

Dear Friends,

As I sit to write this letter for the Autumn edition of the Focus magazine, it is the end of July, but it certainly has felt autumnal over these last few days, with the wind and the rain! Where has the sunshine gone? Hopefully we will experience some better weather yet before the Autumn is properly with us.



September is the start of the new academic year. For children and young people, a time of change and transition. Whether starting school for the first time as some are from our Friday Toddler Group, moving class and being with a new teacher, or moving up to high school or college, or even university. It's a time of change and adjustment. It is at the same time an opportunity to meet new people, make new friends and gain new knowledge and skills. Please remember all our young people in the village and beyond in your prayers.

*"All good gifts around us are sent from heaven above"*. Do you recognise these words? They are from the Harvest hymn, 'We plough the fields and scatter'. Our Harvest Thanksgiving Service this year will be on **Sunday 8th October**. It is an opportunity to indeed thank God for his provision for us. It's lovely to see the different crops growing in the fields on the way into the village. I never cease to be amazed by what grows from a tiny seed: putting down roots and growing shoots. Not unlike starting a new year at school really, settling in and becoming established and growing in every way.

Jesus told his disciples that if they had faith the size of a mustard seed, then nothing would be impossible for them. That's a good thought to take with you into the new academic year.

I don't know if you have seen our notice board recently, but we have a new poster which says, *"Small Church- Big Welcome"*. And that is true. Everyone is very welcome here at St. Stephen's. It would be lovely to see you at any of our services.

God Bless,  
Keith