

An Almighty task to please everyone

As I write this, we've not yet had our harvest festival services in either parish, and we've not had 'the Benenden village fete in support of St George's Church', but both are occupying a lot of my attention right now. By the time you read this, however, we will have had the harvest service in Sandhurst; we will have had the village fete in Benenden; and we will be just about to have the harvest service in Benenden. So, for two out of three, we'll know if they've been really successful events. I would like to say a big thank you, though, to everyone who has worked behind the scenes, and on the day, to make these village events happen. Your hard work is really appreciated.

Like so many outdoor events, the success is significantly influenced by something completely outside of the organiser's control: the weather. We've just had the final planning meeting for the fete, when someone asked what the weather forecast was like for the day. There then followed a discussion on what we wanted: no thick cloud, we'd like it nice and sunny, please, but not too hot, and not too cold either. No rain, and definitely not the thunder, lightning and the hail we had a few years ago, please. Oh, and not too windy either, that's not good for the gazebos. God has his work cut out that day to please everyone!

I suspect it is going to be the same sort of thing when we consider the type of service pattern we want as we start to come out of all the Covid-imposed restrictions on our worship, and what we should and should not do in church. A few months ago, I asked members of the church family for their input regarding some aspects of our services. I was completely surprised, but delighted, by the number of people who responded - so thank you for taking the time to do so.

It has also meant a lot more time than expected was needed to consider all the suggestions - hence the service pattern not having changed yet. One thing is for certain: like God with the fete weather, whatever we decide to do, it is not going to satisfy everyone. We will consider everyone's wishes (but some of these are diametrically opposed); we'll consider the variety of services offered; we'll consider the resources we have available (to lead and preach and preside and play the organ, and all the other things involved in a service). Oh, and we'll be listening to what God might want us to do, too. He usually has some good ideas when we take the time to listen.

I hope that by the time of next month's letter, we'll have had three great community events, and we'll know what we are doing moving forwards. Watch this space.

Revd David