THE GRAPEVINE – *Issue 30: 8th October 2020*

Dear Friends,

Probably, the first words we teach our children apart from Mummy and Daddy, are 'please' and 'thank you'. We try to instill in them an attitude of gratitude right from an early age. Does their response become a habit (not a bad one of course), do they really appreciate the things that come their way? I think of my grandchildren at Christmas or birthday time charging through their gifts, being reminded to 'thank' the person who gave it but quickly moving on to the next alluring parcel.

Traditionally, this is the season when we are reminded to be thankful for our daily needs – food mostly but of course we include many other commodities. It's a celebration of harvest but over the years, harvest has become something that is hidden from our own experience unless of course, you are a farmer. Food is available to us from all over the world, all through the year – the word 'seasonal' no longer applies resulting perhaps in our remoteness to its origin.

During this exceptional year, many more people have turned to growing their own fruit and vegetables and apart from enjoying the fruit of their labour, have found gardening therapeutic; I am sure they would be more thankful for what they had personally planted, cared for and harvested than instant produce from the supermarket.
Apparently, the word 'thank' appears over 100 times in the Bible. It is used in many ways but essentially, it is recognising who God is and what He has done. The Psalms are full of thanks and praise to God for his goodness, protection, justice, love, mercy……and Paul often exhorts his readers to thank and praise God – 'Sing, sing your hearts out to God! Let every detail in your lives – words, actions, whatever – be done in the name of the Master, Jesus, thanking God the Father every step of the way.' But like, the annual Harvest Celebration, are we in danger of our thanks to God becoming a habit without much thought of what he has provided <u>every day</u> for us.

We used to say Grace before a meal but it became a habit without much substance so we don't now but of course, we are still grateful to God for our food and the people responsible for growing and producing it.

Not that long ago, every Thursday evening we were showing our appreciation to our National Health Workers by banging saucepans, honking horns, clapping, and rightly so. We have infinitely more to thank God for so as we celebrate 'all good gifts around us' let us be enthusiastic in our thanks and praise to God our Father who gives all good gifts to his children out of his love and care for us and the greatest gift – his beloved son.

Jenny Woods

PS: Harvest gifts have been requested to be donated to Calne Foodbank this year. If you have some you could drop them off to Church House, Church Street, of drop them off (anytime) in a bag or box under the green awning here at Woodlands Lodge, Wenhill Lane, SN11 0JG. Not sure what food to give? See https://www.calnefoodbank.co.uk/donations (no pasta at present please).