

## **A few words from the Vicar ....**

*'... let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.'* (Matthew 5:16)

Well, it's Advent already. The beginning of a new Church year. A season of expectation and preparation as we prepare to celebrate the coming of Christ in his incarnation at Christmas and look forward to his coming again at the end of time.

The Bible readings and words we use in our services direct us to ponder upon the significance of Christ's birth and challenge our modern reluctance to consider divine judgement.

God as baby Jesus came amongst us a little over 2,000 years ago. Then, as a young man he died on the cross and rose again so that we might have life eternal. This was *the* pivotal moment in human history. Nothing else that has happened or ever will happen in human history surpasses in significance what Jesus achieved for us.

It is impossible to overstate the significance of what Jesus achieved for humanity; for you and for I.

And our response? Well, most obviously, we are called to accept Jesus into our lives as Lord and Saviour. But there's more. Just as Jesus, through his teaching, healing and personal example during his earthly ministry made a positive difference to the lives of many, we who follow him are called to be a blessing to others.

This goes beyond engaging in 'churchy' things, important though they are.

Many of you work hard, for example, to: ensure our worship runs smoothly; to ensure our building and churchyard are remain attractive and fit for purpose; and to raise the funds necessary to keep the show on the road. These things are all important aspects of our mission to serve our community.

Indeed, the same can be said for the many, many other ways in which so many of you engage in Church life.

Last month, however, as I prepared for Tony Blomley's funeral, I was reminded of something that is all too easy to forget in a busy parish church like ours. Tony's calling was to a lifetime's service as a nurse and in the St John Ambulance Brigade. His voluntary service with the latter was particularly impressive; he had a positive impact upon the lives of a countless numbers of people, both directly and indirectly via the training he gave to other volunteers.

All this acted as a strong reminder to me that engaging in 'churchy' things is not the only way Christians can – or should - serve God and our fellow human beings. Volunteering within the community or engaging in charity work are important too as is following a calling to engage in a particular line of work.

Indeed, much of Jesus' own ministry was exercised away from the Temple and Synagogue, which surely has implications for our own priorities.

Every Blessing

*Dave*