

At the beginning of October, St George's Church and Benenden Primary School celebrated harvest. The school did so with a service in church on the afternoon of Friday 4 October, and it was lovely to welcome the whole school community back into their church. The church family celebrated Harvest Festival on Sunday 6 October. Thank you to everyone who supported these two services.

Thank you also to everyone who worked so hard to decorate our church: from lychgate to sanctuary, it looked amazing. Thank you also to everyone who donated some produce to mark the harvest. A wonderful amount of food was then distributed between two local charities: Catching Lives, which supports and cares for the homeless in Canterbury; and Nourish, the food bank in Tunbridge Wells that supports families who struggle to find the money to feed themselves; Nourish covers our area, so the food may well come back to help families in our villages.

At the school harvest service, we played the 'Harvest Shuffle, telling a story about the abundance of the things we have been given and the needs of others; we did so by using the letters of the word 'harvest'. This finished up thinking about what we should all be doing more of out of all the good things that we have been blessed with ... share.

At the Sunday service we thought about, 'This is the world that God made.' (Like the nursery rhyme: This is the house that Jack built.) Thinking about the rich, the poor, the homeless - those who have to beg; and about the farmers, businesspeople, the millers and the bakers who make our bread. A loaf of bread was shared out amongst the baker, the miller, the businessman, the farmer and the 'rich'; all received several slices of bread. The 'poor' got half a crust. The homeless got the crumbs that were left.

That isn't 'the world that God made'. God made a world where there was enough. But God put the world into our care; and now we find there doesn't seem to be enough. But there is. It's just that we that have so much, seem to want more and more; and we don't 'share' what we have been blessed with, with those who have nothing. Or we do, but only at harvest time. Tonight, I think that everyone reading this letter will have a choice of what they want to eat; we will not have to make the choice of whether to eat or not. But some people, living nearby to us, will have to make that stark choice tonight, and may go hungry. Out of the abundance of our harvest we must learn to share more of what we have been blessed with. And you too will be blessed, 'for God loves a cheerful giver.' (2 Cor 9:7) But 'each man should give what he has decided in his heart.'

Revd David Commander, Rector