

A few words from the Vicar

*Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.
(1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)*

As a Vicar, I am obliged to spend time in prayer. Not that I mind. It seems like a good deal to me; being paid to do something I would do anyway!

Of course, it is only to be expected that clergy (and parish lay leaders for that matter) spend time in prayer. Rightly, you would be shocked if any of us did not pray regularly. Indeed, it is difficult to see how I could function in my role as Vicar without plugging into the power of God through prayer.

Prayer isn't just something for Christian leaders though. Long before I was ordained, soon after I came to faith, I began to set aside a daily quiet time for prayer and Bible study. Speaking from personal experience, spending quality time with God is a must for growing in faith.

So, what do I pray about? Well, lots of things really, and the subject of my prayers changes over time.

I have a list; a long list of people and situations I pray for or about (not all in one session). I begin with the weekly prayers on the pewsheet, to which I add any matters parishioners have asked me to pray for in confidence, the mission of this Church, Church growth, and much more besides.

Currently, two of the things I am praying about are funding for the building project and money to pay for a better sound system.

We have permission from the Diocesan Chancellor to undertake some essential repair work to the Church building, without which our lovely building does not have a long-term future. The cost is in the region of £120,000, although we will

have a better idea once we have been through the tendering process.

We do not have anything like that amount of money in our reserves, so will need to fund the work from grants, donations and fundraising. God answers prayer. I don't know where the money will come from, but I know I can lift this situation to God and, if it is His will, He will ensure we find the money.

Likewise, as many of you will have noticed, the Church sound system is no longer fit for purpose. We need to replace it with something better, a system that will enhance our worship. We don't have any money to pay for this, but I am confident God answers prayer.

So, please pray for the sound system and the building project, and let us be encouraged by Jesus' words, "*whatever you ask for in prayer with faith, you will receive.*" (Matthew 21:22)

Changing the subject. Permit me express my sincere thanks to all who have removed items from loved ones' graves that do not comply with the Churchyard Regulations. (Details can be found at <http://ainsworthparish.org.uk/churchyard.html>.) The Churchyard is looking much tidier than it did in February, when I first raised this matter.

Also, a gentle reminder to those who have not rectified things yet; please do so. I do understand that families sometimes place items on graves without realising they are not allowed. Unfortunately, although this Church does not make the rules, we are responsible for enforcing them.

Enforcement is set to begin later this month (25th April). Obviously, it is preferable for families to put things right themselves, rather than leave it to us.

Every Blessing

Dave