

Well, that's the long summer holiday period over for another year! It has been a *hot summer* though; one to be added to the annals of folklore: "Do you remember the summer 1949/1976/2003?" Now we can add 2018 to that list. I hope that those who have been away, those who have been fortunate enough to go off on holiday, have returned home and are feeling recharged, refreshed, and ready for a return to the normal routine of life.

Routine is an interesting thing; some people really enjoy it, and will embrace getting back to "a normal routine", others much prefer life when there is not the everyday, boring pattern of things to have to do. I guess it depends on whether you see the "conventional, everyday, normal and ordinary" as a positive thing, or view routine as "regular, unremarkable and plain". Personally, I like the routine and pattern of the seasonal year, the academic year, and the church year.

At the beginning of September we now face the start of another academic year – with all the excitement, and sometimes the worry, that that can bring. Perhaps it's school for the first time for your first child; or the last year at Primary School; or your youngest going off to University – all these milestones bring their own anticipation and emotions. The "wedding season" is nearly over for another year – just the excitement of another two weddings to go in our parish churches. And other routine but exciting things start up in church once again: the toddler group with drop-in café on Wednesday the 5th September, and Messy Church (jointly at St. George's Benenden) on Sunday the 16th. And then, before we know it, we will be approaching harvest time, with our Harvest meal on the evening of Saturday 29th September and our Harvest service the next day – the 30th. Then on to remembering the *Faithful Departed* in a benefice service (again at St. George's) on the 2nd November, and Remembrance Sunday on the 11th – carrying even more significance this year as we commemorate the 100th anniversary of the end of WW1. And so our year rolls on; all part of the routine of our village life.

I find there is something comforting in that annual pattern, the annual routine, to our lives. It is a part of who we are as a community. If these regular, ordinary, *routine* things were taken out of the calendar, and out of our lives, then I believe we would miss them; we would lament their passing. So I encourage you, now we are back from our holidays, to embrace the routine of village life; embrace the pattern of life; and enjoy it with one another.