

**The Bible tells us:**

*God made the world and everything in it:*

Never forget that the Lord is God.  
He made us, and we belong to him;  
We are his people, we are his flock.  
Enter the temple gates with thanksgiving,  
Go into its courts with praise.  
Give thanks and praise him.  
The Lord is good:  
His love is eternal  
and his faithfulness lasts forever. (**Psalms 100**)

*God gave us His most precious gift:*

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, so that whoever believes in him may not perish but have eternal life. (**John 3:16**)

*So St Paul advises:*

And so we want you to be generous also in this service of love....if you are eager to give, God will accept your gift on the basis of what you have to give, not on what you haven't. (**2 Cor 8:7,12**)

**Let us Pray:**

Lord God, thank you for all that you have given me. Help me to give generously, from my store of time, talents and material possessions, to help others and show my love for you. Amen.

**St. Mary's Princes Risborough  
and St. Peter's Ilmer  
Stewardship Sunday 29th September 2024**

In 2002, Debra Veal wrote her book '*Rowing it alone – One woman's extraordinary transatlantic adventure*'. Some of us may even remember when she hit the headlines for rowing across the Atlantic Ocean alone. The challenge had been made before, but what made her story remarkable was the fact that Debra kept going even though the crossing had never been intended as a solo endeavour! She had planned to participate in the race with her husband Andrew, but it became apparent after just a few days that he would not be able to complete the journey. Over one hundred days later, her skin bronzed from the sun, her calf muscles so exhausted that she had to learn how to balance and walk again, she arrived triumphantly at her destination, to the delight of her family and a watching world. She had bravely dealt with close encounters of sharks, and experienced a variety of difficulties along the way, but she was determined to *give it her all*! When interviewed afterwards, she said how her choice of attitude was the key, and she told of how she had this little card with the words **Choose your attitude** written on it, and she had placed the card on her boat in a place where she would always be able to read it.

As we approach our Stewardship Sunday, we too have a choice before us. We can either be dismissive about it, telling ourselves that how we respond doesn't really make that much difference, or we can allow ourselves to be prompted by God and His generosity and give sacrificially; mindful of how He *gave His all* for us through His Son, Jesus, our Lord. The choice is yours! So please take a moment to prayerfully consider what your response is going to be.

Revd Canon David Williams  
On behalf of the Stewardship Group

### **Committing Time and Skills**

Each year we ask everyone to review what they do to help the church by giving of their time and skills. As the Bible teaches us, we all have something to offer. Making coffee after a service is an important aid to fellowship. Keeping the church open during the week helps us to demonstrate that we are a seven day a week church.

You may already help in different ways, in which case you may wish to re-dedicate what you do.

If you would like to offer 'new' help there is a list of 'jobs' on the response form. You may have a particular skill or talent to contribute. Please indicate this on the form and we will contact you.

If you decide to reduce your commitments, that is fine. The review is not intended to be 'upwards only'.

### **What about Money?**

*All things come from You, and of Your own do we give You.*

Without money we cannot continue the long tradition of worship of God in our beautiful churches. The maintenance of our church buildings makes continual demands on our resources. We are also committed as the body of Christ in our community to our 3 strands of mission: Making Disciples, Children, Youth & Families and Missional Communities.

Where does our money come from? Some comes from donations, collections in church, fees and grants, and we earn some interest from historic funds but these are all comparatively small amounts. By far the largest source of our income, about 80%, is planned, regular, giving from **you**, the members of our congregation. Planned, regular giving enables us to develop a clear vision and budget carefully.

Recently we have lost a number of regular, generous givers and this year we face a deficit of up to £50,000. If we cannot increase our giving, we will have to cut back on our church activities.

If you have not yet committed to give a regular amount, please consider doing so. You can ask our Planned Giving Secretary, Michael Hoey, or Debby Cadwallader for more details.

### **Where does our money go?**

In 2024 St Mary's expects to spend £283,000: where does it go?

- The first commitment (15 per cent of our income - £30,000) is our Christian response to those in greatest need, locally and abroad (charities chosen annually by the PCC\*\*, our response to emergency appeals and support for Lighthouse).
- The largest single item, £100,000, goes to Oxford Diocese as our contribution to the cost of the clergy (our Rector does not get anything like this sum!)
- About £50,000 is the cost of running the two churches (putting on services, heating, lighting, insurance, regular maintenance of the church buildings and the churchyard).
- Nearly £50,000 is spent on our churches' mission and discipleship work, including the budget for a Children & Families Worker.
- The cost of running the Parish Office and administration is £48,000.

\*\*The PCC has chosen the following charities for 2024:

**Major awards:** St Paul's Church Castlewellan & Parish Church of Bryansford (Pat Kerr), Children's Society and CMS Uganda.

**Minor awards:** Hamlyn Fistula, Project Possible, Mercy Ships, A Rocha, The Princes Centre, One Can Trust.

### **What about Gift Aid and Planned Giving?**

Providing you pay UK income tax, St. Mary's and St. Peter's can recover the tax if you declare your giving by signing a simple Gift Aid declaration. It does not cost you any more, but it is worth an extra 25p for every pound given to the church. You can give in weekly envelopes or by bank standing order, or both. Please speak to Michael Hoey for more details.

*Please turn over for helpful bible passages and prayers*