



A pastoral letter from the Dean

I have been very conscious as a member of St Mary's Church Electoral Roll that we have been very poor at communicating important information to you - and for that I apologise.

As a member of the Roll, one of your responsibilities is to financially support the church so that we are able to be alive and active in our community. On behalf of the Parochial Church Council, I would like to sincerely thank you for the money that you gifted during 2015. Your giving has been essential in helping us to carry out worship, ministry and mission in Hadleigh.

Although we publish our accounts at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting, many people say that they find them difficult to understand and would value more of a summary approach so that they know what their money has been able to achieve. I hope that these rounded-up figures for 2015 might be helpful:

It cost £130,000 to run the church - that is £356 each day:

- £42,000 goes to the diocese to contribute paying for me: my housing, pension and training. It also helps to support the central administration. This is called *Parish Share*.
- £21,000 pays for clergy expenses, administration & verger.
- £43,000 pays to run the church - i.e. insurance, heating, lighting, cleaning, general maintenance etc.
- £6,000 was given to mission and donations.
- The remaining £18,000 covers all other costs.

Our income was £108,000:

- £43,000 from regular givers (bank transfers, weekly envelopes).
- £7,000 from cash collections during services.
- £28,000 from other voluntary giving.
- £11,000 reclaimed from the government as Gift Aid.
- £7,000 from fund raising.
- £11,000 from church activities.
- The remaining £7,000 from other sundry income.

Although we had money in the bank to start the year, basic maths will tell you that we were £22,000 short of income to expenditure this year, which amongst other things, meant that we defaulted in paying £5,000 of Parish Share. Hopefully this last year is a blip, but clearly we need to act where we can. We are continually trying to find ways to keep our expenditure to a minimum but we have a large church building and we are very active in our community - something that has been developing and making a huge impact. Legacy and restricted gifts for special projects (e.g. the fabric fund, grand piano etc.) are excluded from the figures above.

At the beginning of a new year, people often take the opportunity to review different aspects of their life, including financial giving. This is a really healthy thing to do and so I encourage you to prayerfully consider it.

Again, using simple maths, if you divide 150 people listed on the Electoral Roll by £130,000 needed to run the church, this amounts to each person giving annually £867. That's £73 per month or £17 per week. There are, of course, people who would find that amount totally impossible, but equally there are others who could, or are currently giving much more than that.

However, meeting that kind of income from members can be achievable, and if we could do this, any income from fundraising events would be able to be used for specific projects and increase our mission giving.

We offer different ways to make your financial offering easier for both you and managing our budget:

- **Weekly envelopes.** We can provide personalized envelopes for each week of the year so that your offering can be privately given in the collection at each service.
- **Standing order form.** A form to complete which will instruct your bank to transfer a specified amount of money on a regular basis.
- **Gift Aid form.** If you pay tax, this is a great way to increase your regular, or one-off giving at absolutely no extra cost to you. The government will give us an extra 25% of the amount (i.e. for every £1 you give, the government will give us 25p). As you will have read earlier, we claimed £11,000 extra income using this important scheme.

The above forms are available on our website (under the Downloads - Forms tab), or copies can be collected or posted to you from the Deanery Office. All contact details are on the back page. You are also welcome to talk confidentially to our Stewardship Secretary, Mrs Sheila Webb. Simply phone her on 01473 827554.

Over recent years, several people have gifted money as part of their legacy. Enclosed is our new leaflet that explains how you can make a lasting difference to the life of St Mary's. There are also people who give one-off specific gifts as they find themselves able to do so, either for the costs mentioned earlier, or for specific projects (such as our current project to purchase a

grand piano). It is best to speak with me, or the churchwardens if you would like to do this.

Many of you know that I have a passion to ensure that our church is sustainable for the future. We have begun a programme of vision and change that is now showing fruits of numerical growth and importantly demonstrating that we are a church that is here for everyone of our community, without exception.

Sometimes issues such as money make us feel uncomfortable, but as Christians it is our belief that all that we have is given to us from God, who requires us to be good stewards:

“All things come from you, O Lord, and of your own do we give you.” (1 Chronicles 29: 14)

‘Giving’ is not just about money. It is about offering our whole selves to God - our money, time and talents. Once again, I want to thank you very much for all you do that truly makes St Mary’s alive and active in the community. We have a wealth of talent in rich variety and so many people freely give of their time to partake in a whole range of activities - from those unseen to those more visible. Each one is essential as we work out being the ‘body of Christ’ in this place. It is a fantastic demonstration of teamwork at its best.

Our Annual Parochial Church Meeting is on Wednesday 13 April, 7.30pm in St Mary’s Church. You will receive your personal invitation in early March, but please put the date in your diary so that you can hear more about what we have done, and plan to do, this year and into the future.

Thank you for taking time to read this - with my love and prayers

The Very Revd Martin Thrower



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