

Vicar's Letter for November 2018

Dear Friends

A big thank you for all the generous Harvest gifts donated by you for the work of our Foodbank, the Refugee and Asylum Seekers Project and the Booth Centre. Heather was kindly helped in the mammoth task of sorting all the donations between the charities. So thank you to those who helped her - members of the church as well as children from St Matthew's School. Thank you to June, Heather and Colin and Bob who then took all the donations to their respective new homes for distribution to those most in need who will benefit from them. Once again our Church looked lovely - beautifully decorated by Isobel and others to show our celebration, and our Harvest service reminded us all of God's rich bounty and generosity, for which we are truly thankful.

The following day the clergy of our diocese had a study day on Eco Church in the Cathedral, where we were reminded of God's bounty in creation and how 'God saw all that he had made and it was very good.' The day was led by Dr Ruth Valerio, Global Advocacy and Influencing Director for Tearfund, who encouraged us to focus on the practical things we can do to respond to God's call to care for the world He has made.

Ruth had seen first-hand the devastating impact that climate change is having around the world. In Tanzania earlier this year she stood with a farmer as he looked at his dying land, uncertain if the rains would ever come to revive his crops.

Our own heatwave this summer should have acted as a wakeup call and alerted us to the seriousness of the situation. "We have to act now and change the way we live and do things as a Church," says Ruth. "We live comfortable lives here and can sit and discuss climate change, but the reality is it's impacting millions around the world right now."

Our own Diocese of Manchester is working towards becoming an Eco Diocese and churches are being encouraged to be part of Eco Church. This is a helpful and easy way to take some practical steps by working through five key areas of church life: Worship and teaching, buildings, Land, Community and global engagement, Lifestyle and so show care for God's creation.

I hope we will be able to explore some of these together, for as Ruth said: "The problems are so massive that we need to work together; let's start by learning and supporting one another."

This month we remember 100 years since the Armistice. Looking back to remember is always important as a sobering reminder of what we as human beings are capable of - and by that I mean heroic courage and self-sacrifice as well as hatred, violence and inhumanity.

There will be many opportunities for remembering and holding at the forefront of our mind our commitment to peace and justice for all who inhabit our world - people as well as the wider natural world.

Surely striving for peace, the cessation of war, sharing of the worlds resources and care for our planet are all inextricably linked if we are truly disciples of Jesus.

Perhaps this November we can make a start on 4 areas for change:

- The food we eat
- The way we travel
- The energy we use
- The things we throw away.

A prayer:

Strengthen our hearts, and hands, and minds, O Lord,
to work together for peace;
to see you in one another;
and to seek your kingdom above all things;
that your will may be seen to be done
and your kingdom come,
through Jesus Christ,
the Lord of lords and King of kings. **Amen.**