Harvest is a beautiful season of reflection.
It is a time when we look at the abundance of the earth, the crops gathered, the table filled, and our hearts overflow with gratitude.
But the true miracle of the harvest is not just that God fills our barns and our store cupboards, it is what happens next.
True thankfulness or gratitude should always move us from receiving to giving and sharing.
God gave us two hands one for receiving and one for giving.
Giving grows out of loving and loving comes from God. We know love because God first loved us. We have known love and so love others in return. Giving is our response to God's love and our giving makes things happen. Just ask Elizabeth Paice.
Our Harvest is a time for sharing, for giving and for thanking God for the opportunity to bear good fruit for him. We are to be thankful for the portion of worldly things that God has given us, be contented with what we have and trust God to provide for the future. This has really come to life this week. We had a coffee morning to raise funds for Macmillan nurses The Co-op Funeral directors donated a hamper for us to raffle. Many people bought tickets, one assumes in the hope of winning. But one lady came to me after buying a ticket and said, "There is far too much for me in that hamper, if I win is there any way I can donate the contents to the food bank. What a wonderful idea I said, we can include it in our harvest gifts on Sunday. That is today.
But she didn't have the winning ticket. But the lady who did win from the other side of the room, when presented with the basket said almost the identical words. And she was delighted when I told her of the previous plan. So not only were the coop people generous, and not one but two of our congregation also generous. And as I look at the gifts around the altar I can see what a generous giving community we are. So thank you

everyone.
This reminds me of our second reading today... The book of Acts gives us a breath taking picture of what happens when a community is truly filled with gratitude and thankful to God..
This shows us that the ultimate harvest God desires is not grown in a field but in the human heart.
The text begins by telling us that “Everyone was filled with awe”.
The early Christians had just witnessed the incredible gift of God’s grace through Jesus and the Holy Spirit.
Their hearts were completely full. Gratitude is the starting point of all generosity. When we look at our lives through the lens of faith, we realise that everything we have is a gift from God. The breath in our lungs, the food on our tables, and the community around us are part of God’s abundant harvest.
When we are filled with awe at God’s goodness our hand naturally begin to unclench. We stop gripping
Our possessions tightly because we trust God our provider.
The scripture tells us that the believers had everything in common and that they broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts.
At harvest time we traditionally celebrate the gathering of food.\but the early church reminds us that food is meant to be shared not hoarded. They turned their private meals into public blessings.
In our world today that often encourages us to build bigger barns, bigger houses, bigger bank accounts, we see the early Christians merely built bigger tables. They understood that a harvest is only truly celebrated when everyone at the table has enough to eat.
Perhaps the most challenging part of this passage is verse 45.
“They sold their property and possessions to give to anyone who

had need. They looked at their neighbours, saw a lack and used their own abundance to fill the gap. They didn't wait for someone else to solve the problem. They became the answer to each other's prayers.
. Generosity is gratitude in action. When we share our food, our time, our resources with the local food banks, shelters and neighbours in need, we are lining out the ideals of the early church. We are declaring that people are more valuable than possessions. The passage ends with a beautiful result; they were praising God and enjoying the favour of all people. Because they were grateful and generous their community thrived and others were drawn to God.
This harvest season let us pray for a harvest of the heart. May we be filled with awe for what God has given us. May we open our homes and our hearts to break bread together, and may our gratitude turn into joyful generosity so that no one among us goes in need,
St Paul the Apostle wrote God loves a cheerful giver, one who sows generously will reap a harvest of joy. Amen.