

Hope you've managed to stock up on toilet rolls – I can't believe panic buying has started again? It makes me wonder, if there's one thing you could not do without, what would it be?

Maybe it would be toilet rolls, though there are ways to improvise – scraps of newspaper were all the rage, so I gather – and I know some of you are old enough to remember that...

Maybe it would be chocolate – can you imagine a world without it? We've not been hoarding it, but early on in lockdown, we did bulk buy – from Traidcraft, fairly traded chocolate, so that made it ok – and we did ration ourselves!

Maybe it would be hand sanitiser – how did we ever live without it – did you know the Church of England had to issue a warning to clergy not to light candles after they'd sanitised their hands! Woosh!!!!!!

Our bible reading which Jane read to us as part of our harvest service today, psalm 65 has been described as a psalm of reorientation – something important each and every time we celebrate harvest and something I believe we especially need today:-

This psalm is a prayer – but it doesn't ask God for anything -no- the reorientation means aligning ourselves again with where God is. From time to time, our satellite dish gets out of line. I then have to get the ladder out, and use this device known as a satellite finder. I move the dish, and as it lines up with the signal being beamed from a satellite 23,000 miles above the earth it begins to bleep, and when the bleep is at its loudest, all is in line. You can't see the satellite, but this device helps to realign, reorientate so we can watch Bake-off again!

How does this psalm help our heavenly reorientation? Firstly, it invites us to look backwards, to see God at work in our relationship with him – v2 of the psalm reminds us that God answers prayer and forgives our sins. And also it reminds us that our God is a creator God who brought the world into being – he formed the mountains, and that day and night are under his control.

Second, it invites us to look around us. The fields around our village are still cultivated, and still full of sheep. Whatever the virus might be doing to humankind, God's goodness still produces crops and animals for us to enjoy and care for. You visit the earth and bless it, the psalmist writes. You water it. He is able to see what is around him, and to see the creator behind it.

And so third, our reorientation so present in this psalm calls for a radical appraisal of who we are. It's been so easy this year to lose focus. To lose focus as we get caught up in lockdown, illness, sadness, separation. That has always been part of the human condition. Yet harvest causes the psalmist, and therefore I invite us to do the same, to look towards God and beyond our circumstance, and to give thanks to God for his care for us.