

Dear friends

**HARVEST FESTIVAL at ALL SAINTS**

Dear friends,

We are living in the most testing of times when we are required to live responsibly, following those guidelines that are in place to provide Covid Security when we gather together for worship. We are in the season of Harvest and we would normally be preparing to decorate the church and plan a service, which was followed last year by a 'Bring and Share Lunch'. It would be wonderful if we could do it all again this year, but we can't.

WE CAN'T invite folk to visit the church to decorate it without potentially putting them at risk. Working in such close proximity, all be to wearing masks, risks infection. Touching, holding, and sharing tools and equipment, buckets and pews creates risk. And for what?

With the church not open for visitors, only for acts of worship, WE CAN'T encourage folk from the village to enjoy the decorations through the week, as would normally be the case. The sad fact is that WE CAN'T issue an open invitation for as many who would like to attend a Harvest Festival as we are restricted to 20 at each service due to the requirement to maintain 2m distance. We could ask folk to register but that leaves the distinct possibility that we would have to spend time informing folk that they cannot come as there is not enough space to accommodate them. I am not happy about refusing any!

So, what can we do? We are in touch with those families who are part of Funday Sunday and Junior Minstead, inviting them to (1) Decorate a Harvest Stick - instructions have been provided and (2) put donations of food for the FoodBank in the back of my car. Between Wed and Sat next week, I will arrange to visit each family personally and with the parents' permission, I will video the children carrying donated food items to my car. The result will be that we will have a video of children from across the Benefice filling my car up which can be shown as part of our 'paired down' Harvest Festival.

In short, this year's Harvest Festival will be a 'normal' Service of the Word with a Harvest Theme, which for the reasons given above, will not be widely advertised.

Involving the children and their families ensures that they can reflect on Harvest and share in our worship by being included in a video which will be shown in all churches at their Harvest Services.

I am saddened that we can realistically do no more, but with everything hanging in the balance, I would want to encourage you to do anything that could result in others becoming sick themselves, or passing the infection on to others. Let's pray that next year will be different - and what decorations there will be!

Thank you for your understanding,

**David, Liz & Gray**

Liz

[elizrandall@btinternet.com](mailto:elizrandall@btinternet.com)