



The Parish Church of
St Michael and All Angels
BEETHAM

part of the Kent Estuary Mission Community
in the Diocese of Carlisle

www.beethamstmichaelandallangels.co.uk

GENEROSITY WEEK 2022
Sunday 25th September – Sunday 2nd October

Dear friends,

'Yours, O Lord, are the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heavens and on the earth is yours; yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head above all.'

1 Chronicles 29.11

This letter comes with continued thanks for the many and diverse ways in which you support the work, ministry, and life of St Michael and All Angels.

As we look ahead to autumn and prepare for celebrating both our Patronal Festival and our Harvest Thanksgiving, we are writing to let you know that between those two Sundays, Sunday 25th September and Sunday 2nd October, we will be celebrating a *Generosity Week* as a church community. A time which will give us opportunity to reflect gratefully on God's generosity to us and how we seek to gratefully respond through being part of the church here in Beetham.

In deciding to do this we recognise two things.

Firstly, the significant levels of financial ambiguity and insecurity that surround us all at the moment, most especially with the dramatic increase in the cost of living and the rising cost of energy. These are demanding days, and we are all aware of the effect our current circumstances are having on our own circumstances as well as those around us, not least the most vulnerable within our society.

And secondly, to acknowledge that such financial realities also pose a challenge for our parish church, particularly as we adapt to financial circumstances brought about by our living through the Coronavirus pandemic. The consequences of the various lockdowns, coupled with the ongoing need to continue to cover the costs of our ministry and building have meant that over £20,000 has been used from our reserves to continue our work during this testing period. This has been needful and necessary but is not sustainable if we are to ensure the future of the church here in Beetham for generations to come.

It is for this reason that the Parochial Church Council has judged that we need both to acknowledge the reality of our financial situation and seek to do what we can to prepare and look forward, with hope and resolve, to the future.

Generosity Week invites us to do more than simply think about the church's finances. It provides time for us to reflect on all God has given us, the giftedness of the good news we share in Jesus Christ, and what it means for us to be part of the story of God's church here in this parish. A story that has endured down the centuries and we pray will flourish into the future. It offers the reminder that generosity goes beyond budgets or deficits and instead is part and parcel of our response to God from whom all good things come. Our prayer for St Michael and All Angels is that such a culture of generosity and gratitude will grow in every aspect of our lives: from our hospitality to friends and family, to how we respond to those in need in our community, to our giving to the life of the church.

Hence, it is for this reason that we are using the opportunity of *Generosity Week* to invite you, in whatever way you may feel able, to review your giving to St Michael and All Angels. We have prepared a detailed review leaflet of our parish's financial situation; and you will find copies of this inside the church if you would like some more information.

What will our *Generosity Week* involve?

- On Sunday 25th September we will keep our Patronal Festival, the feast of St Michael and All Angels, at both our Parish Eucharist at 11.00am (followed by celebratory refreshments) and then with a service of Choral Evensong at 6.00pm.
- On Wednesday 28th September there will be a chance over refreshments to learn more about our church finances.
- On Friday 30th September in the evening we will hold our Harvest Supper in the Heron Corn Mill.
- On Sunday 2nd October we will raise the song of harvest home with our Harvest Thanksgiving at both the Parish Eucharist at 11.00am and with a Songs of Praise at 6.00pm.

As we prepare for this, this letter also offers an occasion to outline some of our intentions and plans for the coming months and years:

- To continue to be a place of hospitality and welcome, expressing and celebrating God's love for all.
- Following approval from the Diocese for our proposed reordering, to begin the first stage of this important work, adapting the church building to be better equipped for worship and for service and use to our wider community.
- To work alongside our partners in the Kent Estuary in mission, ministry, outreach, and pastoral care.
- To continue to build on the excellent links we have with children and families through Beetham Church of England Primary School.

During these challenging times, we realise the difficulty in asking the church community to consider reviewing their giving. However, we judge it important that, with prudence and prayer, we act now to ensure the sustainability of our mission and ministry in the years ahead. And we hope that for some of you, it may be possible to increase your giving or start giving at this time, whilst also acknowledging that for others this won't be possible.

As you prayerfully consider this letter, we return to being reminded that generosity is about far more than our church's finances. We remember that all that we have – as individuals, as a community, as a church – comes from the Lord, the author and giver of life. As such, we trust that this *Generosity Week* will offer encouragement to us all, trusting that we will know wisdom and hope as we go forward together.

In these times of real uncertainty, we pray for God's blessing on you, your loved ones and on everyone who lives in, works in, or visits our parish. On behalf of the Parochial Church Council, we offer our sincere thanks for your support and your continued generosity.

Yours,

