

Vicar's Letter October 2018
Harvest Thanksgiving

Dear Friends

Today is our service of Harvest Thanksgiving, in which we celebrate all that God has provided for us to enjoy. Whilst we are blessed with so much abundance we are conscious in particular of the suffering of the people of Sulawesi, Indonesia following the impact of the earthquake and tsunami. It is appropriate therefore that we should express our thanksgiving in acts of generosity to support the relief efforts taking place. For this reason I have suggested that we donate our regular Sunday offering to the Tear Fund emergency disaster appeal and if you are a tax payer please use the Tear Fund Gift Aid envelopes in order to increase the benefit of your gift. We are always conscious that while we enjoy relative wealth and prosperity, there is so much suffering, injustice and unhappiness in our world. Nonetheless we must not allow the dark clouds of suffering to conceal the light and warmth of the Son or let them distract us from the amazing beauty of all that God has made for us to enjoy. It reflects his heart of generosity towards his creation. St Paul reminds us that creation was subjected to futility and is in bondage to decay 'groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to this present time' (Romans 8:20-22) with devastating consequences.

In the meantime every prayer we pray, every kind word spoken, every generous act undertaken contributes to building the Kingdom of God and redeeming the brokenness of our world, hastening the day when in Christ all things will be made new (Revelation 21:5). So there is a job to be done as Paul reminds us:

'For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do' (Ephesians 2:10)

God is extraordinarily generous. He gives 'generously to all' (James 1:5). If God is so generous, we should also be generous.

Church Weekend Away: 5-7th July 2018

Building on the excitement of our weekend away as a church family last year, many of you have already booked your places for next July and therefore benefited from the priority booking of 'first come first served'. For those who have not yet booked, please contact Jo Davies to arrange your bookings.

Last year a large proportion of the congregation were able to join us (nearly 200 of us) which meant we not only had some wonderful worship and teaching times but lots of fun and meeting of new people too. This year we have responded to the feedback we received so plan to fine tune to make it even better! Here are a few comments from last year:

- *'Everything ran very smoothly, was brilliantly organised and we didn't want to go home!'*
- *"The teaching was amazing! Fellowship with Church was fantastic; met lots of new people. The kids had an awesome time too."*
- *"The whole thing has been great!"*
- *"It was lovely having great teams looking after the kids and fantastic speakers – good not to have to cook either!"*
- *"The food and the facilities were excellent"*

The Mop Fair and Art Exhibition

Next week we will be demonstrating generosity to our community once more through opening the doors of the church during the two evenings of the Mop Fair. Through the free provision of cakes, biscuits and hot and cold drinks and a place to sit and be still, we want to be a blessing to our community and in this way reflect God's heart of generosity and love. Do come and join us 6.45pm – 9.45pm each evening.

'Generosity is not an occasional act; it is a way of living'.

With every blessing in Christ,
Stephen