

## A LETTER FROM THE VICAR AND CHURCHWARDENS

October 2021

Dear Friends

### COMMITMENT SUNDAY

*"Freely ye have received; freely give." (Matthew 10:8, KJV)*

We wish to begin this letter by thanking you all for your ongoing financial support for St Mary's during what has been a most challenging time in the life of our church, our nation and our world.

Our annual Commitment Sunday provides us all with the opportunity to review our giving in support of the work done in God's name here at St Mary's. We express our heartfelt gratitude to all who are currently members of our Stewardship scheme, whose regular giving allows us to budget for the year ahead, a year in which we already know that some unavoidable costs, such as the church's heating bill, are certain to rise. We hope that those of you who do give in this way will be happy to continue to do so, and ask if you would prayerfully consider whether, in response to the generosity of God in Christ, you may be able to offer a little more to the ministry of God's church in this place.

Of greater importance than those who currently give increasing their giving, however, is our appeal to any among you who are not yet members of our Stewardship scheme. Could we commend this planned giving scheme to those of you who are not currently members? If you join this scheme, you can choose to give by weekly envelope, standing order, cheque or payroll giving. This form of regular planned giving is truly the best way to financially support our church. Liz Nethercott, our Stewardship Secretary, is very happy to answer any questions you may have. Her contact details are telephone: 07714-288994 or e-mail: [stewardship@stmaryspb.org.uk](mailto:stewardship@stmaryspb.org.uk).

The income we receive via the Stewardship scheme, for sake of clarity, goes towards the day to day running costs of the church, necessary repairs and improvement works, and our payment of the Diocese of St Albans parish share. Regular giving into the church's coffers is not as exciting as organising and executing a successful fundraising event, and we are definitely keen to support more of those taking place as we emerge from the shadow of the pandemic. When it comes to ensuring the long-term survival and ministry of St Mary's, however, the best sort of income we can receive is regular and reliable. As you will see from the information sheet, when combining our predicted hall rental income with our current level of planned giving and other income, we are projected to fall short of our running costs by around **£102 per week**. We say this not to be alarmist, but to give a fair and honest appraisal of our financial situation and need.

For those who may feel moved to join our Stewardship scheme, if you are a taxpayer, it would be most useful if you could sign a Gift Aid declaration form, so that we can claim tax back on your giving (at no additional cost to you). Many thanks to those who already help in this way.

You are asking everyone to complete and return a confidential pledge form by **Sunday 31st October**, when we shall celebrate **the Feast of All Saints** (our second Patronal Festival). The pledge form is available electronically and there are also printed copies available at the back of the church. Please note that only Liz Nethercott will know the information you submit in this form and she will keep such information entirely to herself. No-one else will be aware of the details you submit. Please do complete the form even if you are not able to increase your giving at this time. Pledge forms will be blessed at the Festival Eucharist on Sunday 31st October.

There are many other ways to commit to St Mary's too. Could you join a rota to give people lifts to church? Or join our monthly cleaning team? Or perhaps arrange flowers, sing in the choir, serve at the altar, join the Watchers and Welcomers rota, help with the catering at the monthly recitals or other social events? We would love to hear from you.

Thank you for your continuing support.

Yours sincerely,

Stefan Chrysostomou, *Vicar*  
Richard Osborn and Mark Jones, *Churchwardens*