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Registered Charity No. 1128597

23rd January 2011

Dear Parishioner,

I hope that this letter finds you and your family in good spiritual health and, although a little belated, I would like to send you my very best wishes for the New Year. I also hope that you will be able to afford me a few minutes of your time to read this letter.

As you will already be aware in 2007 we commenced a vision process for our Parish, in which over a hundred members of all the congregations participated. In this context I think that it is important for us to remember that, as a Christian community, the overall development of our Parish is our responsibility; assisted by a ministry team. The outcome of this exercise presented us with some clear and challenging objectives, the spirit of which is embodied in our Mission Statement '**To be a growing, loving family, with Christ at the centre, reaching out to all**'.

Achievements so Far

We have already made some very good progress in achieving a number of our objectives, although I will admit that there is still much work to do. Some examples of our recent successes are highlighted below:

- Growing attendances at services.
- Supporting a growing ministry team, to meet the needs of a growing parish and the associated pastoral care.
- The ability to fund the cost of employing Patrick and Sheila, our Church Army Evangelists, and Mandy, our full time Children's and Youth Minister.
- Growing Sunday School numbers means that we are having to explore how we can create more usable space, so that no-one need be turned away.
- Support for Alpha Groups and the development of Home Groups.
- A new Parent and Toddler group and the old people's Afternoon Tea on St. John's Estate.
- The Summer Holiday Club, so successful that it was fully subscribed within days of being advertised.
- The Mission Audit on Vicarage Fields.

Resources

The vast majority of our resources are focused on the day to day costs of keeping our churches running and our immediate mission. Obviously, our 'available' resources are limited by our level of income and our fixed costs which, probably like your own, continue to rise, in direct contrast to the level of income derived from our limited investments.

In order to initiate our vision, the Parish has been running a budget deficit over the past three years, funding the shortfall from reserves. Even though much of the work is unpaid and costs are strictly controlled, our staffing costs have clearly increased. Obviously, this is not a position that can be maintained indefinitely. In order to continue with delivering our vision we need to balance the books! In reality this means that we have to significantly increase our level of income or we will, regrettably, have to somewhat curtail our vision.

To be a growing, loving family, with Christ at the centre, reaching out to all

Planned Giving

Planned Giving helps the Parochial Church Council (PCC) to budget for the year ahead, giving solid financial foundations for the ministry and mission of our parish, enabling us to plan for the future with confidence. It also helps us to give as we want to give, rather than relying on what we may have in our pocket or handbag on a Sunday morning. As the title suggests, it helps us to plan our giving as part of our regular financial commitments.

2011 Budget Running Costs	£192,200
2011 Budget Income	£158,400
Deficit	£ 33,800

Most of the money funds the employment costs of the Vicar, Curate, children and Youth Minister, Church Army Evangelists (part), Parish Administrator, Verger plus the training costs of the whole ministry team, housing costs for the Curate and Children and Youth Minister and the balance goes to the other running costs of the Parish.

Please support the Mission of the Parish

Given your links with the Parish I hope that you will consider committing to regular giving so that we can confidently plan for the future.

In order for us to continue to employ a Children & Youth Minister and support the Church Army Evangelists, as a Parish, we need to increase our income. I hope that you will consider joining the Planned Giving Scheme and to commit to giving a minimum of £5 per week. This will help to sustain the valuable work being done to further the Mission and Outreach to all within our Parish.

Once you have decided how much you are going to start giving by, fill out the enclosed form and return it in the pre-paid reply envelope. If you chose to do it via your online banking facility please let me know so I may check that your giving arrives in the Parish account.

Giving cash out of your pocket when the collection is taken is the least effective way of giving as none of us are in church every week to give. The most effective way is to plan your giving via regular Standing Order which means you continue to support the Parish's work even if you miss a Sunday. If you pay either income or capital gains tax, fill in the Gift Aid Declaration so that the Parish may reclaim tax from the government.

God's love is freely given to each and every one of us however running the Parish costs money. If each of us commits to, or increases our planned giving we will be able to continue to show God's love at work in our Parish.

If you would like more information about Planned Giving you might like to visit our website <http://www.waltonparish.org.uk/caring-serving/planned-giving>. Alternatively if you would like to discuss your giving in complete confidence, please contact me at stewardship@waltonparish.org.uk, by post at the above address or by telephone on 01932 220484.

Yours in faith

David

David Henderson
Parish Stewardship Promoter