

Dear Friends

Recently, my husband, Paul, and I spent a week on the beautiful island of Sark. The island itself is just over, there are no motorised vehicles allowed and no streetlights, earning it the status of the world's first dark sky island. The way of life is totally alien to most people's normal routines – nobody locks their doors, everyone travels by bike or on foot, and time is measured by the sound of the church bells and the position of the sun. The pace of life is considerably slower than the normal hectic pace of the average person's daily life, so much so, we found it took us a couple of days to settle in to island life and be able to appreciate the wonder of the place.

We spent our week hiking and cycling around the island; exploring the numerous coastal paths, bays and caves. It felt like every time we turned a corner there was another breath-taking view to enjoy, from a natural rock pool large enough to swim in which was only accessible by clambering over huge rocks at low tide, to the majesty of the night sky filled with stars and meteors and, even, the Milky Way. Even just sitting outside our rented apartment, eating lobster fresh from the sea with just the sound of the bees buzzing and the gulls screeching, afforded us a unique opportunity to really appreciate the wonders of the natural world that God created.

During our week, I truly felt closer to God than at almost any other time in my life. Through those rugged cliff paths and clear, crystal waters, I heard a calling to embrace life and all the challenges that God places before me. Perhaps you have had a similar experience of God speaking to you through nature. Perhaps you have stood next to a mountain range and felt awe at God's grandeur, or sat by an ocean basking in God's peace and felt it enter your spirit. For me, this was a daily occurrence on the island of Sark, and I was reminded of an inscription that can be found on a plaque on another island, Iona, it reads:

"Sitting silently, doing nothing, spring comes and the grass grows."

It is a reminder that we should all take the time in our busy lives to lay aside our preoccupations and allow ourselves to reconnect with God; to remember to appreciate the beauty and majesty all around us. "In returning and rest you shall be saved," says God through Isaiah, "In quietness and trust shall be your strength." There is a divine imperative to down tools and just sit a while.

The Bible is full of stories of people meeting with God powerfully in natural surroundings. I think of Moses and his burning bush in the wilderness, Elijah enduring earthquake and fire on a mountain top and finally hearing God in a gentle whisper of wind, and Jesus going up on a mountain to pray.

We are not all fortunate enough to live somewhere like Sark where God is easy to find in every rocky path, sea view, and starry sky, however, we can all take time to go outside and enjoy what we can – the beautiful autumn colours, the dawn chorus, unexpected warm days. However and wherever you have the chance to get out into the natural world I hope you'll take it and soak in the beauty of God's creation. Spend a day away from your normal surroundings and travel to the beach or the mountains or just a field nearby. Maybe it's enough to put some fresh flowers on the table or nurture a new houseplant. Either way, you're invited to discover and experience God in a new way. I hope you will accept!

Vicky Miller

Aspects of life at St Faith and St Laurence

Morning prayer – is normally said Monday to Thursday and Saturday at 8.15 am in the Lady Chapel. We use Common Worship Daily Prayer, all are welcome to come and join in.

Reflections A chance to meet together over a cuppa and reflect on the Gospel reading for the previous Sunday. A group meets on Mondays from 1.45-3pm Venues are listed in the Programme of the month.

Task Groups – The church has a number of task groups enabling areas of church life. These are listed in the magazine with the contact details of the chairs. If you would like to be a part of a groups please contact the relevant chair or Priscilla. All are welcome to join.

Stay and Play meets on Thursday between 9.30 and 11am in the Hall to give a chance for people with young children to meet and the children to play. All are welcome. Cost £1.50 per family.

Sunday Club meets on the first and third Sundays of each month except during the holidays. We hold an extra Sunday Club on days when there is a baptism. All are welcome to join in hearing and experiencing a Bible Story and learning together about what it means for our daily lives.

Messy Church takes place on the first Saturday of each month, most months. A chance for children and parents/ carers to have an informal time of worship, and discovering about a Bible story through song, craft, listening, cooking and so much more. Dates are published in advance and all are welcome to come along.

Planned Giving helps people make giving regular. You decide how much you can afford to give. You can join the envelope scheme weekly or monthly or pay by Standing Order or annually by cheque. Income tax payers are asked to Gift Aid their giving, so the Church can reclaim the tax on their donations at no extra cost to the donors. For details, contact Jackie Taylor or Brenda Stott

Call in for Coffee time together over a cuppa on a Wednesday morning from 10.30 -12.00. if needed we can arrange for someone to collect you and then take you home. Please ring Pauline Sitford (427 7005). If you are passing, do call in, or bring a friend, all are welcome.

We support **Recycling**. We have a special collection on the first Sunday of every month when we collect ALUMINIUM cans and foil which can be sold and the money raised is donated to our Mission Partners in Chile (through USPG) We also have envelopes for recycling mobile phones again supporting USPG. Pauline Sitford (427 7005).

Your Church Hall needs you! Hall Bookings Organiser: Vacancy (Jan 18)

The hall is a fantastic resource for church members and the wider community. It's also a major financial contributor, bringing in around 20% of our total income.

Could you undertake the important role of organising bookings for the Hall and Committee Room?

To help you decide, here's an outline of what's involved:

Maintain a diary of bookings

Produce weekly booking sheets

Receive and process new bookings

Deal with queries arising from users

Make arrangements to open and close the Hall

Send out invoices, receive and record payments, issue receipts

Liaise with the Treasurer, Churchwardens, Vicar, Finance & General Purposes

Task Group.

Ongoing advice and support will be available.

If you're interested, please contact:

Bronwen Jones in person or by email: d.bronwen.jones@gmail.com.

FOODBANK and HARVEST



Traditionally, Harvest Festivals meant bringing fresh produce to Church to give thanks for the fruit and vegetables, eggs, honey and grain which we garnered from our gardens, allotments and local farms. Nowadays, these items are mainly bought from our supermarkets and may originate in countries far from the UK, but the Harvest Festival tradition of thanksgiving continues.

This year, as in previous years, your gifts of tinned and dried food and long-life juice and UHT milk in cartons will be taken to the Quinton and Oldbury Foodbank where it will be distributed to individuals and families in need. Fresh produce will be given to St Joseph's Home.

There is a list by the Foodbank Collection point of the items we need. We appeal for your generosity and thank you in advance on behalf of the recipients of your gifts.

Brenda Stott



Holy Baptism

September 3 Livvy Isla Staien and Hughie Benjamin Staien

Funeral in Church

Sept 22 Brian Cox

FACTS AND FIGURES

| Week Beginning | Communicants | Loose Plate £ | Planned Giving £ | Gift Aid £ |
|------------------------|--------------|------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| Aug 20 | 74 | 86.03 | 320.46 | 1.00 |
| Aug 27 | 67 | 23.20 | 394.51 | |
| Sept 3 | 76 | 121.85 | 284.38 | 22.00 |
| Sept 10 | 29 | 47.65 | 139.43 | 10.00 |
| Standing Orders | | | 927.50 | 21.42 |
| Parish Giving | | | 990.00 | 247.50 |

The Revd Steve Morris, a London priest, warns new clergy to manage their expectations. After one of his very first services, a parishioner came up to ask if he wrote his sermons down and if so, could he have a copy. He wrote in 'Christian Today' that he felt a "flurry of pride" and wondered if the man wanted to keep it for posterity or to go over its message again. The worshipper replied, "No, Steve. I fell asleep as you started speaking and only woke up when you said 'Amen'."

Home Communion We have a team of lay people trained and able to bring Home Communion usually on a monthly basis. This is for those who are unable to come to church long term. If the situation is more temporary for example after an operation you can also receive communion, usually from Priscilla. In either case please contact Priscilla.

Traidcraft

Traidcraft sells a range of fairly traded food, cards, clothes and accessories. We use Traidcraft tea and coffee and everything we buy helps fight poverty and supports our church. You can order seasonal gifts through the church at Christmas time when catalogues will be available. Any questions, please ask Ruth Jeavons or Bronwen Jones.

'easyfundraising'

Next time you shop online, think of St Faith and St Laurence and raise free donations with 3,000+ retailers:

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/stfaithandstlaurence>

Women's Fellowship meets on the first Monday of the month from March to December. Meetings are held in the Committee Room 7.30 for 8pm. We have talks on a variety of subjects. See Programme of the Month for details.

Prayer Ministry Team

Prayer ministry is offered during the 10am Communion on Sundays. People can receive prayer for themselves or for any situation that is important to them. It takes place in the Lady Chapel during the distribution of communion.

Service with no name

This takes place on the first Thursday in the month in church at 7.30pm.

Foodbank

We collect food for the Quinton and Oldbury Foodbank. There is a box in church and food can be placed there at any time. The list of things that are needed is in church and in the hall. Food is distributed from St Boniface Church on Wednesdays and Paul and Barney's place on Fridays. Vouchers are required to receive food.

Choir and Music.

Choir Practice takes place weekly, normally on Thursdays 6-7pm. Anyone interested in singing in the choir should contact Simon Palmer, Organist & Choirmaster. (Contact details on page cover) We also like to encourage instrumentalists to perform in church, either in services or in concerts.

All is safely gathered in?

The interesting thing about harvest is that people have become more and more keen on celebrating it the further they have got from being the ones who gather in the crops in the fields.

The harvest festival is a festival which most people think goes back into the mists of time. We imagine joyful peasants accompanying horse drawn carts full of produce back into barns. We imagine the whole village coming together to celebrate that all has been safely gathered in. A lot of us, quite probably, think back to harvests that we knew as a child and fondly imagine that it was ever thus. Not so, of course.

The 'all is safely gathered in' style of harvest festival is something that is pretty modern and goes back little further than our Victorian forebears. The hymns that people tend to think of as being traditional harvest hymns, have relatively modern dates to them. You will find little mention of harvest festival in Cranmer's prayer book.

In some parts of England and Scotland, if ever there was a traditional harvest, it was Lammas-time, the celebration of the first fruits of the harvest at the start of August. The idea being, and this one does go back into the mists of time, that if you offer God the first bit of the harvest, God will be so pleased and delighted by the offer, that you get a bumper crop and get to keep the rest all to yourself. Good economics but bad spirituality, and that idea goes back long before Christianity.

So harvest is something of a muddle. Yet we still celebrate it, and I think that it is right that we should. Let me offer three reasons why.

Firstly, it is good to be thankful. Secondly, it is good to recognise the labours of others. Thirdly, it helps us to be aware of the spirituality of the environment, and our place as human beings on this beautiful, but fragile planet.

First, it is good to be thankful. Indeed, I think that being a thankful person is part of what it means to be a whole person. For everyone has in them a sense of thankfulness. There is not a culture in the world which does not try to teach its children to be thankful people. To be thankful is to be human. We are a thankful people.

Secondly, I said that harvest allows us to remember that labour of others. Whether it is the virtues of science, or the skills of a team or those who do indeed gather the harvest in the fields, it does not matter. We rely on others for our daily bread. It is good to remember them once in a while.

Saint Michael de Rupe, Brent Tor, Devon

It was amazing to see the picture of our little church in Brentor on the cover of July's St Faith and St Laurence parish magazine.

Sally (nee Steer) lived in Harborne and attended St Faith and St Laurence Church and its Sunday School until she went to college in Sheffield.

We trained for Reader Ministry and have served as Licensed Readers since 2011 in the Tavy Mission Community. We therefore officiate at this tiny church of Saint Michael – the highest working church in England - frequently during the summer months. Your readers may be interested to know that this ancient little church has been re-roofed this spring. The gas lighting has been maintained with difficulty for many years but we were told that no one could be found to service or repair it and it has had to be decommissioned for safety reasons.

Fortunately for us, a faculty has been granted by the Diocese of Exeter for the installation of solar panels behind the newly restored parapets of the roof. This will allow us to fit new solar powered light fittings which will replicate the appearance of the existing gas mantles as well as providing much better lighting. Preaching at Evensong by the light of head torches has been an experience I would not wish to repeat too often!

You may also be interested to know that the peal of five bells by our dedicated team of ringers can be heard regularly across the surrounding fields. This summer we have given shelter to *Ottery St Mary* within the church as part of the Moor Otters Trail organized by Dartmoor National Park to raise awareness of conservation issues.

We see our ministry as one of giving hospitality both within and outside our churches, when we are not volunteering for church duty, we offer three self-catering cottages and Bed & Breakfast accommodation in our home.

If any of your congregation are thinking of visiting Brent Tor please let us know as we would be delighted to welcome them. This is a special place to live in which provides many opportunities for reflection and healing.

www.sallysholidaycottages.co.uk

Christopher and Sally Pancheri

11th September 2017

A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY.



A Wassail Evening with Simon and the choir is being arranged for
Saturday, 16th December.

There will also a number of our usual stalls in the Hall together with tea (or coffee) and cakes in the Committee Room. This will begin late afternoon (time tbc) with the concert at 7.30 pm. Further details will be in the November magazine.

This event is to replace the St. Nicholas Fair for this year - as we held the Fun Day in the summer we felt the need for something different!! We hope you will give it your support.

SOCIALS TASK GROUP.

COVER STORY

This month's cover shows Cathreen, aged five collecting cassava roots as part of the harvest in Malawi.

Cassava is the most important root crop in Malawi, and it is grown in most parts of the country. It is a staple food crop for about 30% of the 10 million people in Malawi, especially those in the five districts (Karonga, Rumpi, Nkhata Bay, Nkhotakota, and Salima) along the shores of Lake Malawi, where the soils are generally poor. It is grown as a food reserve or cash crop in the other parts of the country where the staple crop is maize.

MALAWI CONTAINER

The container which left Birmingham on June 10th, has arrived and has been safely unpacked and goods distributed to all recipients. We are starting to get some thank you messages back, and some are quite moving.

I said at the beginning, that harvest has got more popular the further people have got from actually gathering in the crops themselves. Harvest Festival is one of the unlikely products of the Industrial Revolution.

Perhaps that is not an anomaly, but rather a good thing. For to remember our interdependence, is to think of others and to do so is to extend our sense of thankfulness beyond being thankful simply to our creator God, to being thankful for our neighbours.

At harvest time we need to renew our awareness of environmental or 'green' issues that effect the whole of God's creation. Realising the dangers the earth faces from the greed and exploitation of its resources, it is vital that the Church rediscovers a reverence for creation that has almost been lost sight of. It is interesting that there is a resurgent interest in those strands of our Christian heritage - the Franciscan and Celtic traditions - that proclaim our kinship and connection with the elements of the natural world.

As we come to celebrate this harvest time, I hope that we will stop and reflect seriously on the present well-being (or not) of God's creation. Let us be thankful for God's many blessings to us, yes, but do not neglect to feel something of the pain of the sufferings of God's world.

The following poem challenges us to not only feel the pain, but take action to alleviate it.

*I was hungry, and you formed a humanities group to discuss my hunger,
I was imprisoned, and you crept off quietly to your chapel and prayed for my release.
I was naked, and in your mind you debated the morality of my appearance.
I was sick, and you knelt and thanked God for your health.
I was homeless, and you preached to me of the spiritual shelter of the love of God.
I was lonely, and you left me alone to pray for me.
You seem so holy, so close to God but I am still hungry - and lonely - and cold.*

When we next sit down to eat, we might like to use this grace of Bishop Charles Gore (first Bishop of Birmingham)

'Lord, forgive that we feast while others starve!'

Peter Stokes

Thank you, Dr Luke!

'Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, bless the bed that I lie on' - a rhyme many of us learnt at Sunday School. At least it meant we never forget the names of the writers of the four Gospels. This month Luke, the writer of the third of them, has his feast day –18th October.

He was a 'physician' - an educated man and probably the only New Testament writer who was not a Jew. In modern terms he was Turkish.

Luke's Gospel has established him as a major figure in the Christian Church. Mark's Gospel may have more drama, Matthew's more prophetic background and John's a more profound sense of the mystery of the divine, but Luke offers us a Jesus who is utterly and believably real. This man turned no one away, cared for the marginalised, the persecuted and the sinful. His Gospel is full of people we can recognise - indeed, in whom we can often recognise ourselves.

He was also a masterly story-teller. Read the story of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32). Read it not as a sacred text but as a brilliant piece of story-telling with subtle repetitions, believable characters, drama and profound emotion.

There are more women in Luke's Gospel than in any of the others, but also more poor people, more lepers, more 'sinners' and tax-collectors, more 'outsiders' who are shown to be 'inside' the love of Christ. This is the great Gospel of inclusion and compassion. Here is a Jesus for the whole world and for every one of us.

Thank you, Dr Luke!

Chris Price

As St Luke is the patron saint of physicians and surgeons, I thought you might enjoy these comments, allegedly taken from actual medical records, dictated by doctors.

From medical records....

On the second day, the knee was better and on the third day it had completely disappeared.

The patient has been depressed ever since she began seeing me in 1983.

Discharge status: Alive but without permission.

She slipped on the ice in early December and her legs went in separate directions.

The patient was released to the outpatient department without dressing.

She is numb from the toes down.

Bible Sunday - Sunday 29th October

Supporting the work of the Bible Society

Bible Sunday is an annual date in the church calendar when we celebrate the Bible's message. It began over 100 years ago as part of Bible Society's centenary celebrations and has continued every year since.

For over 200 years Bible Society has been working to bring the Bible to life; to help people around the world engage with it, relate to it, and make sense of it.

That single mission drives a huge range of activities. In some parts of the world, bringing the Bible to life focuses on translation and distribution projects. Elsewhere it focuses on leadership training, or literacy programmes, or interfaith dialogue. Closer to home, in England and Wales, it focuses on advocacy effort, schools outreach and devotional resources. Bible Society is doing everything it can to help individuals and communities to engage with the Bible because it believes that when they do, lives can change – for good.

God sends us out into the world -

not to build walls

but to dismantle barriers.

Not to load on chains

but to liberate the oppressed.

Not to close our doors

but to welcome in the stranger.

Not to further fragment the body of

Christ

but to re-imagine it.

God sends us out into the world

to live as a sign

of the justice and peace

of his kingdom.

Pat Bennett

7 top tips for reading the Bible

The Bible can seem overwhelming, boring and difficult, but a few basic tips can help you understand it more. Try these...

1. Understand the historical context in which the Bible is written. Even the newest bits are about 2,000 years old. So start asking yourself questions about what it might have been like when the books were written and Google the answers. It will take you on a journey into the world of the biblical writers and open your eyes to new and fascinating insights.
2. Don't read passages entirely on their own, look at what comes before and after them. It's easy to take verses, or sometimes whole stories, out of context, by reading them by themselves. Try to work out where they fit in the bigger story or argument of the book. You'll get a much better sense of what's going on and what it all has to say to you.
3. Read what's actually there, not what you think might be there This is particularly true for famous verses; we can think we know what it says and not actually read it. So slow down and chew it over. You'll often find you understand it in a new way.
4. Read the Bible with other people. We all bring our own experiences to the Bible so it's really helpful to read the Bible with other people, for example, a home group or a prayer triplet. You'll gain other people's perspective on what they think the Bible says. To get some really different ideas, read it with someone from a different culture.
5. Don't read the Bible from start to finish like a novel. It isn't one. Start with the bits that you can get on with. You might find Mark might be more interesting than Hebrews, Genesis more than Leviticus, because stories are often easier to read than sermons or laws. Once you have read the stories you might like to turn to some poetry (Psalms) or some letters.
6. Use different translations. There are lots and lots of different translations. Look for the one you like best. It's often a good idea to have a very literal translation (like the NRSV) and one that's in easy-to-read modern English (like the CEV). The differences between them will get you thinking.
7. And finally, don't beat yourself up if you're struggling. The Bible can be a difficult book to read when you begin, but the more you read it, the more you'll get to grips with it. If you keep going you'll learn to love it and understand it better, and soon you won't be able to remember how you got by without it.

Paula Gooder

(Paula is Director of Mission Learning and Development for our diocese)



Royal School of Church Music Annual Festival Service

Saturday 14 October at 5.30 pm

On 14th October our choir will join with other RSCM choirs from the Birmingham Area to sing the Annual RSCM Festival Service at St Chad's RC Cathedral. The event will be directed by David Saint, Director of Music at the Cathedral.

At this service the Dean and Archbishop Bernard Longley will be presenting the Dean's and Bishop's awards (green and purple ribbons) to choristers who have passed them successfully over the past year.

We have a record number receiving their ribbons this time – nine of our choristers - so we do hope that family, friends and member of the congregation will be able to join us and support them. The service begins at 5.30 pm and lasts about an hour.

Simon Palmer, Organist & Choirmaster

Stay and Play

'Stay and Play' has been going in the present form for over ten years. We meet in the church hall every Thursday from 9.30-11.00. We welcome children from birth to nursery school age along with their mums, carers and grandparents. It is a place where adults can meet in an informal way while children play in a safe environment. It gives opportunities for mums who are new to the area on maternity leave to form friendships. There is a small charge per family to cover toast and drinks.

Up to now it has been organised by a small group of people who work on a rota doing one week in four. Unfortunately, age creeps on and we now need some more helpers - both male and female -to join the existing team. Mainly we put out the toys before the children come, make toast and drinks and tidy up at the end.

If you are interested in helping please contact **Hilary Shaylor on 0121 454 0461**

The Bishop's Messengers and St Faith's

A little book, published in 1950 (priced at two shillings!) by The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, tells a remarkable story. The St Faith's of the title is in the Brandon Diocese of the Anglican Church in Canada, and it was there that Miss Marguerita Fowler came from England fairly early in the last century and founded the Canadian 'Bishop's Messengers' to spread the gospel, and establish schools and missions over a very large area. Starting at Swan River Valley, then the northern limit of the main settled area, and a parish itself some 400 miles square, she and her workers extended their influence over the vast areas leading north to Hudson Bay.

The Mother House of this lay order (it seems never to have been monastic as such, although they wore distinctive clothing, created a Rule, recited daily offices and held retreats) became known as a true household of faith. 'We called the house St. Faith's because we already had a vision of the work opening in many directions, and we realized we were out on a "venture of faith",' Miss Fowler wrote in 1931. She and her helpers worked tirelessly in remote areas, both with white settlers and with the Sioux Indians, and established Sunday Schools and medical facilities.

She retired eventually to England, where she died in 1970. An internet search of the current Diocese shows no trace of St Faith's name, the mother house having been renamed and its purpose changed, although the scattered mission outposts her team helped to set up exist today as staffed Anglican parishes. What also remains is a plaque in Brandon Cathedral, recorded on its website. It reads:

**To the Glory of God and in memory of Margeurita D. Fowler O.B.E.
Founder of Bishop's Messengers of St Faith's 1928,
Born 1884 –Died 1970**

It was placed there, according to the Cathedral, 'on Feb. 26, 1973 in honour of a great pioneer lady whose vision and fervent dedication to a calling has furnished the people of Swan River and surrounding areas with a unique experience in courage, Christian love and charity.'

The little book (apparently quite a rarity) tells the story of this indomitable Anglican lady. She chose our patron's name for its meaning rather than its story, but her life and work add a very real lustre to the long story of Saint Faith and all those associated with her down the centuries.

(We remember Saint Faith on October 6th)



I would like to raise money for the **Church Hall Roof** by using a plan of the church ceiling and asking anyone to donate one or more squares of the ceiling. To do this I would get a large sheet of cardboard and draw a map of the ceiling and when anyone sees me and pays for a square (s) their name will be entered on the chart unless the squares have already been sold, they can choose to write their name or memory message, on the squares they have chosen or they can ask me to do it.

You can purchase as many squares as you like for yourself or in memory of a loved one. If we can sell at least most of them, we can raise between **£4,000** and **£4,500** and with your help we can do it.

We will sell all squares at £5.00 each and I will be in the church every Sunday morning and will commence the sale of the shares on the last day of October. Maps of the squares on a A1 sheet of cardboard (or possibly on 2) and left locked away somewhere in church and I get it out every Sunday morning.

No one will be able to order a square unless the payment as been made to me.

If paying by cheque, please make it payable to ST FAITH AND ST LAURENCE.

If you cannot see me on a Sunday morning please contact me on:

0121 682 2830 or by email: lenmyers@blueyonder.co.uk

Len Myers

Time for a smile

A minister's son, a musician's son, and an artist's son were talking. The artist's son said, "My dad can scribble something on a piece of paper, call it a picture, and sell it for £200." The musician's son said, "Oh, that's nothing! My dad can scribble something on a piece of paper, call it a song, and sell it for £500." The minister's son looked at them and said, "You two don't know anything. My dad can scribble something on a piece of paper, call it a sermon, and it takes up to 6 people to gather up all the money!"

Christian Aid- Harvest in Malawi

In this season of Harvest, most of us in the UK are not in the fields gathering or gleaning, but with our families and friends, giving thanks for God's plentiful gifts. As we celebrate and praise God for providing all we need to eat, we also stand with our sisters and brothers in Malawi whose harvests are uncertain.

We stand with Frank, a farmer in Malawi, who was taught a planting calendar by his grandfather based on the regular seasons – but the ever-changing climate means he can't depend on this knowledge any longer. He used to rely on growing maize to feed his family, but this crop is now unsuited to Malawi and fails easily when the rains don't come.

When the drought ruined the harvest, Frank's four-year-old son became critically ill and he had to carry him on foot to the hospital four miles away. Frank was told that his son was severely malnourished.

"It is very pathetic, as a father, to feel helpless like that, to feel like you cannot provide food for your children, and that there is nothing you can do to make them better when they are crying."

Our partner, the Evangelical Association of Malawi, has been helping Frank and his family to thrive in such hostile conditions. With our support, Frank has successfully grown a special variety of pigeon peas. This remarkable crop is high in protein and its deep roots are ideal for southern Malawi's dry soil, as it can resist the destructive flash flooding which is on the rise in the country.

Frank has already had a bumper crop of pigeon peas, but he still hasn't been able to make a profit. Many farmers like Frank work individually and often lack the space to effectively store their peas. This means they have no choice but to sell their harvests to unscrupulous middlemen, traders who buy at farm gates and drive prices down to the lowest level.

With your support, this project will bring farmers together into Farmers' Clubs, where they will learn vital business skills and work together to plan their planting to ensure a good balance of crops. They'll learn marketing techniques and new methods for production and storage of pigeon peas, and they will be trained in negotiating fair prices for their crops. For Frank, this could mean he is able to make a profit – enough to feed his family and even send his four children to school.

Jesus tells us that he has come so that we may have life and have it abundantly. Through giving, acting, and praying this harvest, you will help Frank and farmers like him not just to survive, but to thrive.

Just £10 could pay for a 5kg bag of seeds, enough to plant more than an acre of pigeon peas; £70 could buy a bicycle so that an experienced farmer can reach over 100 farmers in remote areas to teach essential skills; and £500 could set up a Farmers' Club, a tried and tested way to help a whole community of farmers beat the middlemen and get a fair price for their peas. To find out more about how you can get involved this harvest, please visit caid.org.uk/harvest.

A PRAYER FOR HARVEST

Harvest Festival is traditionally a celebration of the food grown on the land. Thanksgiving ceremonies and celebrations for a successful harvest are both worldwide and very ancient. Harvest Festival reminds Christians of all the good things God gives them.

I have chosen this prayer to remind us that without God our Creator there would be nothing. Without God there would be no love. Without love we cannot be there for one another particularly when people we know and love and care about are going through the darkest of times.

May this eternal truth be always on our hearts,
That the God who breathed this world into being,
Placed stars into the heavens
And designed a butterfly's wing,
Is the God who entrusted his life
to the care of ordinary people,
became vulnerable that we might know
how strong is the power of Love,
A mystery so deep it is impossible to grasp,
A mystery so beautiful it is impossible to ignore.

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Sally Griffiths



PROGRAMME FOR OCTOBER

SUN 1 SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

8.00 am Holy Communion
Exodus 17.1-7; Philippians 2.1-13; Matthew 21.23-32

10.00 am Family Communion
Readings as at 8am

6.30 pm Evensong *Psalms 124*
Ezekiel 37.15-end ; 1 John 2.22-end

Mon 2 1.45 pm Reflections *143 Balden Road*
 7.45 pm Churchwomen's Fellowship *Committee Room*
 The Wonderful World of Cinema-John Smith

Wed 4 10.30 am Call in for Coffee *Committee Room*
 11.00 am Holy Communion *Lady Chapel*
Nehemiah 2.1-8; Luke 9.57-end

Thu 5 9.30 am Stay and Play *Hall*
 6.00 pm Choir Practice *Church*
 7.30 pm Service with no name *Church*

SUN 8 HARVEST FESTIVAL

8.00 am Holy Communion
Deuteronomy 8.7-18; 2 Corinthians 9.6-end; Luke 12.16-30

10.00 am Morning Praise followed by Harvest Lunch

6.30 pm Sung Eucharist
Readings as at 8am

Mon 9 1.45 pm Reflections *143 Balden Road*

Tue 10 10.30 am Queen Mother Gardens Service

Wed 11 10.30 am Call in for Coffee *Committee Room*
 11.00 am Holy Communion *Lady Chapel*
Jonah 4; Luke 11.1-4

Thu 12 9.30 am Stay and Play *Hall*
 6.00 pm Choir Practice *Church*

SUN 15 EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

8.00 am Holy Communion
Isaiah 25.1-9; Philippians 4.1-9; Matthew 22.1-14

10.00 am Family Communion
Readings as at 8am

6.30 pm Evensong *Psalms 139.1-18*
Proverbs 3.1-18; 1 John 3.1-15

Mon 16 1.45 pm Reflections *143 Balden Road*

Wed 18 10.30 am Call in for Coffee *Committee Room*
 11.00 am Holy Communion *Lady Chapel*
2 Timothy 4.5-17; Luke 10.1-9

Thu 19 9.30 am Stay and Play *Hall*
 6.00 pm Choir Practice *Church*

SUN 22 NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

8.00 am Holy Communion
Isaiah 45.1-7; 1 Thessalonians 1.1-10; Matthew 22.15-2

10.00 am Family Communion
Readings as at 8am

6.30 pm Evensong *Psalms 142*
Proverbs 4.1-18; 1 John 3.16-4.6

Mon 23 1.45 pm Reflections *143 Balden Road*

Tue 24 2.30 pm William Lench Court Service

Wed 25 10.30 am Call in for Coffee *Committee Room*
 11.00 am Holy Communion *Lady Chapel*
Romans 6.12-18; Luke 12.39-48

Thu 26 9.30 am Stay and Play *Hall*
 6.00 pm Choir Practice *Church*

SUN 29 LAST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

8.00 am Holy Communion
Nehemiah 8.1-12; Colossians 3.12-17; Matthew 24.30-35

10.00 am Family Communion
Readings as at 8am

6.30 pm All Souls' Service
Readings TBA

Mon 30 1.45 pm Reflections *143 Balden Road*

Thoughts for the month

If you want the rainbow, you've got to put up with the rain.
 Only a lawyer could write an eighty-page document and call it a brief.
 Why does a ship carry cargo, and a car carry shipments?
 People who sing their own praises usually do so without accompaniment.