

# Come Ye Thankful People Come

Words & Music by Henry Alford, 1844

*D A A<sup>6</sup> Em7sus4 D Bm Bm7 F#7sus4#5 F#*  
Come, ye thankful people, come, raise the song of harvest home;

*Bm Em A D E A D<sup>5/A</sup> A E A<sup>7</sup>*  
All is safely gathered in, ere the winter storms begin;

*A D<sup>5/A</sup> D A<sup>6</sup>sus4 G D G*  
God, our Maker, doth provide for our wants to be supplied;

*B Em A D G D<sup>6</sup>sus4 D A<sup>6</sup> A D<sup>5/A</sup>*  
Come to God's own temple, come, raise the song of harvest home.

*D A A<sup>6</sup> Em7sus4 D Bm Bm7 F#7sus4#5 F#*  
All the world is God's own field, fruit unto His praise to yield;

*Bm Em A D E A D<sup>5/A</sup> A E A<sup>7</sup>*  
Wheat and tares together sown, unto joy or sorrow grown;

*A D<sup>5/A</sup> D A<sup>6</sup>sus4 G D G*  
First the blade, and then the ear, then the full corn shall ap-pear;

*B Em A D G D<sup>6</sup>sus4 D A<sup>6</sup> A D<sup>5/A</sup>*  
Lord of harvest, grant that we, wholesome grain and pure may be.

*D A A<sup>6</sup> Em7sus4 D Bm Bm7 F#7sus4#5 F#*  
For the Lord our God shall come, and shall take His harvest home;

*Bm Em A D E A D<sup>5/A</sup> A E A<sup>7</sup>*  
From His field shall in that day all of-fenses purge a-way;

*A D<sup>5/A</sup> D A<sup>6</sup>sus4 G D G*  
Give His angels charge at last in the fire the tares to cast,

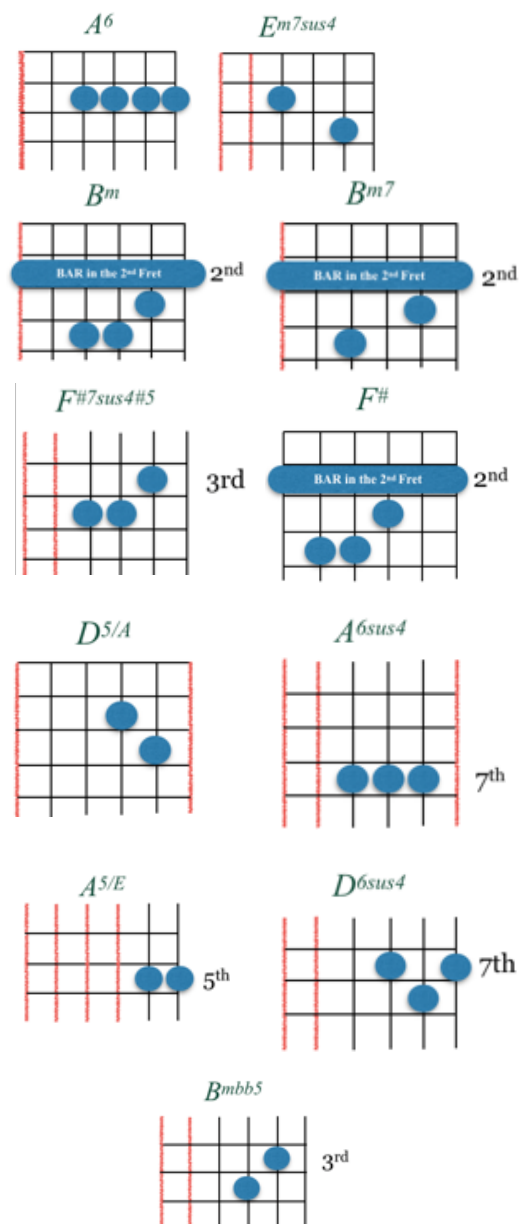
*B Em A D G D<sup>6</sup>sus4 D A<sup>6</sup> A D<sup>5/A</sup>*  
But the fruitful ears to store in His garner ev- er more.

*D A A<sup>6</sup> Em7sus4 D Bm Bm7 F#7sus4#5 F#*  
Even so, Lord, quickly come to thy fi- nal harvest home;

*Bm Em A D E A D<sup>5/A</sup> A E A<sup>7</sup>*  
Gather Thou Thy people in, free from sorrow, free from sin;

*A D<sup>5/A</sup> D A<sup>6</sup>sus4 G D G*  
There forever puri-fied, in Thy presence to a- bide;

*B Em A D G D<sup>6</sup>sus4 D A<sup>6</sup> A D<sup>5/A</sup>*  
Come with all Thine angels, come, raise the glorious harvest home.



# Scripture and History

“Come, Ye Thankful People, Come” was written by Henry Alford (1810-1871) and has become a Thanksgiving tradition.

Born into a long line of Anglican clergymen, Alford was raised early by his father and later by his uncle, Rev. Samuel Alford, due to his mother’s death during his birth. In 1827 he became a scholar at Trinity College where he received all his secondary education (B.A. 1832, M.A. 1835). He was ordained a priest in the Anglican church in 1834, served in several vicarage during his Pastoral vocation.



This hymn first appeared in Alford’s *Psalms and Hymns, adapted to the Sundays and Holydays throughout the year* (1844) with a final revision printed in the *Canterbury Dictionary of Hymnody* 1868. Alford used traditional language and imagery of the rural community to lend words of thankfulness for God’s provision and to expand upon:

**Matthew 13:24-30:** He proposed another parable to them. “The kingdom of heaven may be likened to a man who sowed good seed in his field. While everyone was asleep his enemy came and sowed weeds all through the wheat, and then went off. When the crop grew and bore fruit, the weeds appeared as well. The slaves of the householder came to him and said, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where have the weeds come from?’ He answered, ‘An enemy has done this.’ His slaves said to him, ‘Do you want us to go and pull them up?’ He replied, ‘No, if you pull up the weeds you might uproot the wheat along with them. Let them grow together until harvest; then at harvest time I will say to the harvesters, “First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles for burning; but gather the wheat into my barn.”’”



Tom Stewart, in his writing, says:

[*The hymn*] addresses the common theme of harvest festivals, called in England the Harvest Home, which is celebrated in English churches usually during the month of September. A thanksgiving service would be held in the church, where the bounty of the harvest is collected, displayed with the fall trappings of pumpkins and autumn leaves, and then dispensed to the needy. And, of course, unlike the humanist that is essentially grateful to only himself, a true Harvest Home celebration acknowledges the provision of God, as did the Pilgrims in 1621 and the ancient Hebrews in their Feast of Firstfruits in the spring on the first day after Passover at the time of the barley harvest.

Article by Victoria Schwarz & the Rev. Wilson Pruitt in [www.umcdiscipleship.org](http://www.umcdiscipleship.org)