



Tuesday 12 May 2020

Dear brothers and sisters,

'So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith' (Galatians 6.10).

Eastertide greetings to you all in these strangest of lockdown days and we hope earnestly that you are bearing up in difficult times. Perhaps, however, the Church has more of a role than ever, both in our society and locally, in offering hope and comfort, help and community. To this end, we want to speak to you about our stewardship needs and opportunities as the Merton Priory Team (in the case of Christ Church and St John's, building on Alison's Easter letter).

First and foremost, though, thank you so much for the many ways in which you participate in and contribute to the life of our three churches and team; in the time and talents you give, in financial support. Thanks to all of this, we can say that our churches are alive, even if buildings are closed and activities suspended.

It has been wonderful to be able to offer weekly services online, as well as a wealth of other material. Pastorally, it has been vital that we have maintained contact with the Food Bank and Merton Night Shelter, while also arranging a network of friendship and support for more isolated members of our church communities.

Yet our present and future work, in common with so many others, is challenged by a significant loss in income; in our case, from plate collections and, very significantly, the cessation of hall-rentals. Expenditure has decreased, but not substantially, given that the bulk of it pays for our ministry: the Parish Support Fund, which covers clergy stipends and pensions (aka Alison and Mark!), the wealth of departments and resources at Trinity House and National Church costs.

Therefore, we would be most grateful if you could prayerfully consider any help you might be able to offer now, broadly in these four ways, depending on your personal and household situation:

(1) if you normally give by envelope or cash in the plate, it would be helpful if you could consider setting up a standing order or donating online (details below);

(2) if you already give by standing order, do please continue if you can as your gifts are crucial to our ongoing mission and ministry;

(3) if you are on a stable income and might be able to increase your gift at this time, we would be most grateful;

(4) if you have lost income during this coronavirus pandemic, you may need to reduce your giving; do speak to us for prayer or practical help.

I began this letter by quoting from St Paul; partly, no doubt, because during lockdown I have finally finished NT Wright's book about him! Paul calls the Church the "family of faith" and that is what we are. I am so pleased to have joined this family and pray that we can share one another's joys and bear one another's burdens. Let us, especially in these days, work for the good of all and sow seeds not only for survival, but for future growth in God's kingdom in this place.

Thank you for reading; thank you for your sacrificial generosity given in so many ways; may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing,

Yours in Christ,

Mark Eminson, Team Rector

on behalf of

Alison Judge, Team Vicar

Mike Brunt, Treasurer of Christ Church

Jonathan Hett, Treasurer of Holy Trinity

Ann Newson, Treasurer of St John's

For online donations, see Golden Giving:

<https://www.goldengiving.com/secure/donation/merton-priory-pcc>

(Donations via Golden Giving will be shared across the churches in the team)

For a conversation about setting up a standing order or any other stewardship matter please speak to:

Mike Brunt for Christ Church – mikebrunt@btopenworld.com

Tracey McDermott (Stewardship Officer) for Holy Trinity – traceymcd42@hotmail.com

Ann Newson for St John's – zen135143@zen.co.uk

For more information, see the church websites:

www.christchurchsw19.org.uk

www.holytrinity-southwimbledon.org.uk

www.stjohnsw19.org.uk