

Views from the Pews - Harvest – in more ways than one!

As you know, since the beginning of September we have had a new Rector, Reverend Chloe Kingdon, and you may have thought this edition would have been 'penned' by her! Indeed, I have included excerpts from an article she wrote prior to her welcome service at the end of this column.

Some of you will be aware that Revd Chloe's ministry here in the Quantocks Villages Benefice has not gone to plan thus far. Her Installation Service, held in Nether Stowey on Wednesday 9th September was full of joy and hope for the future and we all heard Chloe's heartfelt commitment to rural ministry and parish life. Over the next few days however, what seemed to start as a bad headache was subsequently diagnosed as a benign brain tumour. By Sunday 13th September, Chloe was in ITU in Southmead Hospital having surgery. She has since had another operation to remove the tumour and, as at the time of writing, I am delighted to report that she is now recovering on a general ward in Southmead and the future is looking bright.

You may be wondering what all this has to do with the title of this article – 'Harvest'?

Well, at this time of year it is traditional to give thanks for the harvest of the fields - wheat, vegetables, milk, meat - it all needs managing every day of the year and many people work extremely hard to get the produce from field to table.

However, there is another type of harvest – one for which many of us will have personal reasons for giving thanks – the harnessing and harvesting of God-given vocations and skills of those ministering to us in times of trouble.

Doctors, nurses, surgeons, paramedics, hospital porters, counsellors, psychiatrists, support workers, volunteer hospital visitors, volunteer drivers ferrying people to hospital appointments, chaplains - the list is endless.

And it doesn't stop there. Each of us has our own skills or talents to be harvested for the good of others. Many of us are not physically able to go and work in the fields for hours on end, but are able to lend an ear to someone who is lonely, bereaved, made redundant; help in a practical way such as shopping, tidying the garden - again, this is not an exhaustive list.

Revd Chloe and her family need our prayers at this challenging and healing time. Some of us will feel that we can't or don't want to pray. So instead, maybe just think about someone you know who has perhaps moved house, or settled their children in a new school, or started a new job, or has been suddenly struck by illness - or all of the above. Then think of your own life, what problems you have, what do you want out of life - another endless list - and then, what you have got that is wonderful. Health, happiness, families, work, peace in our land, freedom - yet another list that goes on and on.

Whether we feel hard done by or very lucky, thinking about others in difficulty, with empathy, is yet another gift to be harvested. I call that prayer.

Miriam

From our new Rector

September is a month of new beginnings. Over the summer holidays everything stops, or slows down so much that it appears to have stopped and then before we know it, September is here; clubs, school, societies all begin again with shiny new kits, uniforms and a renewed energy and enthusiasm.

And you have new Rector (ed) What is she like? you are wondering... well once you have made your minds up, the greatest compliment you can pay me is to describe me to one another in word like 'she seems normal' or 'she's just like one of us'. That is my aim, I want to be part of the community. (ed)

Steve, I and our children; Josh, Ben, Annie, Dominic & Ellie are settling in the Rectory (ed). Steve and I both come from Exmoor, Steve from Luccombe and me from Wheddon Cross, so we feel like we are coming home.

I am passionate about rural communities and rural ministry; the church in the countryside is not dying, it is evolving as it has done many times before and I am really excited to be entering into ministry at such a time