

A few words from the Vicarage ...



At long last work has begun on the church boilers! It is amazing how reliant we have become upon heating systems and how drastic things appear when they fail or let us down (as has been experienced in the past). The boilers being replaced have served us well over more years than anyone can recall

- but their time had come as spare parts were no longer available and they were simply being nursed along. A case of crisis management almost.

Isn't it fortunate that people are more robust than boilers? - or are we? With an ageing population we are seeing more and more people beginning to struggle with failing parts - eyesight not what it once was; hip joints needing replacements; hearing loss; the list is endless as our faculties become less effective, less efficient with increasing years.

So we seek to do the same for ourselves as we achieve with boilers - call in the experts to prescribe glasses; carry out replacement surgery; fit us with hearing aids - so perhaps we're not as robust as we might wish to believe after all.

This brought me to think how we treat those who have the skills to help in this restorative work - just as we are grateful for the designers and installers of heating systems, we ought to be ever so grateful for the skills of those who are involved in keeping our bodies in as good a working order as possible - not least the NHS in its many guises and all other agencies upon whom we call and rely. Their skills have been gained and

honed through hard work and training - but have their root in the gifts of God to humankind. This is the human face of the parable of the talents - God gives us talents to use and we should be eternally grateful for them.

Many thanks go to Linda for her splendid recital on 4 January and to the ladies in the kitchen for preparing and presenting an equally splendid afternoon tea - all of which was superbly recorded in the local press, attracting a full page spread of photographs with accompanying write-up - well deserved ladies. The money raised by donations has seen the creation of a special fund to enable us to respond directly and immediately to cases of need locally. In the past, it has often been necessary to redirect people seeking help to other agencies, which has seldom been the most appropriate solution. This fund gives us this new opportunity to act, not deflect - if you become aware of any enquiries of this nature, please refer them to me.

January also saw the annual observance of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and our local covenanted churches gathered here in St Paul's for an ecumenical service as part of this. It is always good to share in worship with our brothers and sisters in Christ - especially at the start of a new year - as it hopefully sets us off on this trail of unity together. We now look forward to further sharing during Lent with the weekly lunches; and Holy Week with the Good Friday services and procession of witness.

God bless you all,
your Vicar,
Fr D.