



## Thought for the Month of October 2021 by Revd Prof Stella Mills, Associate Chaplain

There seems to have been many serious items in the news recently: the change of power in Afghanistan, the recent reshuffle of the Cabinet in our own Government, and the preparation of the Global Summit about climate change to be held in Glasgow this autumn. On the sporting front, we have had the Olympics and Para-Olympics at both of which, the UK has done well. Then there is the success of our young tennis star who has won the Grand Slam as a teenager, echoing Virginia Wade's success so many years ago – something which some of us will remember! In spite of Covid-19 numbers increasing, there have been some good things happening over the summer.

But now as the autumn days shorten and late holidays are taken in preparation for winter, we are told of possible Covid-19 spikes as well as influenza and other winter illnesses threatening our health this winter. Yet, throughout the summer and now into the autumn, our farmers and rural workers have laboured faithfully and quietly, keeping the countryside in care for future generations. If we have continued walking frequently, we shall have seen the changing seasons from summer to autumn especially and noticed the harvests taking place across our country. Lambs and bullocks have been taken to market ready for our tables during the winter and cows (and sheep) have continued to be milked to provide sustenance for all our well-being.

Behind the faithfulness of our farmers in continuing to provide food, the faithfulness of God remains. In spite of everything this year, the harvests have happened and we give thanks to our farmers and to God for their care and hard work in producing our food for the future. But we know that for seeds to germinate and for stock to reproduce something is needed beyond our own husbandry and power and so, as usual at this time of the year, we join together to thank God for all his goodness to us and for the miracle of birth and new life which sustains our farms and countryside. In our local churches across the land, harvest festivals of thanksgiving are being held, not only to thank God but to acknowledge his goodness and greatness not only for our physical needs but also for our spiritual sustenance and hope for the future. In Jesus, God's Son, we find peace and strength, forgiveness and hope, through His Resurrection and His promise of eternal salvation.

The Derbyshire Rural Chaplaincy is holding its own Harvest Festival on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2021 at 2.30pm in the Ring at the Agricultural Business Centre in Bakewell when we shall welcome the Bishop of Derby as our preacher. All are welcome to attend this service, subject to any local Covid-19 restrictions.

So, this autumn, let us thank God for our food and His wonderful goodness to us and let us thank Him for all the good work our farmers do to make our countryside such a peaceful and beautiful place.

