

St Christopher's Pott Shrigley

Unless the Lord builds the house...



A Call to Prayer

Dear Church Family member,

As you will know, for many years St Christopher's has been considering a plan to build an extension, to provide a meeting room and better refreshment facilities. At the very least, you will have seen the plans on our noticeboard; but you may well have been involved at various stages along the way, as plans have been discussed, and amended, or as they have been referred to the various authorities and advisory agencies: it has already been quite a long journey, and many of you will know far more about that journey than I do!

However, last year, our Church Council agreed that it was time finally to decide whether to take the plans forward – or to put them aside. The Council took soundings, and had discussions, and, in the autumn, commissioned a working group to look in detail into the question, and to make recommendations.

That group reported back to our most recent Church Council meeting, and recommended that, if at all possible, it would be good to proceed with the extension, as the benefits it would bring could not be fully achieved in any other way. However, it also offered an estimate of the cost – an estimate which is considerably more than the reserves which we have put aside to pay for it.

That faces our council – and our church – with an important decision:

Either...

- A. To go ahead. This brings the exciting prospect of much enhanced facilities for our church and its mission and ministry; but it brings the equally daunting prospect of a major undertaking, and of a substantial cost in both effort and money (money which we would have to find).

Or...

- B. To put aside, probably for good, the extension plan, and to examine less ambitious ways to make our building appropriate for the needs of our church's life.

There is more information, if you would like it: the report of the working group is available from the group's chair, David Gem; while our Treasurer, Peter Kennedy, can give you more detail on our financial situation. The purpose of this letter, however, is not to provide detailed information:

it is to ask you to pray, earnestly, for guidance for our Church Council, to make the right decision.

At our recent meeting, once we had received the report, it was agreed that we needed time for prayerful reflection: and I believe that our whole church should take part in this. Yes, I know we often say, 'I'll pray for you', or, 'I'll pray about it' – and then don't really do it. But I am asking, over the coming weeks, for **serious, sustained and prayerful seeking of God's will** on a decision which will have a major impact on the life of our church (*whichever* decision we make!).

Prayer is a very personal thing: God doesn't much mind which way we do it, so long as we *do* it (with or without words; sitting, kneeling, walking, lying; while doing something else, or while very still and quiet). Just pray in *your* way.

However, as one aspect of this 'Call to Prayer', there will be a **Prayer Vigil** in Church on **Saturday 9th February**. The idea is to have continuous prayer in our building from **9.30am to 4.30pm**: at least one person (preferably more) praying at all times (**sign up** for a half hour stint or more on the list on the noticeboard). There will be a prayer leaflet on the day, to help give some guidance. But just turn up and pray in your own way – sitting silently, or whatever you wish.

If you can sign up for the Vigil, that would be great, and I hope that 9th Feb will give us a focus: but **more important still** are the many prayers which we will each offer in our own time and in our own way – **and which can start as soon as you have read this letter!**

Your prayers matter, and *will* make a difference: as a whole Church Family, from the youngest to the oldest, let's seek God's will for St Christopher's.

*Unless the Lord build the house, the builders labour in vain.
(Psalm 127)*

Yours in Christ

David Swales

January 2019