



Muddiford
United Reformed Church
(The Chapel in the Valley)



Harvest 2023 Magazine

Dear Friends

Harvest is a great time of the year and it is now a full year that I have been with you, as your Minister. Thank you all, once again, for your warm welcome and making me feel part of your close knit community.

Over the years I've enjoyed discovering the truth of many Scripture verses and at this time of year, I'm drawn to the words of Paul's letter to the Galatians. To the newly formed church community in Galatia, many hundreds of years ago, Paul writes with words of encouragement and advice. In Galatians 6 verses 7-9 we read:

'Do not deceive yourselves; no one makes a fool of God. You will reap exactly what you plant. If you plant in the field of your natural desires, from it you will gather the harvest of death; if you plant in the field of the Spirit, from the Spirit you will gather the harvest of eternal life. So let us not become tired of doing good; for if we do not give up, the time will come when we will reap the harvest.'

The challenge is there for us to see, you will reap what you sow. If we want a world of kindness, we need to plant kindness in our relationships. If we want a world of peace, we need to plant peace in our lives and nurture peaceful ways in the world. If we want a world in which all people know compassion, we need to be compassionate to the people around us, both near and far. If we want a world full of biodiversity, we need to plant the seeds and nurture our environment around us.

During my sabbatical travels and reflections, it was a great joy to see a wide range of plants, birds and animals that we rarely see in Devon. It gave me encouragement to witness the steps being taken by conservation groups, churches and governments to reduce emissions and improve habitats. The whole world is aware of the climate crisis and the seeds are being planted for a better future.

May we all respond to God's call to be good stewards of God's creation and to plant the seeds of kindness, peace and compassion in our lives and in the lives around us. As we celebrate our harvest, may God remind us again of our worldwide family and the need for us to share the blessings we have received.

God bless you this Harvest time!

Rob Weston

Minister

GODS HARVEST

I planted a tiny seed one day The packet said Marigold
I followed all the instructions doing exactly as I was told
The shoots began to break the earth and I was delighted to see
That the tiny seeds I had planted were growing so healthily.

I looked forward to seeing the flowers so colourful, cheerful and bright
I transplanted them into the pots I'd prepared so sure I was doing things
right
But hours turned to days and days into weeks and though they grew big and
green
I could see no flowers begin to appear, not a single bloom could be seen.

So, I decided to pull one out of the ground to see what was
growing there
And I was shocked and surprised to see orange carrots appear
everywhere



I have no idea how that happened. I thought I had planted flowers
I had fed and watered and weeded, for many daylight hours.

Yes, I planted a tiny seed one day I thought I knew what would grow
But what that tiny seed would become only God could know.
All my work would be in vain. I could work for no reward
Plant, weed and water, use all my skill but the Harvest belongs to the Lord.

As I walk through this world as a Christian, spreading God's word as I go
It could fall on deaf ears and wither and die or could germinate and grow
I am called to tell others, planting the seed, sharing Gods kindness and love
But the Harvest I am sowing will be gathered by my Father in Heaven above.

Only He can strengthen and support me as I journey through this land
Only He can see the future. He loves me and understands
When days of doubt overwhelm me and my life is falling apart
I know that God reaps the Harvest and that He holds me in His heart.

Sheila A Jennings

Six Little Stories With Lots of Meanings.

- Once all the villagers decided to pray for rain, On the day of prayer, all the people gathered, but only one person came with an umbrella.

THAT IS FAITH

- When you throw babies in the air, they laugh because they know you will catch them.

THAT IS TRUST

- Every night we retire to bed without any assurance of being alive the next morning, but still we set the alarms to wake up.

THAT IS HOPE

- We plan big things for tomorrow in spite of zero knowledge of the future.

THAT IS CONFIDENCE

- We see the world suffering, but still, we get married & have children.

THAT IS LOVE

- On an old man's shirt was written this sentence, I am not 80 years old; I am sweet 16 with 64 years of experience.'

THAT IS ATTITUDE

Have a happy day & live your life like these six stories.

Remember- Good friends are the rare jewels of life, difficult to find & impossible to replace!!

from Angela



Matthew 9:35-38

New International Version

The Workers Are Few

³⁵ Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. ³⁶ When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷ Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. ³⁸ Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

Herein lies one of the great truths of the Christian faith: The harvest will never be reaped unless there are reapers to reap it. Jesus Christ needs men and women to bring in the harvest. Jesus' followers today need to see people as Jesus saw them - as plentiful, precious, perplexed and perishing.

When I was thinking about harvest time my mind went back to when I was much younger & how I loved going around to the different churches &



chapels for their Harvest Festivals. I loved to see all the places decorated with flowers & fruit & vegetables & to smell their scent as we went through the doors. The churches would be almost full of people, come together in thankfulness for the harvest.

One of the things which I particularly remember are the Harvest Suppers at Middle Marwood. I seem to recall that they were held on the Tuesday evening following the harvest festival. There would be a service where we would sing Sankey hymns. At the end of the service a few people would leave the building & shut the door behind them. However, after a few minutes the door would re-open & in would come the same people carrying big jugs of tea & trays of sandwiches, cutrounds & cream & all sorts of goodies. It was amazing.



They had been down the road to Andrew's parent's farm where all the food was stored. It was no mean feat, because it would have been dark & there were no streetlights & for certain sometimes it would have been raining. Nevertheless, it always seemed to be a very happy time of fellowship.

There were also lovely harvest services at Marwood Methodist Church, the Parish Church, & at Bickington & Muddiford & they were all well supported. It was a time of thanksgiving which many people seemed to want to celebrate together. I know it is easy to look back through 'rose coloured spectacles' but how things have changed.



Harvest time on the farms must have changed too. I suppose it is much more mechanised & so does not need quite the manpower it used to & with less people involved harvest celebrations are not as popular as they were.

Also, as they do their supermarket shopping, many people may not give too much thought to where their food comes from & so forget to be thankful.



Of course, we must move with the times & look to the future. In many ways life is easier than it was in the past & we have much to be thankful for. Muddiford URC is still here. We are very blessed to have a Minister to lead us. We have some lovely services brought to us from a variety of preachers & we enjoy fellowship & fun together. We are fortunate to have people to play the music, to prepare the power point & those who are willing to step in at any time to help in the services in so many ways.

We must not forget to thank God for Zoom.

Before the pandemic struck most of us had never heard of it, but what a blessing it was during the months of lock down & it is still a blessing today. We love to have our friends joining us each week from their different homes & we really feel that they are part of the church family. We are so grateful to them for their kindness & the support they give to the chapel.



At Muddiford URC this is our harvest & may we be willing 'labourers' in the future! Thanks be to God.

With love from Pam

Did I offer peace today? Did I bring a smile to someone's face? Did I say words of healing? Did I let go of my anger and resentment? Did I forgive? Did I love? These are the real questions. I must trust that the little bit of love that I sow now will bear many fruits, here in this world and the life to come.

~ Henri Nouwen

Now may the Lord of *peace* himself give you *peace* at all times and in every way.

The Lord be with all of you.

2 Thessalonians 3:16

A Prayer of Thanks for Our Church

Dear Father,

Today we thank you for our church.

While some might think of doors and windows, we are praising you for spirits and hearts.

The people whose lives you've intersected are remarkable through your grace. We can't praise you enough for the unique way you've blended the talents of individuals into beautiful masterpieces of joy. May we love one another to the fullest and be evidence of Your ultimate love to advance the work of Your Kingdom.

Amen.



How did the farmer
find his wife?



He **TRACTOR** down!

Gardening starts at daybreak



and ends at back break!

So many weeds, so little thyme.



*I may have many faults but being wrong is not
one of them!*

How have things changed?

What was life like when today's grandparents and great-grandparents were children?

Money

We had pounds, shillings and pence. There were 20 shilling to the pound and 12 pence in a shilling. We wrote "s" for shillings and "d" instead of "p" for pence. (that came from a Latin word for a small coin, "denarius", but we **said** "pence")



We could buy a lot more with pennies than we can now. On occasions on my way home from school I would stop at the sweet shop at the bottom of Pilton Street and buy a sherbet fountain for 2d. When Mars bars were first sold in 1932 they cost 2d. What are they now? Over 60p. That's over 12 shillings (and they are smaller). I know earnings have risen as well as purchase costs, and we call this growth in prices and salaries "inflation". We use the same word for blowing up a balloon: we blow, it gets bigger!

Food

Most of our food was local. Lots of people, especially outside the towns, grew some of their own. The rest was nearly all from farms and market gardens not far away, except for things that don't grow in this country, like bananas and oranges. (No bananas in wartime!)

We grew most of our own potatoes, and a selection of other vegetables and fruit. We had two apple trees, one eaters and one cookers.

Fruit and vegetables were ready for eating at different times of the year, so meals were different at different times. In February and March we ate a lot

of things like swedes, turnips and parsnips. There were only a few fruits, like Bramley cooking apples, which stored well through the winter. We only enjoyed soft fruit in the summer, and plums were at their best in August and September.

I think this was good for us. We thought a lot more about the seasons, and nature, than we do now. There were other local foods depending on where you lived. (e.g. laver, chitterlings (chitlins) and junket).



Our milk was local. I knew the cows our milk came from. It was brought round in horse drawn cart, in big churns, and ladled out into our own jugs and we paid for it with real money.

Before the war most families didn't have a fridge, or washing machine, or tumble drier. Our gadgets were sewing machines, a vacuum-cleaner and a mower for the lawn. Since my childhood, shops, businesses, secondary schools, and many other organisations have got bigger. This makes things less personal. There are lots more rules and regulations and more forms to fill in. How can we make things more human again?



Wise words remembered by Princess Eugenie.

To quote Queen Elizabeth II

"Whatever life throws at us, our individual responses will be all the stronger for working together and sharing the load."

Seeds

**Seeds, bursting from their winter sleep,
Run, their appointed hour to keep.
They strive and thrust, they twist and run,
To lift their hearts towards the sun.
Seeds in their silent winter bed
They lay as cold and still as dead,
Beneath the stiff, white sheets of frost,
Their bodies empty shells and lost.
Beneath the deep, soft quilt of snow
They waited, row on sleeping row;
And when the fingers of the thaw
Tapped gently at each hidden door,
They stirred, the seeds no man can number,
Yet turned again to dark and slumber
Till the first trumpets of the sun,
Tilted to heaven, afresh begun
The song of spring. The seeds awoke,
Shook off their hard and heavy yoke
Of clay and stone, then, furrow free,
Leap to fulfil their destiny.**

Peter Howard.



Harvest Wordsearch



Can you find these words in the word search?

HARVEST
FESTIVAL
CROP
CORN
WHEAT
VEGETABLES
FRUIT
FARMER
PRODUCE
BREAD
SEEDS
GARDEN
FIELD
PLOUGH

If you use the church's WiFi, are you receiving God's signal?



Forbidden fruits create many jams!



Sin burn is prevented by Son screen!



GARDENERS CORNER

For many years we have cultivated four deep beds in our garden to grow early vegetable crops. But because the timber sides were beginning to rot and needed repairing, I decided to take these beds out completely and replace them with something less labour intensive.

As soon as I started this project, we experienced the high temperatures of flaming June which we had this year. I must say it was hot work digging out tons of soil and then wheelbarrowing in tons of hardcore.

Eventually it was ready for the topcoat of a mixture of resin and small chippings (called Cappuccino) which a local firm did for us. Very surprisingly when it was done in this way the resin is water permeable with no run off.

We wanted to put back some vegetation into this area so two metal rings were inserted into the resin to allow trees to be planted.



I thought that two Rowan trees would be suitable because they provide lovely Autumn colour and berries for the birds.

This got me thinking about the trees that are mentioned in the Bible, so here is a short quiz to test your knowledge:- (tick the box "0" you think is correct)



Gary

1. **Abraham planted this type of tree at Beer-Sheba.**

☐ Palm ☐ Mustard ☐ Tamarisk ☐ Cedar ☐ Sycamore
☐ Fig ☐ Oak ☐ Olive

2. **Zacchaeus climbed one and the prophet Amor tended this type of tree.**

☐ Palm ☐ Mustard ☐ Tamarisk ☐ Cedar ☐ Sycamore
☐ Fig ☐ Oak ☐ Olive

3. **Absolom, King David's son met his downfall when his long hair got caught in this tree.**

☐ Palm ☐ Mustard ☐ Tamarisk ☐ Cedar ☐ Sycamore
☐ Fig ☐ Oak ☐ Olive

4. **The disciple Bartholamew sat under one before he met Jesus.**

☐ Palm ☐ Mustard ☐ Tamarisk ☐ Cedar ☐ Sycamore
☐ Fig ☐ Oak ☐ Olive

5. **In one of Jesus's parable, a tiny seed grows into this tree.**

☐ Palm ☐ Mustard ☐ Tamarisk ☐ Cedar ☐ Sycamore
☐ Fig ☐ Oak ☐ Olive

6. **This tree is hard, aromatic and was prized as building material.**

☐ Palm ☐ Mustard ☐ Tamarisk ☐ Cedar ☐ Sycamore
☐ Fig ☐ Oak ☐ Olive

7. **Psalms 92 states that the godly will flourish like this type of tree.**

☐ Palm ☐ Mustard ☐ Tamarisk ☐ Cedar ☐ Sycamore
☐ Fig ☐ Oak ☐ Olive

8. **One of the most frequently mentioned trees in the Bible and its oldest specimens in Israel surround the Garden of Gethsemane.**

☐ Palm ☐ Mustard ☐ Tamarisk ☐ Cedar ☐ Sycamore
☐ Fig ☐ Oak ☐ Olive.

Lord of the glowing Summer, -
When waves the corn on high,
And fruits in valleys ripen,
Beneath a cloudless sky:
Shine on our hearts' endeavour
To give our strength to Thee,
That in our spirits ever
A richer life may be!

Lord of the bounteous Autumn, -
When orchards yield their store,
And golden sheaves, new-gathered,
Pass to the garner door:
Grant now a full fruition
To every seed of truth,
Which fell with blessed mission,
Upon our souls of youth!

Lord of the changing seasons!
Lord of our passing days!
Wake Thou in us abundance
Of duty, love and praise:
That hearts of wintry sadness
May feel the breath of spring,
And summer's time of gladness
The autumn glories bring!



Dendy Agate, 1883.

Found in the "Sunday School Hymnary."

The Laws of Life

The Law of Mechanical Repair

After your hands become coated with grease, your nose will begin to itch.

The Law of Biomechanics

The severity of the itch is inversely proportional to the reach.

The Law of Probability

The probability of being watched is directly proportional to the stupidity of your act.

The Law of Random Numbers.

If you dial a wrong number, you never get a busy signal; someone always answers.

The Law of Theatres and Sports Arenas

At any event, the people whose seats are furthest from the aisle, always arrive last. They are the ones who will leave their seats several times to go for food, drinks, or the toilet and who leave early before the end of a performance or the game is over. The folk in the aisle seats come early, never move once, have long gangly legs and stay to the bitter end of the performance.

The Variation Law

If you change lines (or traffic lanes), the one you were in will always move faster than the one you are in now.

The Law of Gravity

Any article when dropped will roll to the least accessible place.

The Law of Physical Surfaces

The chances of an open-faced gooey sandwich landing face down on a floor are directly correlated to the newness and cost of the carpet or rug.

Adam

Adam was hanging around the Garden of Eden feeling very lonely. So, God asked Adam, "What is wrong with you?"

Adam said, he didn't have anyone to talk to. God said that he was going to make Adam a companion and that it would be a woman.



He said, "this lady will gather food for you, she will cook for you and when you discover clothing, she will wash them for you. She will always agree with every decision you make and she will not nag you and will always be the first to admit she was wrong when you've had a disagreement.

She will praise you!

She will bear your children and never ask you to get up in the middle of the night to care for them.

She will NEVER have a headache, and will freely give 'love' and whenever needed, compassion

Adam asked God, "What will this woman cost?" God replied, "An arm and a leg..."

Then Adam said, "What can I get for just a rib?" Of course the rest is history.....

From Martin

*Looking back over the years we remember our youth with;
"Rock Around the Clock"*

*Now in our senior years it's,
"Limp Around the Block"*



As we age, we lose lots of things over the years, hair, hair colour, teeth, hearing & our mobility, but no matter how many changes we go through in our lives, as Christians one thing never changes, & that's our FAITH in the Lord.

We have our eternal home with him to look forward to where our new bodies will be free of all pain & will be eternal.



AMEN to that!!

+++++

**IF YOU WANT THINGS TO STAY AS THEY ARE,
THINGS WILL HAVE TO CHANGE!**

SO VERY
thankful
INCREDIBLY
grateful
UNBELIEVABLY
blessed



A Bad hair day?