

St Thomas Brampton

Sermon by Rev Matt Barnes
6th July 2008 (10.30am)

Theme: Building Project

Reading: Matthew 6:25-34
Matthew 14: 25-32

Part 1 – Why? The Past

Introduction

Good morning everyone and hello and welcome if you're listening on-line.

Today we're thinking afresh about our building development plans - these plans have been an aspiration of this church for many, many years – you've dreamed a dream, held a torch, run what is turning out to be a marathon race.

I want to share in that dream with you this morning, it's a very excited dream – I know I've come late to it but I've come for the best bit which is the end bit! For the benefit of all I guess it's worth recapping about why we want to build a building anyway?

The answer is of course found in the passage of scripture we're just read we, as God's people are called to SEEK 1st THE KINGDOM of GOD.

We're not about building for our church alone – we're not about denominational building – it's not to the glory of St Thomas' or to the Church of England – or to any individual or group of individuals - we want to build to the glory of God in order to extend HIS kingdom.

That's why we want to build isn't it? In order to support not our Empire dreams but our kingdom dreams.

This building is a fantastic worship space and a wonderful resource – but it's not really good for anything else – We need a complimentary facility that will give us:

- A place of hospitality
- A place of meeting – both as a church and with the community
- A place of service
- A place to support our learning (especially with our young people).

I just want to say from the very beginning that I see this building as a Church facility primarily and not a community centre. Hear me when I say this – I'm not saying that this building should be entirely for our sole use – the church is the servant of the community in which it's set and it's incumbent on us to offer hospitality to those who come to us – but the primary blessing to this community is ourselves as God's people – not our buildings – we are the 'living stones' that will impact on this area – not the cold stones of a building –

if God is going to change this place he's going to do it through us not our buildings! In my opinion we don't want a community centre what we need is a centre at the heart of the community – that is the church.

I'm I right so far? It's a good and noble project that many of you have been committed to for years - I just wasn't to pay tribute to those of you who have kept going though those long years – well done – there is a blessing in persistence and you will be rewarded for your faithfulness.

Just in-case you're new and you're not sure what we're talking about then the plan originally was to create an entrance through what is now the boiler room and build a long corridor that would run along the whole back of the church through towards what is now the activity room and into a new facility that would be built on top of the activity room and offer multi-use space for meetings and activities.

It was a good plan, and you may still feel it's a great plan, but the problem has been one of economics – to do all that was planned would cost something close to 1.5 – 1.75 million pounds. Last year the architects looked again at the scheme and reduced it to a bare minimum – separating the building away from the church and reducing the floor space and not moving ahead with the work in the church – because of the need to respect this listed building the build cost would be very expensive. Much more than what we have at the moment –

We would get: **(SLIDE ONE)**

And this would cost us – **(SLIDE TWO)**

That's a lot of money!

This, I think as your new Rector I bring you 2 gifts – sorry – neither of them is £1.5 million – The first gift I bring is a mirror to hold up before you and as I look into that mirror this is what I see:

As I look at this – I see two things:

1) The space you would gain would not support a growing congregation – I believe we should be aiming to be a congregation of 400 adults – that's achievable is most people who come to St T's brought one extra person along - the building we're proposing would barely support the activities we run now – never mind any growth – I've done some basic calculations based on our children's ministry – I can tell you now for nothing - within six months we would be pot-bound and looking to bring back portacabins!

2) The scheme is bad economically – it may be desirable to some but it's not affordable. If it were you'd have done it by now. I've had a fair amount of involvement with grant funding – I'm on the board of directors at Chesterfield LINKS – let me tell you – Grant funding will not be your salvation – if we want this building we are going to have to pay for it ourselves.

PONDER THAT WHILST YOU WATCH THIS!!!!
(SLIDE THREE)

If the first thing I bring is a mirror and it's challenging to look into it. The second thing I bring is a blank sheet of paper -

Peter faced a momentous decision in the boat didn't he – Which did he believe more – what he'd always know, i.e. if you stand on water you'd sink or Jesus? If Jesus calls you to do something however improbable that something is then that's the right thing to do – even if it means potentially great personal cost.

Peter went through that paradigm shift – he evaluated the past in the context of Jesus calling him forward into a new future of walking on water – a future he didn't understand but he was willing to give himself to it.

I think some of you have been dreaming this dream along time – what we may need to consider is that what was right all those years ago may not be right now – it's not that the original dream was wrong or bad but that now there may be a better, more achievable dream that meets our needs in 2008.

Maybe some of you are starting to do that right now – what we've known and wanted in the past may not be right for the now. The question is, where is Jesus calling us?

I'd like to share the doodles of my blank sheet of paper with you if I may – I'd like to put another proposal to you that may require a little imagination and certainly a little faith. So, please – give me some latitude here this is far from polished

I'd like to propose we think about doing this **(SLIDE FOUR)**

We retain the church and existing meeting room and add a more simple building to the other-side of the car-park. This area could be landscaped and creating a courtyard

What would this give us? **(SLIDE FIVE)**

This would be the MAXIMUM space that is I think realistic – it may be a smaller space, but not significantly so.

And what might this cost? **(SLIDE SIX)**
(these are guestimates I admit – but not far out)

Let's put those two sets of figures side by side **(SLIDE SEVEN, SLIDE EIGHT)**

By employing a more simple design and having greater control over the materials we use and by retaining space we already

have (which I agree needs enhancing but I've some ideas about that too) we get a whole lot more for a whole lot less!

What we need now is a facility that will reflect and support our values as a church and the growth potential that is within us.

How might our new building do that?

Well, here's a picture – just one picture of what Church might look like **(SLIDE NINE)**

Just take a walk with me through your imagination.

(Describe building)

For the 21st Century –

If that's a dream you like then the good news is it's achievable. If the PCC ratify this scheme then the time line could (ambitiously but infinitely achievable look like this)

(SLIDE TEN)

The only small fly in the ointment is this **(SLIDE ELEVEN)**.

So, how are we going to tackle this! This is, as they say, where the rubber hits the road.

(SLIDE TWELVE) - of course there are an infinite number of ways we could secure the money from one person giving all of it to all of chesterfield giving a pound ! But let's try and be realistic –

We as a congregation give it all – I've been told that there are 100 giving units in this church – if everyone gave equally that would mean - ...

Another option (if the first isn't appealing to you) would be to borrow against assets of say and find the remainder ourselves which, again if we all gave equally would be

In order to help people quantify this – the building group is that we look to 'sell 100 units of £3,000 each'. Individuals, giving units, home groups, families, groups of friends etc... may wish to but part or one or more than one of these units.

Obviously the more we get the more we can do – if we don't get as much we'll be wading across to this building through the un-landscaped mud in order to paint the building ourselves – (which we may want to do anyway!) –**BUT WE MUST BUILD IT** – In my mind that is not an option – it's a great time to build – economically we can drive a good deal out of a builder – but more than that we need a building – that we can use NOW- we can't wait another year –

The Greek language has two distinct words for our one English word "time." The first word is "*kronos*," from which we get our English word "chronology." It means ordinary measured time: days, weeks, months, years, and so on. The second word, "*kiros*," refers to "eventful time," that is, time not so much as measured in duration or length, but as marking an era, a season pregnant with some critical event, crisis time, or a "shifting of gears" in which something unusual or extraordinary is happening.

This is a KIROS moment – a time to do – not to wait any longer – If we don't build this building I'm not sure that the ministry of this church won't dramatically stall –and all our kingdom plans stall with it.

Your minds must be buzzing with questions and so I want to run through a few right now – if yours is not answered amongst these then forgive me – the building group will be on hand over coffee at the end of the service to go through it all with you.

(SLIDES THIRTEEN – end)

There's only one thing that will stop us – and that's us. We're the only ones standing in the way of this new development. If you get the vision then I implore you to go away for one final time and get behind this thing.

I'll buy the first unit – for the sake of my children and their understanding of how much we value them –

Others of you will give for other reasons – some of you will give because you're fed up about hearing about this project!