

Dear Friends

At time of writing this, we are fairly confident that the re-slating of the church roof will go ahead over the summer and in fact may well have started by the time this edition of the parish magazine is published!

This is a momentous point in the life and history of St John's, Menston. For some, the re-roofing is a way of protecting and preserving what we have. But I believe it is much more than that. The re-roofing project is a step of faith here and now, and a statement of hopeful confidence in the future.

It's a step of faith because, despite all the generosity from the church and the village, grant bodies and fund-raising, we are still short of the money we need for the project. There is a plan for this shortfall, but we are still praying hard for the balance to come in. It's also a step of faith, because replacing a roof suggests a confidence that this roof will be needed for the next century or so.

Much has been said over the lifetime of our existing roof about the demise of faith, and in particular the death of the Church; but here we are, investing in a future where we believe God is as important as he has always been and where God is our hope for the world in which our grandchildren will grow. Our church roof is a symbol of that hope and faith in a God who has faithfully provided in the past and will continue to lead us into the future.

There will be some disruption over the summer relating to the building project. I've talked about faith and hope, but let me also talk about the importance of love in such times. There will be difficulties, irritations and sadness caused by the works, but like any family going through times of change, we will get through it by loving and forgiving each other.

In summary then, faith, hope and love are the key to our summer at St John's this year. It's very fortunate then that these three are such themes in Paul's letters in the Bible. In the Junction service we recently looked at them as we studied 1 Thessalonians, but they also occur sprinkled through the New Testament.

These three - faith, hope and love - ground our life together as God's people, and so perhaps this summer gives us the opportunity to practice them again as we look forward to re-opening a church building which keeps the water out, the heat in, and is open to God's Spirit permeating throughout every aspect of what we do.

Steve