

A few words from the Vicar

October already! It doesn't seem long since I wrote my January article. Now it's well and truly Autumn and our Harvest Festival is almost upon us.

Harvest is a time for remembering that all we have comes from God. Yes, we have to work hard to earn a living but ultimately it is God who provides. So it is good to have a time of year when we give thanks to Him for his bountiful provision. In the words of the chorus from *'We plough the fields and scatter'*:

*All good gifts around us
Are sent from heaven above;
Then thank the Lord,
O thank the Lord,
For all His love.*

The words of this great Harvest hymn remain apt today even though the vast majority of us in this country no longer earn a living from agriculture.

Although quintessentially English, the hymn actually comes from a German poem by Matthias Claudius published in 1782, *'Wir pflügen und wir streuen'*. It wasn't until 1861 that the hymn was translated into English by Jane Montgomery Campbell. And, if you know your history, you will know that by then most people in England were already living in our towns and cities. In the 19th Century the urban population in England increased from 17% (1801) to 72% (1891).

So it was a hymn to remind mill workers and mill owners alike that God provided for them in the same way he had done for their (and our) ancestors who had worked the land.

Once again this year, we'll be collecting basic toiletries and tinned / dried food (but not fresh fruit and veg). These will go

to support a local charity, 'Porch Boxes', who provide crisis packs for those in need.

Just as God provides all year round, not just at Harvest, we support 'Porch Boxes' all the year round and have a collection box for them near the old font in Church. So, when you do your food shop it's a good idea to buy something extra for 'Porch Boxes' and bring it to Church with you.

Of course, in our gratitude there is much more each of us could do and many more charities we could each support. The fact is God is generous towards us. Ultimately all we have comes from Him, so we should humbly thank him by being generous towards others, especially those in any kind of need.

The final verse of 'We plough the fields' sums up this attitude to life neatly:

*We thank Thee, then, O Father,
for all things bright and good,
The seed time and the harvest,
our life, our health, and food;
Accept the gifts we offer,
for all Thy love imparts,
and what Thou most desirest,
our humble, thankful hearts.*

Every Blessing

Dave