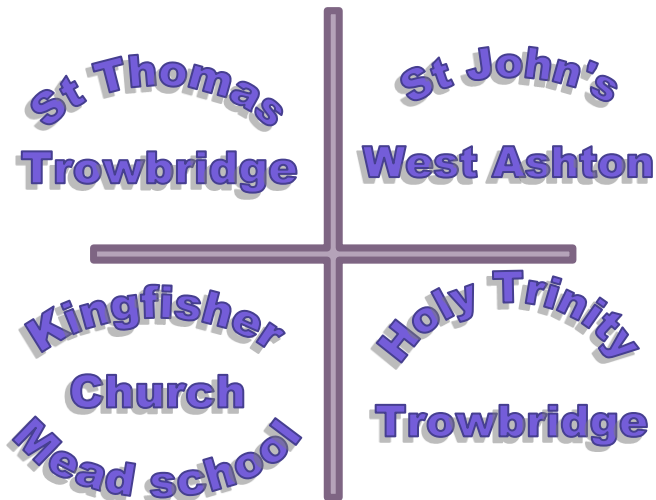


# St Thomas', Trowbridge and St John's, West Ashton Monthly News October 2024



We plough the fields and scatter  
The good seeds on the land  
But it is fed and watered  
by God's almighty hand

## Churchwarden's Update

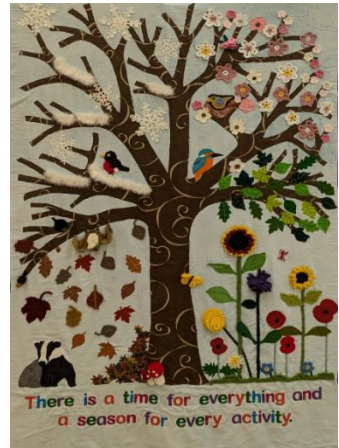
Dear Friends,

As I write this, we have just had a few days of lovely late summer weather, and are now plunging (almost literally) into a wetter spell. 'It's starting to feel quite autumnal' someone said to me today. Although our British weather can be full of surprises from one day to the next, there is still an inevitability about the progression from one season to the next. I'm grateful that I live in a country in which we experience the contrasts between the seasons. I love the fact that we have such variety through the year, and every season brings its own special joys. Mind you, it has to be said that the seasons bring their challenges too (don't get me started on church heating systems!).

We're experiencing something of changing seasons in our church life at this time too. We're already more than 3 months into our 'season' of interregnum, and I feel very grateful to God for the way he is providing for us and leading us during this time. It's a real joy to sense the vibrancy, joy and commitment of the whole church family. People continue to give so much to so many different aspects of the life of the church, and it's wonderful to see the 'body of Christ' working together to worship Him and to serve Him. It's such an encouragement to be part of this, and the encouragements far outweigh any challenges.

This is a good opportunity to give an update on where we are with the process for finding a new vicar. We have now drafted the Parish Profile – the document which will be used to tell prospective applicants all about our church. This has been reviewed by the two PCCs and by a small number of external people, and we hope to have the document finalised in time to be 'signed off' by both PCCs at a special meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> October. At the same meeting we will be appointing the 'Parish Representatives', who will represent the church in the process of reviewing applications and conducting interviews. The planned timetable is then to advertise through November, with closing date for applications at the end of the month, to shortlist applicants in the first week of December and to hold interviews in the first week of January.

This banner, depicting the seasons, is one that Kingfisher church made and often uses in worship. At this time, the Kingfisher family is also facing a 'new season' in its life as Alison steps down from the role of leader at the end of October. Alison has served faithfully in this role, with Mark at her side, since Kingfisher was planted more than 15 years ago. As a family we are very grateful to God for Alison and for her faithful leadership and service during this time.



This change presents some important challenges for Kingfisher, for its mission in the local community, and for its pattern of worship and meeting together. Please keep Kingfisher in your prayers over these next few weeks and months as, together with support from St Thomas', they seek God's will for the way forward. If anyone has a particular heart for this work and would like to join with Kingfisher for Sunday worship or in their prayer meetings over the next few weeks, then that support would be much appreciated.

The banner reminds us that "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity" (Ecclesiastes 3:1). Whatever seasons we might be going through in our lives, or in our church life, we can have the confidence of knowing that God is in control. Or, as someone said in a prayer meeting recently, "God's got this".

Paul

## Prayer Ministry Training

Judy W will be leading a prayer ministry training session at 11am on Saturday 19th October. It is aimed for those who would like to explore being involved in prayer ministry or who would like to find out more about it. It will also be a useful refresher for those who are involved in prayer ministry.

Please let Andrew S know if you would like to attend. More details will follow nearer the time.

## St John's Update

*"As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease."* Genesis 8:22

Here we are in autumn - trees changing colour; smoky bonfires; kicking dried fallen leaves; hearing the robin sing his autumnal song; harvesting fruit and vegetables. Dark mornings and early dusks makes us reflect upon the year that has passed and appreciate the good times and pray for the future.

September has seen a busy time at St John's, usual maintenance of churchyard (grass still growing). Cutting back brambles and cutting ivy from field walls.

Rev. Ivor Hughes led a service in early September, he was a retired Chaplain from Bath Abbey - he was received very well and was asked to revisit next year. A PCC meeting took place on the 13<sup>th</sup> and the Parish Profile was discussed. The document was impressive and appreciation goes to those who constructed such an in-depth profile - it captured all the churches admirably. The annual Wiltshire Historic Churches Trust Ride and Stride event took place on the 14<sup>th</sup>; St John's was open all day for refreshments. A sincere thanks goes to all the stewards that were on duty that day. Not only did they "meet and greet" visitors but did many housekeeping jobs and outside work - all much appreciated.

St John's Holy Communion Service took place on the 15<sup>th</sup>, Rev. Liz Gifford officiated - then after the service there was a Christening with three boys - Reuben, Tobias and Ezra being christened and a girl (Imogen) being blessed - all from the same family. A joyous occasion. *(See photograph below)* An elderly gentleman brought his lap dog - miniature poodle - which was extremely well behaved and a real cutie! The gentleman asked if she could be christened too - her name was Daisy - Bless.

It is proposed to have contractors visit on the 26<sup>th</sup> to clean some of the mould/damp walls with specialist fungicide, this being on a trial bases.

St John's October services/*events* are as follows :

Sunday, 6 October Harvest Festival - *see separate poster in magazine for details.*

*Saturday, 12 October - Work Party at 10am to polish and clean church for Bishops visit.*

*Sunday, 20 October - Holy Communion lead by Bishop Andrew Rumsey.*

*We hope to see you at one of the above, you would receive a warm welcome.*

*With blessings and enjoy the autumn colours.*

Jean R

*Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up - Galatians 6:9*



*A joyous Sunday at St John's on the 15 September, when twins Reuben and Tobias, with brother Ezra were christened. Big sister Imogen received a blessing at the same time. Proud Mum and Dad look on (James Blundell and Kerrie Charlton).*

## Monthly Prayer

What a lovely surprise we had when we arrived for the September Church Prayer Meeting.

Tables and chairs were set around the church so we were immediately in small sociable groups able to chat and relax over a drink and chocolate biscuits!

The evening was clearly structured with each section separated by an appropriate song. There were suggestions for prayer, quiet reflective times, time for silent prayer and even a drama when we were encouraged to write our current concerns down and put them in an envelope. The drama culminated in these envelopes of cares being dumped at the foot of the cross giving us freedom.

A wonderfully refreshing evening – thank you John and Andrew. If you've never been before give it a try. Set aside an hour and a half on the first Thursday of the month.

The old saying says

“The family that prays together stays together”

Linda P

## Harvest Supper at St Thomas'

The Harvest Supper at St. Thomas' gave us the opportunity to once again use the lovely space created by our reordering of the Church.

About fifty-five folk gathered there ready to enjoy a lovely meal which reminded us of God's abundant provision, as well as some good conversation and a very small amount of brain stretching exercise in the form of a Quiz.

As we arrived we found the tables attractively set with platters of cold meats and cheese, salads, bread and a bottle of Shloer. As a conversation starter we had a sheet on each table inviting us to see how many words we could make from the letters in the words "Combine Harvester". Give it a go – you will be surprised!

Before homemade apple crumbles and fresh cream were brought to the tables to tempt us further we had a short (15 questions) harvest related quiz. Do you know what a Scarlet Emperor is? Congratulations to the table who got 12 correct answers and won the bag of goodies to share.

The evening was rounded off by Geoff Tate in his flat cap delivering a Yorkshire Harvest Monologue, and then, as an extra treat, a monologue relevant to Tony's 94<sup>th</sup> birthday and Marina's forthcoming 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. Thank you Geoff.

*Thank you to all who came, to all those who planned and prepared the evening and a special thank you to those of our guests who, without being asked, kindly put the church "back together" ready for Sunday morning.*

Linda P

The glowing red of the autumn fires,  
The smell of the burning leaves;  
Glittering stars in the frosty skies,  
Wind sighing round the eaves.  
Autumn's here, winter's nigh,  
Spring will come round by and by.

*F Gay*

## Guide Dog Puppy Update

This will probably be the final update on our lovely Gucci as she goes to 'big school' in Exeter next Tuesday (1 October).

Geoff and I will miss her lots – she has been a lovely dog to care for – its difficult to remember the little 8 week old pup who arrived 13 months ago.

At that stage she weighed 5kgs,

she now weighs 30kgs



This is a photo of Gucci (on the right) meeting her brother, Fagan

We think she will make a superb Guide Dog after the 4 months or so advance training at Exeter and then a month of specialised training with her new Guide Dog Owner.

We will have another puppy but will wait a short while until we are know where we will be - currently Guide Dogs have a huge number of puppies needing to be raised for 12 months or so - if you would be interested in this very important role do have a chat with me – or look at the Guide Dogs website.

It really is a privilege having a beautiful lab puppy and when they have 'accidents' at that stage they are very little 'accidents' and they soon learn where to do their 'business'; Yes you have to be prepared to let them go to do what they are bred for – change somebody's life!! But it really is worthwhile – and all vets fees and food are paid for. Dog boarders are always available if you are going away or have something that you can't take the puppy to – or even don't want to take the puppy to!!!

Incidentally we heard from Winter's Guide Dog Owner and she is doing incredibly well still – loving life in North Wales as much as Rowena loves her and she tells me every time I speak to her what a difference she has made to that lady. For those who don't know Winter was our first Guide Dog puppy and she has been working for over 2.5 years

Pat K



## Viney Hill

What a great time at Viney Hill!!! The weather was so kind to us. Praise the Lord!

About 46 people of all ages camped – either in their own tents or the on-site tents – and some were lucky enough to be in the wooden huts that had electrical pints and a heater!! 8 people stayed off-site but close to Viney Hill – 7 in a local inn with the en suite bedrooms being described by one person as excellent and others as not very good – they were in fact somewhere between the two and perfectly adequate for the not-so-hardy!! One person had the luxury of her own camper van on a site nearby. And 6 people came as day visitors.

On site there were activities to be enjoyed – 22 of our group in age ranging from about 6 to early 50s – took part in the high rope and leap of faith challenges. The high ropes were as the 'label says' but the leap of faith – wow! It entailed a climb up rungs on a 10 metres pole – when at the top climbing on to a platform about half a metre square and then jumping forward to grab a trapeze swing set away from the column – some people even went back for a second go and a few even did it blindfolded. Wow it was scary – and I that was just watching it!!



Another group of about 11 did canoeing in the afternoon

There was lots of good food, good fellowship and good fun. The camp fire singing after the bbq on the Saturday evening was great – the highlight being seeing the young people arm in arm swaying to the delight of 'Country Rose, West Virginia' (the John Denver song) to the accompaniment on guitars from Peter and John. AND those of us staying at the inn were lucky enough to hear another rendition of the same song at the birthday party that was happening at the inn when we got back for the night!!

Thank you to all who organised it both in advance and at the weekend, especially the very eager washer-uppers!!

We are now looking at a weekend away for 2025

## Summary of PCC Meeting on 17 September 2024

*(Full minutes available from office on request).*

*Ministry Training:* Judy is undergoing 40-hour weekly training and will have a placement at Holt Benefice from November to May. She plans to be ordained as a Deacon in June 2024 with curacy at St Thomas thereafter.

Natasha requires help finding a supervisor during the interregnum. Both need prayer support due to the intensity of their training.

*School Links:* Alison, as part of EQUAMead and Church Schools Flourishing Committee, is working with Bellefield on clarifying the church's role, especially during the interregnum. Church involvement in worship services is welcomed.

*CATA Links:* Paul and John are attending monthly church leader lunches.

*Security Lights:* John is to contact Dennings to see if repairable to avoid need for consents and licences for new lights.

*Kingfisher Church:* Consultations are happening re various options for the future. Prayer and reflection are required.

*Staffing:* Steve Bolt is now in the role of Verger. Anastasiia Zhuravel is working as Admin Assistant on a temporary contract until the end of the year and the role will be reviewed for a permanent appointment in the new year.

*Finance:* income and expenditure are running very much in line with the budget

*Parish Profile:* The wardens and Esther have been working hard on the draft profile, with positive feedback from the Archdeacon. The PCC are considering the four people to be parish reps for the discernment and appointment process.

Harriet H, PCC Secretary

## The Soup Run

On Sunday 22 September the St Thomas' Harvest Festival service featured an interview with Celia R, Joan B and Hilary. It was lovely to hear about the run and why these lovely ladies do it every week



Celia told us that soup run was started in 1996, with Keith E as one of the initiators, and that in 1998 Joan joined the St Ts/St Js soup run team that was led at that time by David C.

In response to the question: 'Why do you do the Soup Run?', Joan said: Because there is a need. In fact anyone can become needy, anywhere and at any time. The Soup Run is one way of saying, 'You matter.' Jesus had, and still has, a way of meeting people where they are. He wanted to give everybody the chance to be accepted. He valued and cared about all age groups, all stratas of society, even those low in the pecking order. He did not blame people for their circumstances, nor their resulting lifestyles. He looked at the heart, and He saw the potential. Our clients will not have chosen the situations they find themselves in.

They may have tried for ages to get a decent job, but they could not. They may become depressed, develop low self esteem. Some may take to drink and/or drugs to escape their problems. Their addiction may mean that they behave badly, and they become increasingly impossible to live with. They then find themselves out in the street, with no roof over their head, and this can become worse when bystanders insult them, are rude and cruel to them, and blame them for their problems.

If they hear about the Soup Run and are brave enough to come along it is important that we are welcoming and accepting, in a low key and informal way. Most of our clients are men but women come along as well.

We only know what they chose to tell us; we aren't Social Workers, and we don't ask questions. For some clients the Soup Run is short term help, til they can get back on their feet again. For others it is long term; in fact, it becomes part of their routine and their social life. The atmosphere is relaxed, and even merry at times. And it is noticeable about how supportive they can be to each other.

Sometimes we are asked which church we come from, as they know it is often, although not always, a church project.



I like to take dog biscuits along. Occasionally someone brings a dog, but more usually they have one at home, or know someone who does.

If ever there is a risk of fighting and violence the police know where and when the Soup Run is happening, and we have our mobile phones with us. But it is the men themselves who usually stop any problems, as they want the Soup Run to continue.

At this Harvest we can remember God's great generosity to us, His multitude of blessings. We are all in this life together, and God encourages us to think of others, to share, to enjoy, and to rejoice.

*Thank you Joan for sharing that with us, and to Hilary for her lovely testimony of why she helps, as she shared bible verses that encourage her in this work.*

*Thank you to Celia for all that she does, and thank you to all the sandwich and cake makers in St Ts.*

## Quiz Answers

Answers to last month's quiz – *thanks to Tony L for setting them:*

1. 90 Degrees in a Right Angle
2. 12 Old Pennies in a Shilling
3. 4 Kings in a Pack of Cards
4. 30 Days in September
5. 21 Consonants in the Alphabet
6. 6 Points on the Star of David
7. 5 Lines in a Limerick
8. 10 Green Bottles Hanging on the Wall
9. 12 Labours of Hercules
10. 18 Holes on Golf Course
11. 21 Spots on a Dice
12. 147 Highest Break in Snooker
13. 26 Letters in the Alphabet
14. 11 Players in a Cricket Team
15. 3 Coins in the Fountain
16. 64 Squares on a ChessBoard
17. 8 Furlongs in a Mile
18. 20 Fluid Ozs In a Pint
19. 6 Feet in a Fathom
20. 21 Shillings in a Guinea
21. 7 Value of Black Ball in Snooker
22. 112 Pounds in a Hundredweight
23. 14 Days in a Fortnight
24. 39 Steps by John Buchan
25. 200 Pounds for Passing Go in Monopoly
26. 24 Months in Two Years
27. 1805 Battle of Trafalgar
28. 88 Keys on a Piano
29. 3 Musketeers (Athos, Porthos and Aramis)
30. 40 Double Top

## UA Support

My friend in Ukraine works in a resilience centre for children and adults in Khmilnyk, Vinnytsia region. They need various materials to work with and support children who are experiencing panic attacks and similar psychological trauma because of the war. They also work with military children and children with special needs. My personal desire is to organise some support for this particular centre because I personally know Nadia, who works as a social worker at the Resilience Centre. She has been working with troubled children and their families in Ukraine for over 20 years. She is a Christian and she loves Jesus.



If you would like to, you can join in by collecting donations for the children Nadia and her colleagues work with at the centre. Some of the things they need are: -toys made of plastic or wood (they need to be washable), materials for crafts and creative activities and table games. All this is for children aged 1 to 8 years.

We also want to raise money to pay for the delivery and so that the centre staff can buy the other necessary materials and equipment, for example, children's soft furniture to diversify the meetings for children.



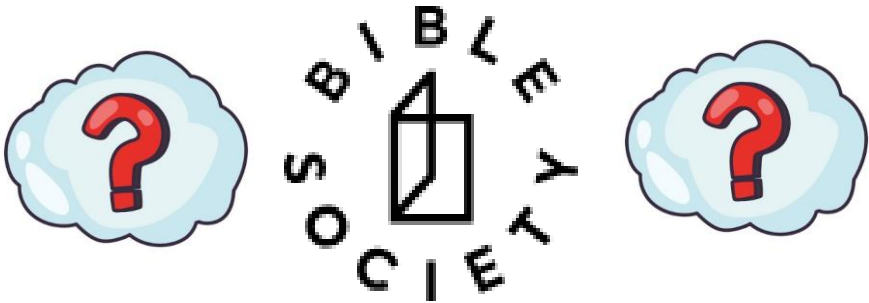
The work of the centre is aimed not only at children but also at adults. When parents (usually mothers) bring their children with a problem, the staff help the parents as well. The centre has a Facebook page. Here is a link to the page if you want to know

more. <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61560822991666>

You can leave toys, materials, or money for 'UA Support' in the church office Tuesday-Friday 9:30-11:15 until 14 October 2024. Or you can give it to me personally by contacting her at 07493502241.

Thank you! May the Lord bless you all!

Anastasiia Z



# Afternoon Tea



# Quiz



# in aid of Bible Society



- St James Church, Trowbridge
- Tuesday, October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024
- 2-30 pm

Join us for an afternoon of tea, cake and fun.

No charge but donations for Bible Society appreciated.

Teams of 4 or come along and join a team on the day.

## Social Events

In this edition there is an article about the Harvest Supper and Viney Hill and during 2024 we have had a number of social events including: a board games evening; a quiz; an Easter Monday walk; Supper for Six; beetle drive with fish and chips.

Different events have attracted different church members – and what has been really special is that there have been a number of folk who don't attend services but do have links through the Sheds and the Morning Break have come along to some and enjoyed time with us.

As we look to a 2025 programme we are always trying to think of something new – do you have any ideas? Perhaps something you have heard of another church doing – or just something that you think would work well.

If you have any ideas it would be good if you would be part of the organising team but if not don't let that put you off suggesting events.

Have a word with Linda P, Kay C, Jo D or Pat K

## Sunny Sunflowers at St John's



As we look to the appointment of a new Vicar at St Thomas' and St John's, we look back at previous incumbents:

## A Bit More History of St Thomas'

I know I have been at St T's for just over 50 years but that doesn't mean I know everything about the past incumbents. But as we are now into my fifth interregnum I thought it would be good to look back and tell you a bit about our past vicars. I have scanned in all the pictures of our past vicars whose mug shots graced the walls of the vestry. Some scanned better than others due to damp damage. So as the song says 'let's start at the very beginning' .....



1870 – 1880  
Rev C W S Taunton



1880 – 1897  
Rev W H Smart



1897 – 1903  
Rev S Mayne Ward



1903 - 1914  
Rev G E Watton





1914 – 1929  
Rev J F A Stimpson



1929 - 1957  
Rev Edgar Owen

The Rev Owen is the longest serving incumbent to date. The First Hundred Years history of St T's says that soon after his arrival his wife passed away leaving him with to raise two young children. He was always ready to help people.



1959 – 1965  
Rev John Colbourn

The 100 year history says this about him. A strong youth movement was developed, a Pathfinder group established and St T's had the largest Sunday School in the town. Rather than sit in his study he was often found digging up the drains in the vicarage, painting the verger's cottage, rewiring an electrical circuit or climbing up the church roof replacing tiles. I am sure Celia Russell and Jenny Gailey could tell you stories about him. During the two year interregnum after John left there were two temporary vicars. From October 1965 to January 1966 the Rev John Geilinger was appointed for three months, he was on extended leave from missionary work in Nigeria, and March 1966 to September 1967 the Rev D C H Michell.



1967 – 1975

Rev Michael Christian-Edwards

I moved to Trowbridge in 1972 and started attending St T's youth group in May 1973. It is through Michael and his wife Marilyn that I became a Christian. They were and still are very gentle, loving Christians.

They had 2 sons. Mark and Stephen, and a daughter, Ruth, who was severely handicapped. Ruth passed away whilst Michael was vicar here and her grave is at Wingfield Church; we were linked with Wingfield then. My mother, Audrey Brombley had a prophesy that God would bless them with another daughter. A couple of years later Mary was born and mum became her Godmother.

Marilyn taught Jenny Gailey and myself to play the guitar and almost right from the beginning had us playing at the Sunday evening after church fellowship and at youth group.



1976 – 1981

Rev Kenneth Hopkins

Ken and Sue Hopkins had two young sons. Ken was a high flier academically and often left some of us behind in his sermons.

It was during Ken's time with St T's that the church was redecorated. As I said in last month's article decorated just for our wedding.

1982 – 1991

Rev Leslie Hedges



Leslie and Doris Hedges had two grown up children, Susan who lived in Cornwall and Simon who lived at home. They were a gentle and kind couple.

The church rooms were built during Leslie's time at St T's. Simon made a to scale lego model which was displayed in church. Simon also helped write and direct, with Chris Turnbull-Ross, the pantos we did to raise money to build the room. Tony Ludlow has copies of all the panto programmes.

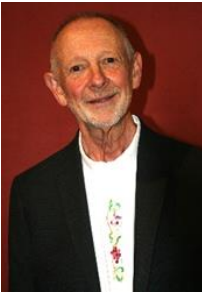
1992 – 1998 Rev Frank Sears

Frank and Jennifer Sears had two grown up children, Nigel and Nicola.



I became the first admin assistant for the church and the use of punctuation and correct grammar were soon polished up under Frank as he had been a newspaper editor for a number of years before being ordained. During the interregnum Michele Riley took over as Admin Assistant.

Jennifer often helped out with the Toddler Group and she was fondly know as the jolly green giant as she was taller than Frank and often wore green.



1999 – 2024

Rev J Allan Coutts

Now what can I say about Allan as you will all have your own memories of him. He came to us as a bachelor and left us as a married man.

He had two visions for the church, Alpha and Cell Church. The Alpha courses were fairly successful and the Cell Church concept was adopted by most of the groups, which we were involved in the training of leaders for them.

Jane Bullock and I much appreciated his support to Toddlers and Messy Church. He allowed us to take over the vicarage garden for the Toddler Summer Event, until the numbers grew and we needed to use the church grounds.

The parish enlarged with Paxcroft Mead being added and then Holy Trinity. Trinity is used mainly for outreach via Toddlers, The Island and Women's Shed Allan saw Phase 1 of the church redevelopment happen during his final years at St T's. The church looks so much bigger with the chairs and what a wonderful space for our various activities.

Allan went through four Church Administrators; Margaret Hewitt, Debrorah Jones, Ruth Barber and Frankie Smith.

So now we are praying again for the right man/woman of God to lead us on in our journey with God as individuals and as a church.

Val S

# Harvest Festival Service at St John's



St John's Parish Church, West Ashton

Warmly Invite You To

**HARVEST FESTIVAL SERVICE**

**SUNDAY, 6 OCTOBER, 2024 – 10.30am**

Whilst it is easy as a trip to the supermarket to buy any type of food imaginable at practically any time of the year; it is important to remember where our food comes from and to give thanks for it.

Harvest is a special time when the Church takes a moment to thank God for his creation; the earth, the sun, the sea, the rain, the farmers and everything that goes into providing the food we all eat day by day.

Why not join us this autumn to thank God for all the good things He gives us?



If you would like to donate any tinned or packet food, this will be given to Trowbridge Foodbank for distribution to the needy.

Thank the Lord for Harvest - He Provides You With Plenty Of Food  
And Fills Your Heart With Joy. *Acts 14: 17*