

# Pastoral Letter – June 2020

From Rev'd Michael Lovegrove

Dear friends,

Nearly all of my secular working life was spent in the financial City of London, most recently as an Ombudsman with the Financial Ombudsman Service. I continued in that capacity for three years after ordination, sometimes wearing my clerical collar. Inevitably one biblical text was frequently quoted at me, namely 'No servant can serve two masters. Ye cannot serve God and mammon' (Luke 16.13 AV). I now find myself as Chairman of our PCC Finance Committee and so I thought that I would say something about God and money.



To talk about money at the time of a pandemic may seem odd but it is of particular concern to many, especially the self-employed, those running a business and all those struggling to make ends meet. Others more fortunate turn to their 'Wealth Platform' or investment schedule and look with dismay at the drop in value of their investments.

The first thing I want to say is that because of prudent planning over the years as a church we have a contingency fund which, for the time being, enables us to meet all of our financial commitments, including to those whom we employ.

Is money a bad thing? Even to ask this question would sound like the height of stupidity to many. Money is not a bad thing, that is to say in itself, but the love of money certainly is. 1 Timothy 6.10 (so often misquoted) puts the matter plainly 'For the love of money is the root of all evil'. Wealth can beguile and not only the wealthy can be 'hooked' on money. It can happen to the poor as well if everything is judged in terms of money.

The Christian is not required to go penniless. We are not called to go about in rags or live in a hovel. Some like St Francis of Assisi have been set apart to a life of extreme poverty. We are not all called to such a life but those who are should be honoured. Wealthy Christians, however, and they do exist, are called to a modest style of living, they are not to flaunt their wealth and should make it their business to be humble in manner and to seek out those less fortunate than themselves.

We have to live with mammon. Mammon is around every corner, but for the Christian the necessity is to dethrone money and keep it dethroned. Let us as Christians be charitable people and guard against this particular snare, whatever our bank balance.

I cannot conclude without expressing my gratitude to all in our church family for giving so generously to the funding of our ministry and witness. Over the past few years we have broadened the base of our stewardship giving and in total committed giving has risen steadily to £199,000 pa. Stewardship giving including Gift Aid continues to finance over 70% of our total annual expenditure, for which I give thanks. In broad terms our total income for 2020 was expected to be around £262,000, a shortfall of £3,100 of budgeted expenditure.

That may well change as the result of the lock down, but I pray that God will help us to use

wisely what has been entrusted to us so that neither wealth or poverty may hinder our Christian discipleship.

With love,

Michael Lovegrove

### **Previous copies of our Pastoral Letter**

[May 2020](#)

[April 2020](#)

[24 March 2020](#)

[March 2020](#)

[February 2020](#)

[Dec 2019-Jan 2020](#)

[November 2019](#)

[October 2019](#)

[Aug-Sept 2019](#)

[July 2019](#)

[June 2019](#)

[May 2019](#)