

A business or a church?

I remember that this question came up during one of my very first PCC meetings, only a few years ago. I think that every member of the PCC both then and now firmly believes that we are a church and not a business and there was a level of resistance to any attempt to perceive ourselves as a business. However, after two and half years as treasurer I find myself asking whether the two are actually mutually exclusive.

The word church comes from the Greek *ekklesia* which means *an assembly of people*. It is interesting to note that the word *ekklesia* has nothing to do with a building and yet to many a church is just that, a building where people meet to worship. For us at St Mary's we meet in one of the finest church buildings in the country and I suspect that our building is synonymous with the worship and the music. The cost of that building is however quite considerable.

If the building is important to us, then the cost associated with it has to be treated in a business-like fashion and that is what your PCC endeavours to do each year. However, I hasten to point out that while we are not a business that seeks to make a profit for profit's sake, the PCC would be failing in its duty if it did not seek to secure our finances in order to preserve and run our building and our ministry from day to day.

That said, as Christians, our duty extends beyond our own immediate needs and so we have an implicit second financial objective: to support the Christian ministry into our wider Warwick community and then our diocese and beyond.

I will talk about how we are asked to provide financial support to poorer parishes in our diocese in a future letter but for the next few weeks my letters to you will be very parochial. I will focus on matters close to home as I firmly believe that we need to put and keep our own house in order before we look to help others, and indeed so that we are in a position to do so.

My aim in writing these letters is to give everyone the information necessary as the backdrop for our Stewardship campaign. Some letters may be a little drier than others, but I think it is important that we all understand our current financial position. I will endeavour not to get mired in the detail, but should you ever want more detail than I can provide in a short letter, please do not hesitate to ask me in person, or send an email to me at the address below.

Please take these letters home with you and keep them to refer to when considering how you can help the Rector, the Churchwardens, the Treasurer and the PCC as we move through the Stewardship Campaign. Our initial focus, before the summer, is to achieve our financial goals. After the summer holiday season we will move on to look at our giving of time and talents.

Are we a business or a church? The answer has to be both, for a smooth running business provides a firm foundation for everything else we seek to do. The business must not dictate our spirituality but be its invisible support.

John Adams

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