

Our Church - Our Challenge - Our Responsibility

Dear Friends of St Thomas & all Musbury Matters Readers

As I type my message for the September magazine, we are well over halfway through August, the month when things traditionally slow down a touch. I have recently returned from a break in North Wales with my family and, once more, August or not, the pace is starting to pick up again, as we start to project ahead to the rest of the year and beyond. That said, firstly, I want to briefly look back . . .

I want to start by saying a big ‘thank you’ to all those who were involved in our **“Open Church”** initiative in July. It was so encouraging to see the high numbers of volunteers who came forward to welcome people to St Thomas’, take them around our beautiful church, offer refreshments and so on. I think the 4-day ‘welcome’ to the local and wider community was a great success and something we could well repeat.

The emphasis now turns to the autumn and the launch of a number of initiatives, which at their heart seek to enhance the life of our Church and community.



Firstly, there is our **Giving in Grace / Stewardship Campaign** which will be launched in September. This will provide us with an opportunity to reflect on what we give to Christ’s Church in response to God’s abundant love and generosity to us.

Christian Stewardship means seeing our lives and possessions as a gift from God, to be used in God’s service. We should live knowing that we are stewards, or managers, of everything God has given to us (time, skills, money, and possessions). We know that we will be accountable to God for how we have used these.

For me, it comes down to the 3T’s – **Time, Talents and Treasure**. In all that we do, we are called to give back generously to God to ensure that His

Church grows and is resourced for mission and ministry. Over a series of three Sundays in September, our sermons will be focused on the theme of Stewardship, our hope being that the central messages will cause us to review our giving – both financially and how we give of ourselves – our gifts and talents - to our Church, for the betterment of God's people.

During the Campaign we will be issuing literature to everyone on our Electoral Roll and ask that material is returned in time for Harvest Sunday on October 8th, when we will give thanks for the new financial pledges from our congregation and new offers of time and talent in the running of our church here in Musbury and Helmshore.

My thanks, in advance, for supporting our Campaign. Do please pray for its success.



Alongside this we have a number of exciting building projects underway. By the end of August, work should have started to point the outside of the **Bell Tower**, a project supported financially by so many people in the Parish over recent years. Then we have our plans to upgrade our **Toilet Facilities** in the Hall and in due course, the installation of a new **Ramp**. Both of these projects will greatly improve our facilities, especially for disabled users. The architect working with us on these Hall improvements will be addressing the PCC in mid September, when we hope to identify the best proposals, copies of which can be viewed at the back of church.

Aside from buildings, we have other plans in the pipeline too. Following a very fruitful **Bible Study** during Lent of this year, we will be gathering once again to consider the Scriptures during **Advent 2017**. Our meetings will take place at St James on **Mondays at 7pm for an hour, beginning on November 27th and running for four consecutive weeks in total**. More info to follow nearer the time.

Secondly, following a wonderful **Confirmation Service** at St James' in June, we will be welcoming **Bishop Julian of Blackburn** to these parts on **Monday June 4th** at 7pm at St Thomas' for our **2018 Confirmation Service**. Do you know anyone who would like to be Confirmed – an adult or a child (in Year 6 or higher)? Do let me know!

Thirdly, for your information, our friends at St James' are planning a **Festival of Harvest Thanksgiving**, which will also incorporate a **Scarecrow Exhibition**. Plans are afoot to "**Open the Church Doors**" to the local community over four days, between **Thursday October 5th and Sunday October 8th**. The programme is currently being finalised and will appear in the next Musbury Matters. Why not enter a Scarecrow?!

Finally, as we reach September and the beginning of the new academic year, let us pray and give thanks for our children, especially those who are beginning school for the first time. We remember too all the hard working teachers and parents. May we as a parish always remember the privilege of supporting our four local schools in the Helmshore area. We look forward to receiving them in the academic year ahead.

In all that we do, let us place our trust in the God who loves us, unconditionally. Thinking about the future and what may lie ahead, with all our plans and hopes, let's remember this inspiring passage from the Book of Proverbs . . .

TRUST
in the
Lord
with
ALL
your
Heart
Proverbs 3:5

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
and do not rely on your own insight.
In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make straight your paths*
Proverbs 3:5-6

Thank you for everything that you do within the St Thomas family and the local community of Musbury and Helmshore. May Jesus be Praised – now and for evermore. Amen.

**With prayers and every blessing,
Your Friend,
FATHER TERRY**