

A few words from the Vicar

*Count your blessings, name them one by one,
Count your blessings, see what God has done!
Count your blessings, name them one by one,
Count your many blessings, see what God has done.*
Hymn Lyrics by Johnson Oatman Jnr (1856-1926)

One of the things that amazes me (in a good way) about Christ Church is the large number of people engaged in the work of the Church. People simply roll up their sleeves and get on with it.

I could fill the magazine with a long list of what people do. To do so, however, would run the risk of leaving something or someone out. There is so much that goes on behind the scenes. I am fortunate. Being your Vicar affords me an overview but, even now, having been here over eight years, I am still learning.

Sure, it can be frustrating sometimes when we struggle to fill important posts. For example, we still need a leader for the 12th Rainbows. But, if I count my blessings one by one, if I reflect upon the hard work that goes on already, this helps me place occasional disappointments in their proper perspective.

And, because we have this firm foundation, because the routine business as usual activities of parish life are assured, we can invest time and effort into doing things that will help this Church grow again. For example, Revd Debra and I have the time to lead Mid-Week Praise, our new family friendly service, which has expanded rapidly since it was launched in October. Weekly attendance at that service now hovers around 40 adults and children. God is good and we are blessed!

Naturally, there is always more we could do in terms of mission and outreach. As we look around us, there is so much need and there are many in this land who do not know Jesus as their

personal saviour. So, more volunteers are always welcome as we work together to build God's kingdom.

Not that I want anyone to feel guilty. Far from it. One of my concerns is that it is all too easy to become so busy with Church work, that we neglect to find time for prayer and to open God's word. There are times when we need to put our busyness to one side and be still in God's presence. Therefore, I am hoping to organise a parish quiet day in the not too distant future (please email me if you are interested).

Indeed, there is more to building God's kingdom than what we do here at Christ Church. As I look around the congregation, I notice those who are active volunteers outside Church life and those whose God-given vocation is expressed through their employment (medics and police officers, for example). This is right and proper.

Likewise, there are those who are not able to engage in Church work. Some are busy parents and carers, and there are others who were once active in God's work, but for whom age means this is no longer possible. And, as a welcoming parish church, there will always be room for those who simply wish to join us for worship, and nothing more. Everyone can expect the same warm welcome at Christ Church.

In the Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard (Matthew 20:1-16), Jesus makes it clear that all of us are valued equally by God, regardless of the effort we put into building his kingdom. Our eternal reward is the same. Indeed, serving God is a privilege and a joy; it is its own reward!

So, do I count my blessings as your Vicar? Do I count them one by one? You bet I do!

Every Blessing

Dave