

Sermon Outline (1) (Feb)

Also available online at www.manchester.anglican.org/finance

Building a Strong Parish Community

Suggested Passages – Acts 4:32-37; Ephesians 4:1-13; Matthew 10:1-15; John 15:1-17

- The Church in this country/Diocese is facing huge challenges – falling attendance, perceived irrelevance, financial difficulties (illustrate locally as appropriate)
- What can we do? Wring hands in despair/pack up and go home? Need to understand this is not a new situation – Church has always faced challenges in each generation/place – sometimes more than others (e.g. Melanesian Brothers)
- Key principle is the importance of the local church as focus for mission and ministry (cf. Acts) – that’s where it happens – Diocese etc exists to serve and support local churches not to do the work of mission – the responsibility is ours as disciples of Jesus (cf. Matt 10).
- Need to look at some fundamental principles about the life of the Church and apply them to our local situation to help us build a strong parish community:
- **Mission** – How can we bring people of every age and background in our community into a living and growing relationship with Jesus Christ?
- **Community** – How can we become more fully a mutually supportive, caring community in which everyone has a part to play?
- **Worship** – How can we offer worship to God that is whole-hearted and reverent, as well as accessible and relevant to our parish community?
- **Personal Formation** – How can we enable people to grow in wholeness and Christ-likeness in their own lives and relationships?
- **God’s Kingdom** – How can we play our part to change the life of our local community for the better and to change the way the world around us goes about its business?
- **Giving** – How can we motivate people to give joyfully and sacrificially to support the building of strong parish communities?
- **Conclusion** – People today are often resistant to or apathetic towards the gospel and the Church. They need to see Christians living out their faith in the Church and in the local community if they are to be willing to listen to our message and to respond to the love of God in Jesus Christ. We have a vital part to play in building a strong parish community so that this can happen here. It is part of the commission that Jesus has given to us as his disciples.

Remember to display the posters and distribute the Bishop’s letter