

A message from Reverend Carol Hayden, as given in her sermon on Sunday 13 June, and reproduced here with her permission:



I have been here for three and a half years. We have had our ups and downs, our joys and sorrows and we have journeyed together, trying to understand where we fit in the big picture of God's kingdom.

This church was built in 1839 at a time when every seat would have been taken, when church was the heart of the community. It is now showing its age and in need of repair.

A few weeks ago I asked people (myself included) to reassess our giving financially. I am grateful to those who responded. Thank you.

But the reality is that our income is much less than our expenditure, and in order to survive the day to day running of the church, we are going to have to use some of the investments; and this is not including what it is going to cost to repair the roof, walls, and damp. Financially, Manchester Diocese is also running at a huge deficit, and they are looking at new ways of being church. A reduction in stipendiary (paid) clergy and more reliant on laity! But that in itself is a challenge: who are these people who are going to volunteer their time and energy? We cannot even attract new volunteers to take on the fundamental offices required in a parish. For weeks we have been advertising for a person or persons to assist our Treasurer.

At the APCM, our Parish Secretary informed us that, after 3 years' faithful service she wants to step down. Do you have the skill set for this role ...or could you step up and assist or shadow the Safeguarding Officer ...or the Church warden. Have you ever considered joining the PCC?

I came here because I really believe that God called me to be here. I love being your vicar, but some of the initial enthusiasm has worn off because it is frustrating not being able to move forward with our Mission Action Plan. I am tired - as many of us are - and we need help; I am pleading with you to consider helping in some way so that the work is not left to the faithful few.

Our Gospel reading tells us that the kingdom of God is like a mustard seed; it is amazing to think about. This tiny seed has so much potential. That little seed has within it the potential to become the largest of plants, a source of food, and a dwelling place for the birds of the air. Perhaps this analogy that Jesus uses does not impress us as much as it should because we know that all plants begin with a seed. But try to think about this wonder of the physical world. Try to think about how so much potential is packed into that little seed.

This reality reveals the fact that Jesus wants to use each one of us for the building up of His Kingdom. We may feel as though we cannot do much, that we are not as gifted as others, that we will not be able to make much of a difference, but that is not true. The truth is that each one of us is packed with unbelievable potential that God wants to bring to fruition. He wants to bring forth from our lives glorious blessings for the world.

We need to step up our game if we want our church to survive. We need to respond. We need to pray. Please pray for our churches: both buildings and people. The harvest is indeed ripe, but the workers are few.

Every Blessing ~ Carol
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