

March 2025

Dear Friends,

This month is the time for our annual renewal of financial stewardship in support of St Helen's Church, its ministry and mission through 2025. You will already be aware of the fund-raising communications from all and sundry worthy organisations, reminding us of just how much need there is in our world. As I write we all watch mercifully, from geographical distance - tragedies unfolding in other parts of the world, and the needs of which we are daily made aware. In light of all that, financial stewardship at St Helen's may seem trivial, intrusive or both.

But consider.

This year one of our helpful associate clergy sent an inspiring email to the churchwardens recounting a couple of encounters he had had with newcomers to St Helen's Church. His message was simple: in his view the chance for prayer and spiritual counsel which our sacred space afforded those who entered it are two of the most important things "the Church is for". If that is so, then sustaining this "impact" on all who visit us, whether or not they are members of our established congregation, is a goal worthy of our serious and sacrificial support. **The better each local church congregation supports itself and encourages and helps its visitors, the greater the Faith's global impact for good can be.**

Our community, just like every individual, family and organisation, needs to meet the increasing costs of living, working and witnessing to our Faith. At church the standard question is: can you give more? I'd like to put another question as we face the local practical needs: **what can you sacrifice in your habitual or special spending during 2025?** Are there car or other journeys you might lessen or not take? Are there caps you might put on presents to family and loved ones? Are there clothes you might get one more year out of before replacing? Is there a book you might borrow from the library rather than buy, a coffee out, a bottle of wine or spirits you might forgo? To raise giving, to have more than we need to 'cover costs' helps our church become even stronger in its daily witness in Abingdon and a more prayerful and spiritually welcoming place to all.

Please use this year's stewardship campaign to be part of that stronger witness to the Faith, as well as to help maintain our spiritual sustenance to all who pass through our doors. It's "what the Church is for!"

In faith and hope,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Pope". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David Pope , Churchwarden