

This edition's letter is from Local Ministry Assistant Dave Robinson,

As I'm writing this, I can hear the sound of a tractor working in the field on the other side of the reservoir. I can't see it because there are trees in the way, but later I'll check it out when I walk our lazy greyhound. What I expect to see will be a harvested field. Because it's getting to that time, isn't it? Harvest festivals, ploughing the fields and scattering, and all that. And the sycamore tree outside my window is looking decidedly brown around the edges. The summer we had high hopes for in May is cruising down towards autumn. Very soon we won't be able to sit in sun-kissed gardens, listening to the birds in the trees and watching the industrious insect life buzzing from flower to flower. What's that? We've hardly done that this summer, anyway? I suppose the weather has been a bit mixed, and when I say mixed, I mean cold, cloudy, rainy and windy. It would have been nicer if it had been mixed.

But it's like we've been cheated out of our English summer! That pastoral time of grasshoppers and swifts and bees and happy children playing with buckets and spades on a sandy beach. I've heard a few people say that it's ridiculous! As if it's a dead cert that we will, or at least should, have a gorgeous, hot, sunny summer between June and August. As if, somehow, the government or someone must be to blame. How hard is it to organise a proper summer? Those weather people stand up on the TV and confuse us with jet streams and cold fronts when really, they should just be getting on with the business of seasons in their proper places. It's the same with muggy winters – we don't want those either! Too warm!

The fact that we have a changeable, maritime climate in the UK seems to escape us. Or that we're responsible to some extent for raising the temperature of the sea and atmosphere, causing new weather patterns. The weather, like life itself, is rarely predictable, and neither are we. But fortunately, we know someone who is. Predictable and dependable. And when we are anxious about the changing world we live in, He promises to be with us always. That's a promise, not a forecast.

Dave Robinson.