**3 Small Steps - Small Change**

A prayer familiar to most is the Serenity Prayer attributed to Reinhold Niebuhr and quoted by a British Prime Minister at the start of their term in office and this is the focus of our 3 small steps, showing how small change can make a big difference.

**Step One: Accept the things you cannot change.** We meet many frustrated people, both laity and clergy, who don’t agree with the way things are. Welcome to the club! One churchwarden, in exasperation, wished they didn’t even have a church [building] – ironically in a Cornish town where another denomination were desperately seeking a centrally sited place in which to meet.

Work with what you have. No electricity to enable a permanent contactless device? Fine. You may be able to use a battery-operated one for occasional events or make sure that online giving is an option and QR codes are on display or available to take away. No nearby houses? Fine. Play to your strengths by embracing the quiet contemplative nature of your location, just as the Celtic Quiet Places Initiative has done.

The apostle, Paul, said he had learned the secret of being content whatever his circumstances. We would do well to seek that sort of contentment.

**Step Two: Change the things you can.** The thought of change is often met with dread as familiarity is comfortable but this attitude can also cause stagnation for the church in a constantly moving world. Audible groans or cries of, “That’s just not me!”, issue forth as the Generous Giving Team propose new technologies or ideas as solutions: giving reviews; routers; Generosity FIKA’s\*; GWD’s\*\*. That is why this prayer calls for courage. Whether of the *dunamis* miraculous power of God variety or the *thorseo*, inner emboldening strength. Be assured you are not alone in this exploration of ‘new things’. God’s promise is that He will make a way for new things and the Generous Giving Team’s promise is that we will support you in walking through them.

**Step Three: Know the difference.** When Nehemiah was moved to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, the task seemed huge and the opposition insurmountable. However, it was God who had stirred his heart and the impossible became a reality. Conversely, the ambitious project of 1880 to build a British link to the continent under the English Channel was admirable but the timing was all wrong in terms of both technical challenges and political fears. Huge amounts of effort and money went to waste on an idea way ahead of its time but which would come to fruition much later.

A major refurbishment may be what you dream of and it too may come to fruition in years to come but you can make your current premises shine. I recently remarked to a vicar what a joy it was to visit their Benefice churches as they clearly cared a great deal for them and the warmth was tangible. How about a ‘Welcome’ review or a good old clear out? If you are not sure what to do, James 1:5 instructs, “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.”

May serenity, courage and wisdom be yours in great measure!

\*FIKA = Quality time to savour with others over cake

\*\*GWD = GoodWithDevice, contactless machine