

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

*The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. (2 Corinthians 9:6-8)*

In April I wrote about our relationship with money and mentioned that, unless the income of this Church increased, we'd finish the year with a shortfall of at least £3k. It was a gentle prod from me for all of you to prayerfully consider how much you give financially towards the ministry of your Church.

Well, since then our financial situation has deteriorated further.

I appreciate that personal finance is a sensitive issue for many of us and I don't want to make anyone feel guilty but ..... this is what you might call a less than gentle prod!

Our reserves are now depleted and we could finish the year with a whopping shortfall of £9k. This doesn't take into account the need to build up some additional reserves towards covering the cost of some essential building work that will be needed sometime over the next couple of years.

The opening words of June our Treasurer's report to the PCC in July were, '*We are desperately short of money .....*' I couldn't put it better myself!

Why are we short of money? Well, it is simple economics really; our income is falling at the same time that our expenditure is increasing. You don't need to be an accountant (like me) to realise that this situation is not a good recipe for the long term viability of any organisation; and that includes this Church.

Like everyone else our fuel bill has soared due to a combination of poor weather earlier this year and a significant increase in the tariff we pay. Our biggest item of expenditure, our parish share – the amount we pay to the Diocese to cover the cost of employing me plus a contribution to the mission of the Church in this Diocese and nationally – is, thankfully, marginally less than last year. Nonetheless our costs in general are rising.

Yet the amount you give collectively to your Church through regular giving and on the plate is actually decreasing! Let me repeat that, the amount you give collectively to your Church is actually decreasing!

I appreciate that we are living in a time of austerity but we can't continue like this; overall giving needs to increase if you want to see your church continue to flourish!

So, without wishing to put a guilt trip on anyone, now would be a good time for you to prayerfully consider how much you give regularly to this church and, if you can afford it, to give more.



In fact it wouldn't take much of a sacrifice from each of us to turn our finances around. If we ignore the cost of future building work for now, an average of £3 extra per week on the plate (or sent in via standing order) from each of us would be sufficient.

In addition:

- If you're a taxpayer and don't yet Gift Aid then please consider Gift Aiding your giving to this Church;
- Don't forget September is our 'Gift Month', so please consider giving something *extra* to your Church at this time; and
- Feel free to engage in fundraising for the Church if that's where your talents lie (but please speak to me first).

In April I said that to consider giving from the perspective that the Church is short of dosh so please give us some of yours is actually to view it from the wrong perspective. Well, I haven't changed my mind. God is and always will be the source of all that we have. Whatever the state of our parish finances, He expects us to respond to His sacrificial and overwhelming love for us by sacrificially giving back to Him some of what is His anyway.

Remember, '*God loves a cheerful giver*' (2 Corinthians 9:7) so please, please be of good cheer!

Every Blessing

*Dave*