

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

As I am sure most of you will have heard by now, we have some good news. God has blessed us with the funding we need to begin essential building work at Christ Church. Our prayers have been answered: we have been awarded a substantial (£36,000) grant by Viridor Credits, we have received an unexpected legacy and the contract price for completing the work is lower than expected.

If we add these things to your donations, the money raised through your fund raising, and the reserves the PCC had squirreled away in recent years, we now have the money we need to commence work. Hopefully, work can start soon.

A lot of people have worked hard to get us to this point, but the glory goes to God. Without His intervention, we would be facing years of gruelling fund raising. As things stand, the future of our Church building is assured, so we can now focus on finding the funding for some of the other things we need to do.

Maintaining an old building like ours is like painting the Forth Bridge; it never stops. I know that Chris Haworth, our Buildings Officer, has a list of other work that ought to be done, plus we still need to find the money to enhance our sound system. And, plus, there is a cost to mission.

So, as we thank God for blessing us so generously, we continue to pray that He will continue to provide for our finances.

Is it worth it? Can we justify spending so much money to assure the future of our church building? These are valid questions, because Christ Church is not the building, but the people and, if push comes to shove, we could worship elsewhere. In the Church Hall maybe. I know of a Church in Great Lever that worships in their local school, and another, in Radcliffe, that worships in their Church Hall, so we wouldn't be setting a precedent!

Personally, I would be unhappy if we were forced to go down that route. As far as I am concerned, spending £100k or more to secure the future of our church building is fully justified. Why? Let me explain.

Local people have been worshipping at Christ Church, our little church on Cockey Moor, for at least 500 years, and probably for a lot longer. When I am alone in church, I can sense that generations upon generations of prayer and worship have soaked into the very fabric of the building. One cannot but help sense God's presence.

Sure, our building doesn't have the grandeur of an ancient cathedral or of a town centre church, but that is precisely the reason I like it! I prefer the simplicity and homeliness of Christ Church. And I know that many (like me) find themselves attracted by the simple aesthetics and prayer-soaked ambiance of our homely village church.

I long to see revival in this land and I long to see Christ Church (the people, not the building this time) grow in faith and grow numerically. Thanks be to God that we have already experienced rapid growth through Mid-Week Praise, and I continue to pray for other opportunities to grow this Church.

Well, we can have all the mission action plans and mission programmes we like but, as a mission-minded priest, I know that our building provides us with an essential foundation for growth. Indeed, it is difficult to foresee how we would survive for long without it.

So, let us continue to praise God for His generosity and thank Him that the long-term future of Christ Church is now assured.

Every Blessing

*Dave*