation and even our churches have in many ways turned aside from God's word and ways and done much to provoke His judgement. In a recent article entitled, *The Quiet Judgement on the UK* (possibly an allusion to *The Quiet Revival* - bit.ly/wfdrqre), author, evangelist and minister, David Robertson (bit.ly/weeflea), announced that "the judgement of God has finally come upon the United Kingdom" (bit.ly/ctdrukgj). His words were prompted particularly by the recent votes in Parliament in favour 'assisted dying' and 'decriminalising abortion'.

Pray for a renewal and revival not just of church-going or 'spirituality', but of repentance, true (costly) discipleship, faithfulness to God's word and ways, holiness and purity, and genuine love for the Lord, one another, neighbours and enemies, among God's people (bit.ly/vhspcwitg). Pray for God's mercy on our nation, and that the Holy Spirit will convict many of sin, righteousness and judgement ([John 16:7-11](#)) and that they will ""seek the Lord while He may be found, and call upon Him while he is near" ([Isaiah 55:6](#)).

Foot and mouth disease

Earlier this year, we urged prayer regarding Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), which had re-appeared in several European countries and threatened the UK (bit.ly/vhhcfmd). The threat seems to have receded, but the disease has not gone wholly away and we need to remain vigilant. FMD remains one of the most globally significant livestock diseases, with few other pathogens having comparable impacts on livestock production and trade (bit.ly/vrfmdv). The disease is very costly. An outbreak in Germany this year in just one small herd of water buffalo resulted in estimated costs of up to €1 billion in lost exports (bit.ly/ldfmdwb). According to the National Audit Office (bit.ly/naofmd), the 2001 UK "outbreak cost the public sector over £3 billion and the private sector more than £5 billion". The human and social cost was much greater. The mass slaughter of farm livestock (and even some domestic pets), and the ways in which the slaughter and disposal of animals was 'managed' (especially in the early days) left many people deeply traumatised. For some the epidemic marked the end of their businesses and way of life. Other livestock diseases also continue to impact UK farmers. For example, bluetongue has spread across large parts of England, prompting DEFRA to implement new controls on livestock movement (bit.ly/bbcbtsp).

Pray for understanding, wisdom and discernment to know how to pray, speak and act, for God's people to 'understand the times and know what to do' ([1 Chronicles 12:32](#)) - in this and in all matters (bit.ly/vlospclion; bit.ly/vlospcreap). Pray for all affected by the FMD outbreaks in Hungary and Slovakia, and for all farmers fearful of FMD and other diseases reaching their own livestock. One of the greatest risks is the entry of animal diseases via illegal imports of meat products. Entreat the Lord to watch over and secure the borders of the UK - to 'strengthen the bars of our gates and make peace within our borders' ([Psalm 147:13-14](#)).