

Reflection for the week: September 6th- 13th, 2020

Anticipating Harvest

Jesus said to the one who had invited him, 'When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbours, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.' Luke 14: 12-14

On October 4th we will be celebrating the annual Harvest Festival in church. And, we will still have a harvest lunch, but boxed instead of plated and eaten at a safe 2 metres apart from people who are not part of our social bubble. There is nothing comparable in the bible except, perhaps, a different interpretation of hand sanitising.

However, there is a concept embedded in the words of Jesus from Luke's Gospel which continues to speak to us. The concept is that of open hospitality – extending the invitation of welcome to those who cannot pay you back. In these few sentences is yet another high-risk, radical strategy, especially when we remember that meals were important social ceremonies in the ancient near east. It mattered who you ate with and where you sat, as these were indicators of social hierarchy (akin to a Cambridge College High Table).

On 4th October, it won't be a hierarchical case of who sits next to whom because the options are dictated by the lingering threat of covid-19, and every effort will be made to deliver to those who cannot join in person. Beyond the logistics though there is another thing to consider – that with your generosity, people who live on another continent can receive an invitation to hope and feel welcomed as cherished guests of an international church family. This year we would like to support the diocesan mission partners in Kigali. When speakers feel safe to come along we will be able to hear more about the inspiring work happening in this place.

To reflect upon: *Place yourself at a meal with Jesus. Are you the host, one of the guests, or a servant? How do you react to what Jesus says?*

If Jesus came to sit among us in church on October 4th, what do you think he might say?