

# The power of yeast



King of Heaven, may we be so inspired by your eternal kingdom that our hearts are set on fire with a desire to live out eternity in our daily lives, bringing the kingdom of heaven into our present world. Amen.

## Finding God on the smallholding

by Jeni Parsons

Smallholding isn't all animals and birds. We have begun to grow vegetables and fruit in the poly tunnel and are now eating salad, courgettes and tomatoes at most meals. Giving food away has always been important to us and this amazing productivity

encourages us even more. The God of abundant living showers down food that must be shared if it's not to go to waste.

All the stories of Jesus feeding people with bread and fish, or bread and wine, and the prophet Elijah being the one who tells a starving woman and her child that their jar of meal and the jug of oil will not fail if they are able to share it, give us reason to know that sharing food with neighbours, friends and others in need is the way of living that God delights in. Try it for yourselves and see that God is faithful! 🍞

“And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight.”

Philippians 1:9

Rob James *reflects on* Matthew 13:31-33. 44-52

Jesus' teaching on the kingdom of heaven today is a quick-fire burst of parables. The kingdom of heaven is, it seems, so abundantly overflowing, wonderful and mysterious that it is likened to many things. Image after image pours from Jesus' lips as he tries to give the disciples, and ourselves, some idea of the time beyond time and the place beyond all places that he is talking about. Complete understanding of this kingdom always evades us, but we can have some idea of what it might be like. It is somewhere big enough for all to find shelter; it is precious beyond all imagining; it is supremely, and only, good.

Most of these parables give us hints about what the kingdom of heaven will be like, but one stands out as different from the others. Verse 33 contains the idea of the kingdom being like yeast that is worked through dough until the whole batch of dough feels the effect of that leaven. This is an image of the kingdom being not only eternal, but also present. We do not know what the dough is – it could be an individual person, or it could be a whole society, or the world in general. Knowing about the eternal kingdom should mean that we work with God to bring its leaven to our temporal lives and to our temporal world. 🍞

## International Day of Friendship

by Caroline Hodgson

Did you know that today is International Day of Friendship, as designated by the United Nations General Assembly? You might think you don't need an intergovernmental organisation to tell you about friendship, but then again, perhaps we sometimes take our closest relationships for granted, and a nudge is no bad thing.

The aim of the day is to take a step back and be “thankful for these relationships worldwide, as they promote and encourage

peace, happiness, and unity”. Governments, community groups, and other organisations are encouraged to co-ordinate activities and events that celebrate friendship. There is also a focus on reconciliation, understanding and consensus, and finding comfort in “those friendships that feel like home”. What a lovely image!

Jesus' disciples became friends to him because they were his confidantes (John 15:15). So why not make friendship the focus of your prayers today, and do something to let your friends know that you value your relationship with them. 🍞