

IT ALL STEMS FROM NURTURE

I have been thoroughly blessed by the exceedingly vast wisdom of the garden experts within the congregation at Christ Church, who have informed me that rhubarb is in fact not a fruit but a stem. This is great news. Why? Because if you missed it, I had likened the growing of fruit to the nurture of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Rhubarb appeared to put a huge spanner in the works, as it just seems to keep growing, regardless of its treatment or care.

Growing things takes effort, concentration and care. We're about to celebrate the hugely significant festival called Pentecost—the moment when gifts were given in abundance, something like a trolley-dash in a toy store, gifts galore as the Church was equipped for the journey ahead.

It began with languages; real, tangible skills of communication that signalled the spreading of God's word to the world, but it didn't end there. The Spirit set to work transforming ordinary people into skilled evangelists, teachers, healers, peacemakers, the works. It kept coming and God's new Church kept growing, but it was far from plain sailing. In fact, the sea was significantly choppy; people lost their lives growing the Church and sharing the Gospel. They constantly needed to reflect on what they were doing and to evolve.

I'm very glad to say that Christ Church is in that same place of reflection and evolution, led by the very same Spirit that descended upon the Apostles. Unfortunately, that also means that we'll get things wrong along the way. Our AGM was a really significant moment in the journey of this congregation as we put in place the new structures and voted to begin advertising for a new families' worker, but also a really important element of that meeting was missed. The chance to celebrate got lost in the motions of business and for that I'm really sorry. The list of appointments is much more than a list; it's a collection of people willing to serve, to give of their energy and time as they respond to the action of the Spirit in this church. That needed to be celebrated.

So, belatedly, thank you for all the hard work, sweat, stress, tears, inspiration and imagination that go into each of the roles that you gladly took on. A special thank you to those of you that have worked tirelessly for many years in roles and have recently stood down. I hope to be able to make a big fuss of all of you in church very soon!

I know that each of you do what you do, not for recognition and applause, but because of the call on each of us to serve, but the occasional thanks and support do no harm at all! I pray that each of us would be refreshed by the Spirit this Pentecost in preparation for all that is to come, and in confirmation of all that we already do.

Andy Hall