The Rectory,

 Escrick

Dear Friends,

**SUMMER FRUIT**

At this time of year we might be experiencing an Indian Summer, catching the warmth of the sun, in morning and afternoon, and settle down in the evening as the nights draw in. It is now the end of July (as I write) and the farmers are beginning to get in the grain harvest, some potatoes are already up and the beetroot, beans and peas in our garden are already being harvested.

This time of year is a time to be contented, to be thankful, to be prepared to harvest the work of earlier months. The celebration of the harvest must have begun before written history. Today only about half our food comes from farming in this country but in rural communities the link between parishioners, farming and the harvest remains strong. More recent celebration in churches began in the Victorian era in 1843 when Revd Robert Hawker from Morwenstow in Cornwall invited parishioners to a festival. Over the following decades others continued the tradition. Today church communities up and down the country give thanks from the abundance and provision of the harvest, thanking God for his goodness to us.

Our school communities focus their harvest celebrations on our care for our world and our planet, thinking about sustainability in a world where much seems to be a throwaway society. Often items are purchased because of a lower price, however the cost of disposal continues to shadow the purchase often leading to continued cost and nuisance long after the item(s) have been disposed of.

Our churches, chapels and schools are having harvest celebrations this autumn, do come and come and join us as we give God our thanks.

Yours, Richard Kirkman.

**Prayer of thanks for Summer fruit**

We thank You, God, for blossom:

its beauty reflects the harvest yet to come.

We thank You, God, for strawberries:

their fullness reminds us of Your grace.

We thank You, God, for raspberries:

they are worth the toil to protect them from the birds.

We thank You, God, for bilberries:

so small and delicate, yet in clumps so rich.

We thank You, God, for apples:

so familiar and reliable, like Your care for us.

We thank You, God, for blackberries:

not fruit from our labour - but we collect them anyway.

Thank You, God, for your abundant love.