

Sermon Evensong - 12th June 22

Well, it has been a while now since Father Bob called the church together and, having shown us that the church and the hall were now 'fit for purpose', threw down the gauntlet to see how we were proposing to use these facilities to serve our community.

You may remember that he didn't want good ideas, he wanted volunteers to 'do stuff'. And that's much harder to sign up to. For plenty of good ideas came out of the meeting, but far fewer volunteers to put those ideas into practice.

We have heard the excuses, I'm too busy. I'm too old, I do a lot in the church already, I really don't know how I can be of use. They are all valid reasons.

Moses didn't want the job God gave him either – so we are in good company. But Moses accepted that he was the one to do the job and so asked for help. 'If your presence does not go with us, how will people know that you are pleased with me and your people?'

We are the people of God in this community. God is with us, just as he was with Moses. If we do our best to do his work, God will ensure that it prospers. But we have to have faith in him.

I'm too busy! 'Always ask a busy person if you want something done' is a well known saying. I'm too old – did you know that Christians on the whole live longer than non-Christians – 2 years average, but if you go to church more than once a week that can be extended to 5 years. (and you only need to look around our congregation to know that it is true). I do a lot already, how much of it is so routine that someone else could take over, leaving you free to take on a new challenge? I'm not thinking of you Edna, I'd hate to have to keep tabs on the church funds. Don't know how you can help? There are people who are crying out for your help – use prayer, then God can guide you to your role.

So, as St. Paul says, we have to be bold. If we pray about our plans and as a church all take them on, if we ask our community, instead of just assuming we know what they want, then our plans will succeed. And if they don't, well we may have to rethink it.

So far, I have undergone Safe Families training, Safe Families look to befriend people with various needs to ensure children don't end up in care. Now I'm in the

middle of Kids Matter training. It is to help me facilitate a course for parents, who would like to be better parents, to help isolated parents into the network of community and church. It seeks to empower people to be responsible for their own lives, and seek their own solutions. So far everyone I have approached to be part of my team (and it needs to be a big team) has been positive about helping me.

Pam and Naresh have been learning about the Christians Against Poverty scheme, which again helps those who are marginalized by lack of resources. This offers positive help, not cash, which again helps empower people to get their lives back on track. They too will need people to help them.

Just as Jesus walked along side people during his time on earth, we are asked to walk alongside those we meet in our day to day lives. With the help of the Holy Spirit, and each other, those around us will see that being a Christian is not just saying that we are, but that we are doing Christ's work here in Handsworth. And that we are making a positive difference.

In this way we can all be part of growing the kingdom, and the more people who are attracted to what we are doing, the more people we will be able to encourage to join our work.

God still promises that his presence will go with us, and so in that way we will know that he is pleased with us personally and with our church. Amen