

A few words from the Vicar

It was only a year ago that we launched Mid-Week Praise. Since then, this new congregation has grown steadily, and attendance is about 50. This is far in excess of attendance at our two BCP services put together. Indeed, the MWP congregation is larger than the number of weekly worshippers attracted by many Church of England parishes (the median weekly attendance in 2017 was 44).

So, to say that MWP is a success, would be an understatement.

Although Debra and I had taken soundings, we had no idea whether MWP would be successful. There was always a risk that we might fall flat on our faces. Yet, after a lot of prayer, we sensed the pull of the Holy Spirit, so, we stepped out in faith ... and MWP has been a resounding success.

Sometimes it is necessary to take risks for the Gospel. In fact, it is always necessary to take risks, to step out in faith. Unless we do so, unless we keep trying new things to see whether they work, we will not grow.

Achieving growth is not just an essential part of Manchester Diocese's vision for the future, it is a Gospel imperative; Jesus commands us to spread His good news and we must obey. In launching MWP we have played a part in this but, of course, there is always more we could do. So, when the Holy Spirit sends inspiration again, doubtless we will be stepping out in faith once more.

MWP is led by a team of three. Debra fronts the service and undertakes most of the preparation; I provide backup and support; and Lillian undertakes 101 jobs at the back of Church, ensuring things run smoothly.

Always intended to be a family-friendly service (but suitable for others too), the format of MWP has gradually evolved and will continue to evolve. Children participate actively. They hand out

and collect in service books, take the collection, lead our prayers, take up the elements at Communion and are fully engaged throughout the service.

Yes, things can get noisy and boisterous at times. What amazes me though, what touches my heart is the way boisterousness seamlessly transforms into serenity as soon as we begin the Eucharistic Prayer. And, then the children rush up to the receive God's blessing. I find this both touching and amazing.

You are welcome to join us. MWP is on Wednesday evenings at 6.15pm and last for about 45 minutes.

Before I finish for this month, I must say that I have been overwhelmed by the community response following the theft of the Churchyard Team's tools and equipment. The outpouring of support demonstrates that the Team's hard work in maintaining the churchyard, rain or shine, week in week out, is greatly appreciated. The generosity of the community has been overwhelming too. Donations of equipment and money have flowed in.

We have a great bunch of volunteers, and the selfishness of the thief (or thieves) has not deterred the Team from serving the community in this important way. Our well-maintained churchyard provides an oasis of calm and it is just one of the ways we serve the bereaved and the wider community in love.

The selfishness of someone out to make a quick buck will not deflect us from this important task.

Every Blessing

Dave