

## GENEROUS GIVING –

### *Transforming our giving in response to God's generosity*



Over the last three Sundays, we have been offering a series of services and sermons on Generous Giving, using resources provided by the Diocese. We began on 12 September with a week of prayer, which seemed like the best way to start. We distributed leaflets provided (attached) with suggestions for prayer and activities to try for each week of the series. We thought about the Biblical principle of being generous stewards of all that God has given us: not just our money, but our time, talents and other resources. We thought about the different examples in the Bible of how Jesus took the ordinary things of everyday life, and transformed them into great blessings: such as the loaves and fish in the feeding of the 5000. As we give what we can, back to God in thanksgiving for all that he done for us, so he takes what we give and transforms it to bless others and grow the kingdom of God in ways we cannot imagine.

This theme was developed in week 2 where we looked at God's generosity and week 3 when we looked at Thanksgiving and the story of Zacchaeus.

At All Saints and Holy Saviour, we have distributed leaflets about how you may give to your church, if you are not already giving regularly through standing order (attached) for example. We realised during the pandemic lockdowns, how important it is for us to receive regular donations directly through bank transfer (if possible), as then we don't have to rely on people being in church to make their offering. It also means that we can have a reliable income, and we don't have to rely on fundraising events to make up the shortfall (which we haven't been able to do many of over the last year).

This Sunday 3 October is the last Sunday in the series when we invite you to return your response to church and place it in the offertory. According to figures released by the Diocese, if average giving per person per week increased from £10 per week to £12, we would be able to grow our shared mission and ministry. That's something for us all to consider. We understand that not everyone is able to increase or give that much. But some of us probably could, and others may be able to give more.

At the moment, we are not currently able to pay our full parish share requirement, which goes towards paying for our clergy (training, housing, pensions, stipends). If giving doesn't increase, then tough decisions will have to be made about allocation of clergy in parishes in the future.

However, it is not just about the provision of clergy. If we were able to increase our giving, just imagine some of the things we could do to improve our presence and reach into our community! In my last parish, we were very blessed to be able to appoint a new Children's, Families and Schools Worker because of generous donations, a grant from the Diocese for mission, and a generous legacy from a church member. Why not dream some dreams, and see what God could do with whatever we are able to give, so that we don't just maintain current levels of ministry and mission, but increase and improve on what we are already doing?

Finally, I would like to thank all those who already give so generously, who have responded to appeals in the past (such as for our new screen and projector), and who have a vision for the future of the church here in the White Horse Team. We look forward to your response and thank you for all your support. With every blessing

*Rebecca Harris*