

A few words from the Vicar

By tradition we hold our Harvest Parade service on the 2nd Sunday in October and this year is no exception.

For many years we have used our Harvest Parade as an opportunity to support Porch Boxes, a local charity supplying crisis packs to people in need. This year is no exception. Please be generous.

What is different this year is that, throughout the whole of October, we shall be reflecting upon two things: God's generosity towards us; and our response to him in terms giving generously from our time and money to support the mission of the Church.

Before I go any further, permit me to thank everyone for their involvement in and commitment to the life Christ Church. We would be struggling without all the time, energy, skill and financial support given freely by many of you.

Nonetheless, Christ Church is running at a deficit. This limits our ability to serve our community, means we will struggle to afford to fund some necessary building work and, by failing to pay our Parish Share in full to the Diocese, means we are failing in our obligation to support the mission of the Church within the poorer areas of Greater Manchester.

More detail about our finances can be found in the booklet which will be given to all those attending worship this month. However, the bottom line is our running costs are £19.55 each week per adult worshipper, before paying for building work, a new sound system and spending more on mission. Few contribute at this level.

If this prompts folk to reconsider the amount they give to Church funds, all well and good, but that would be the wrong place to start!

The correct place to begin is with God; to consider His love for us and what He has done for us. To give thanks to Him that, through Jesus Christ, we have forgiveness of sins and life in abundance. To thank Him that all we have, ultimately, results from God's blessing. And, if we follow Jesus, to remember that He calls us to play our full part in the mission of the Church, not just by sharing the good news of Jesus Christ in the world, but also by being God's blessing to others.

We then pray, asking ourselves, "where does giving to God, both financially and of my time, come in my priorities?" Does He come first or last? We then act as we are led, in the knowledge that, *'Each of us must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.'* (2 Corinthians 9:7)

Of course, some of you are already giving of your time generously and / or will already be giving sacrificially from low incomes. In which case, it would be reasonable for you to leave things unchanged. Others, however, might feel led to respond by making a greater commitment to the mission of the Church in terms of time and money.

Remember, giving our time and money is an act of faith, and an act of trust. Scripture teaches the principle of proportional giving, giving a percentage of our disposable income (i.e. income after tax and national insurance). We should therefore seek to give a certain amount for each £1 of our disposable income. There are also numerous occasions in scripture where God promises to meet the needs of those who put Him first.

I have based my giving upon Biblical principles for nearly 30 years now, and God has never let me down!

Every Blessing

Dave