

Holy Trinity News



Funding Your Church

October 2017

Cheerful Giving - Stephen Hiscock

Imagine this.

Somewhere in a great trading city a Christian community has grown up. It has a good mix of people from a variety of backgrounds. Quite a few do not have much of a religious upbringing. This community has had its ups and downs, but its members are enthusiastic, charged with a concern for others. They really value being part of the church, dedicated to following Jesus, trying to project His living presence and loving values.

This community understands. Only with vibrant local churches, is there really any hope for the world.

And on top of people's willingness to get involved, they do know that all this needs money. The commitment is there. But, as in all things, the perennial problem remains, turning that into tangible cash, needs an extra push, maybe even quite a large shove.

So, which Christian community are we talking about? Holy Trinity? You might not be far wrong.

But, of course, it goes back many years before our time. It is the story of the Christian community in first century Corinth. True to their commitment and enthusiasm, the people have agreed to make special cash collection for others in need. Would it were that simple!

St Paul, mentor, friend, and founder of the community, knows the problem. Most of us can be very enthusiastic, until, that is, we have to put our own hands into our own pockets.

Over the last couple of weeks, others have spoken of their enthusiasm for being part of a community that, in the name of Jesus Christ, makes a difference to each of us, and hence, we hope and believe, to those around us.

It is part of an ongoing project, to get as many members of our community as possible, committed to providing regular financial support. That's hard cash to you and me. It means asking everyone who is part of Holy Trinity, to give very serious consideration to joining those who already have monthly standing orders. Because, without them, bluntly, this community would cease to exist, as we know it.

I guess, as church treasurer, I could have got up and said just that. Standing order forms at the back. If you haven't yet, sign up before you leave. The doors are bolted, it's your duty to do it now. Job done!

But, as we all know, that's not the point. That's a membership fee, rules based, approach. Jesus' story of the vineyard workers reminds us – there is no fixed fee, there is no rule.

That's why what Paul said to the Corinthians, and says to us, is so vital: *'Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.'*

There is no compulsion here. God only wants cheerful givers. Actually, the Greek translated as cheerful gives us our word 'hilarious', but we'll quickly gloss over that. God loves a person who enjoys giving.

How can we enjoy giving, especially when one remembers that our individual financial situations are so very different?

Paul knew, we all know. God's love for us has to be at the heart of our generosity, but human nature makes that hard to convert into action. What if I need it?

In Old Testament times, there was a rule. You gave a tithe, or 10 per cent of what you had. But then, Jesus said to one questioner, *'Sell all you have and give to the poor.'*

So, here's the thing. Each of us does have to have a strategy. To summarise St Paul, it means setting aside a percentage of what we have, each week or month – before we spend it!

Being systematic about giving back a regular, tangible proportion of what God has given us does this: **It takes giving from being a burden, so that, in due time it becomes a welcome responsibility, then, and only then, dare I say it, can giving become a real joy.**

Then we have achieved the objective, because

'God loves the person who enjoys giving.'

Sarah Tyner

We arrived in East Finchley in 2005 just before Russ and I were married. Russ needed to have his banns called so we came to Holy Trinity one morning. The welcome was so warm we stayed although in many respects All Saints was much closer to my churchmanship and, frankly, it seemed the more thriving community at that time. I believe that if you possibly can you should worship in your parish – that way, church is the bedrock of a community – all the more so when there is a school attached. My peers came to London and made friends with people on the basis of a shared university, shared career opportunities, shared sports teams. Later you can make friends with the parents of your children friends. It's a self limiting circle. In church you will make friends with people of different ages, backgrounds, education, who simply share a faith like this motley crew gathered here this morning.

You all know the difference Holy Trinity has made to my life (you've enhanced and rejoiced with me in the good times, and been there in the darkness – when I had a serious health scare shortly after Cerys's birth outside of my family the two people who actually came to visit me in hospital were Fr Lawrence for the sacrament and Ellette who bought me soup – the strength of prayer for me from this building was tangible and gave huge support to my Mum) and in turn I have tried to make a difference to the life of Holy Trinity.

I joined the PCC.

I remember a discussion at an early PCC meeting over whether there was any point to making any contribution to the common fund. It seemed to be an accepted fact that HT had so dwindled there would not be a new Priest assigned when Father Lawrence left so why should we pay in. Looking back now the mindset is broadly horrifying. Of course, Father Gray then came along and our church was transformed and with the change in attitude, the growth in numbers and in giving, those turned out, thank God, to be groundless fears.

I became a Governor.

I have seen the money and support London Diocesan Board of Schools supply to our schools, which given current austerity and the slashing of funds available to the Borough is more important than ever.

We set up the Sunday Club.

I see the support Diocese give to training youth leaders and Safeguarding.

So I give my time. But I also give my money. Not the shrapnel from my loose coinage when I'm here, not at the level my parents gave to me to give to the plate thirty odd years ago, but a committed monthly standing order. I am always conscious it is never enough – I have worshipped in places where tithing is the accepted norm and the idea of 10% would give my husband and bank manager conniptions but I give.

Why?

1. Time alone is not enough. My giving of time is not a selfless act – I get out far more than I put in – I have learned so much about my faith and Christ's love from our children. If you saw Maria and I drinking prosecco and singing along to Les Miserables as we cooked for the barn dance you would realise it is as much pleasure for us as it is effort. So it would be a self serving deception to say "Oh, I give my time instead of money" and suggest there were not a net benefit to me.

2. I do not feel comfortable with allowing the standing orders of pensioners on fixed incomes or single parent struggling in some of the poorer parishes in this city to subsidize my access to a full time priest here in comfortable suburban east Finchley.

3. If I do not pay in it is as though I am here on trial – like Cerys doing a taster session at Brownies or having a free trial at a gym or passing the collection box at the Natural History museum after a full day of enrichment. I give because I am committed to this place and I know that the church is necessary to me. To go a bit "street" on you – you have to have skin in the game to stay in the game. There is nothing like paying for something to make you value it. A financial contribution means you are literally a paid up member. I am a member of Christ's church here in East Finchley and my contribution gives me confidence in helping to shape its future. By grace, I am given the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven. For sure, I do not buy my way in. But here on earth, giving an amount, however small (the poor widow's pennies were valued above much larger smuggler contributions by Christ) I show that I value this – that I want this for generations after me.

So I give my time to help pass my faith on.
And I give my money to help pass the Church on.

Sylvia Duthie

‘Holy Trinity Church is somewhere that gives a sense of security.’

This is what my daughter said when I asked her.

To me there is a sense of belonging. A family. My daughter was baptised here, confirmed here, married here...and has brought her children to be baptised here.

Continuity.

It was the children’s needs that lead me here all those years ago. A feeling that I wanted them to have a church, and a church school, they could belong to. My son is still friends with many he went to Primary school with. One in particular said when they ended up at the same University, ‘I just can’t get rid of you, can I?’

Continuity... Community.

For me my journey has lead me to become a PCC member, children’s group organiser, Churchwarden, chair of governors at Holy Trinity School, the Deanery’s representative on the London Diocesan Board for Schools, where I chair their Education Committee, and Vice -Chair at our Wren Academy. All because I belong here.

Continuity.

My spiritual journey over the last thirty years has deepened and strengthened my faith, which is often wobbly, through singing, praying, reading the lesson, studying in Lent Group, and administering the Chalice.

I have felt supported in prayer through times of loss and sadness, and I have asked you all to pray for people known to me in their times of trouble. And they know you do, because I tell them.

Continuity.

If we want that ‘sense of security’ to continue for the next thirty years, we have to do as much as we can, each and every one of us, to ensure our future.

Join the Welcome team, join the readers, be a server, help out with Children’s Group....

We need to offer and use our talents. Perhaps you can be a Fair organiser, a website boffin, a home visitor for the house-bound, provider of Sunday coffee, but above all, we ALL need to help financially.

I am sure you know they story of the widow’s mite and how Christ praised her sacrifice, however meagre her contribution.

We are all, by comparison, able to give more than a meagre mite...

If we do not pay our way, all the time, every week, then I come to the challenging question.

What would happen if this Church was not here?

What would you miss?

We need continuity. It is up to us all.

Chinelo Nwajobi

I moved to East Finchley at the end of 1994 and started coming to Holy Trinity Church probably just before Easter in 1996. Prior to that I had worshipped at All Saints where our 3rd daughter was christened. It wasn’t my cup of tea so I stopped going there. Holy Trinity Church is quite hidden and because I didn’t drive then I had never gone to the northern parts of Church Lane. A family member who happened to walk past informed me that there was a church on that road and that’s how we found ourselves there.

I had 2 children in Holy Trinity School at the time; one of them in the Nursery class and the other in the infants, so I knew Mrs Singham the Head Teacher. I was absolutely petrified of her then and it shows the cohesiveness of our Church family that I no longer see her as Mrs Singham but as Sonia – a really normal person!

We were welcomed and accepted, there were no cliques and everyone was encouraged to get involved. This gives you the confidence to offer support whether it is reading lessons, providing tea and coffee, serving; (my 4 children all started serving at age 7), offering to serve on the PCC or singing in the choir (don’t worry, you just have to love singing, not necessarily have a good voice – I am a good example of that). Support also includes financial support to our Church.

Holy Trinity Church has been there for us through good times and bad. One of the things I love is that people of different generations feel free with one another; have you seen Nmesoma engaging Stephen in conversation?

We have a history of teaming up and working together. Not too long ago, after Father Lawrence retired we were in danger of disappearing as a Church, but we pulled our socks up and worked really hard as a unit. The result is that today we have a new Priest and our future looks brighter.

Our Church is not just a building – I have been privileged to see the generosity of spirit of members of our congregation in all sorts of ways. Holy Trinity Church is like a second family and we should make sure that this continues for all of us.

Pauline Crilly

This term is a busy time in our church, for the community and the church calendar. To begin our Autumn schedule we look forward to the Garden Party this afternoon at the Vicarage.

This is followed next month by the celebration of Harvest Festival and of course our Barn Dance.

On November 11 we have the Autumn Fayre and soon afterwards Advent, culminating in Christmas with special events such as the Carol Service and Childrens Nativity.

Making these events happen relies on someone from the church community stepping forward to say 'I'll take the lead on this.'

Marius and Cristina for the Garden Party, Stephen and Margaret for the Barn Dance, Nichola and myself for the Autumn Fayre, Wiebke to prepare the choir for the carol service, Sara to write and direct the childrens Nativity, and of course the Childrens Team who week by week give of their time and imagination to run the Sunday Club.

Then of course to make these events a success we need the energy and participation of the whole church community.

We are very blessed in this church that people do step forward to help, to participate and to get involved and enjoy everything that is available.

Unlike the other events, the Autumn Fayre is rather different in that it has a dual purpose, for everyone to enjoy working together, but also to raise funds. Last year we raised £2000, which seems quite a lot for an event which only lasts about 3 hours, but in terms of funding the everyday running of the church it is a drop in the ocean.....

To keep the church running, and pay our dues to the Diocese, we need so much more than this, and we rely on the weekly giving of members of the church community.

There are enormous pressures on both the time and the financial resources of us all.....especially on families.

Family time at weekends is precious, especially where both parents are working, and it is neither possible nor realistic that everyone will make it to church every week.

However what could be possible and realistic is for many more people to still give money to the church each week by setting up a standing order. This way, even when you can't be in church yourself one week, your contribution to the running of the church is still made.

Standing orders don't need to be for large amounts, you choose how much you can give each month, and of course you can easily vary it if your financial circumstances change

This is then your way of giving; you don't also need to put money in the plate when you do come to church, because it's being contributed automatically through your bank.

I don't put money in the plate, because I pay by standing order. So, please fill in a standing order form and give it to Stephen, to help give our church the financial stability it needs.

Thank you all for everything you do to make this a wonderful and thriving church community as we look forward to all the events planned for the rest of the year.

Remember Remember, the 11th of Novemberits our Autumn Fayre !

How can you contribute?

- By offering and planning to run a stall, game or activity, either a regular stall/activity or a new one you may have an idea for
- By delivering leaflets in the roads near your house (we will let you know when they are available)
- By bringing in items to sell: jars and bottles for the tombola, bric a brac items, good quality adult and childrens clothing, toys, books

These items can be brought into the church any time from now, the sooner the better as it gives us time to sort them out . If in doubt about clothes and bric a brac items, just think 'is it likely to sell' ?

- By planning to make cakes, jams, chutneys and craft items to sell
- By buying raffle tickets from Val.

How to let us know you can help:

Just have a word with Pauline or Barbara (we are at the Welcome Desk at the rear of the church every Sunday this month), or Speak to Nichola or Jac in the school playground, or Write your name and suggested stall /activity on the list hanging on the wall in church

Finally

Put the date in your diary, tell all your friends, and come along on the day !