

Changing seasons

It has been such a delight this summer to be able to throw the church doors open to children and their parents and carers each Wednesday morning. One week over 140 people came through our doors, and each week we fed 60-90 people with a hot meal. None of this could have happened without so many people offering to be part of it. Whether cooking, serving refreshments, washing up, chatting over games and train sets, organising crafts and prayer spaces, joining in with different activities, welcoming, praying, shopping, donating money and much more. Our theme throughout the summer has been 'living and growing in God' and as the weeks have gone on, conversations have deepened, even as we have visually watched the soil, seed, tree, leaves, fruit and ecosystem of new life emerging on the wall through different craft activities. One of our readings during the summer was Psalm 1 that talks about the one who meditates on God and God's word being like a tree planted by streams of water that yields fruit in season. As we have been reflecting on living and growing in God my continued prayer has been that our roots would go down deeper into God's life and love so that living water of God is drawn up through us, and we can be fruitful for God.

As the season begins to change now, and we move towards harvest time, it has been interesting hearing different people talk about the crops that have been abundant and those that have struggled this year. Being fruitful, as Clare spoke about in her sermon last week, does not always look like lots and lots of fruit, it is also about the slow maturing of fruit that is fuller and richer, and sometimes it is about storing up strength for future growth. Moving into September, I wonder how you feel about the fruit that God is growing in your life? You might be about to change seasons: going to a new school or university, changing jobs or roles, experiencing children or grandchildren moving, facing illness or death. You might feel like you are in limbo with very little changing and wondering if life is still flowing in you. For me, remembering we are called branches of the Vine, the Body of Christ, the Temple of the Holy Spirit, reminds me of God's amazing promise to us - that when we are connected to God, God's life will always be flowing through us whether we can see it or not. How wonderful and reassuring 😊

In our parish of St Catharine's that life always seems to be moving and changing. On 5th September, it will be 5 years since I arrived, and it feels that very little has been static in that time! Being vicar here continues to be a joy and a privilege, even in the times of being alongside the deepest sorrow and hardest questions. I love been part of a community that wants to grow and mature in God and is willing to wrestle with what it means to live out our Christian faith and how we do that well. The next few months we will be seeing change in the church again, with Lindsey Power arriving as our Youth and Childrens Worker, saying goodbye to Su Chard, and hopefully welcoming a new clergy assistant into the church office. Please do be praying for those transitions.

And throughout September and October, we will be looking at the big picture of the biblical narrative and how the story of our lives connects with that. Whatever season change you are in, I encourage you to find a bit of time to take stock and check in with God. Perhaps ask God where God's life is flowing in you, and where it might be blocked up a bit; and ask what it will look like for you to be fruitful in the season ahead and what you need from God and those around you to help with that. And may you know God's holding and leading as you journey on.

Every blessing Jo