



**From Rev Tim Ward, Vicar of Walberton and Rector of Binsted**

Dear Friends and Neighbours

**Church is Changing**

As you may have heard, the Church of England, in response to the government's advice, has decided to suspend public worship. Baptisms, weddings and funerals are still permitted but only with immediate family and participants.

In response to this time of crisis we at St Mary's will be taking the following measures in line with our vision, Loving God - Loving Community:

**~ Worship Services**

We will broadcast a simple service from St Mary's each Sunday morning by 10.30am. We plan to use YouTube. (If that is unsuccessful, we know we can use Facebook Live.) **The details of how to access this will be posted on our website home page.** [www.stmaryswalberton.org.uk](http://www.stmaryswalberton.org.uk) **There should be an introductory video up by Friday to check the technology.** As this crisis is likely to last several months there will be all sorts of opportunities to explore the creative possibilities of this medium. Suggestions are welcome, especially from our children!

**~ Prayer**

The church remains open for prayer from 8.30am daily. As you enter the building please wash your hands with hot water and soap at the sink for 20 seconds. If anyone else is present please remain at least 2 metres apart. There will also be resources on the website to help our devotional life. We do need to pray that people will follow the Chief Medical Officer's advice and that the virus, by God's grace, is suppressed.

If you would like immediate prayer support please contact our Churchwarden Jean Strickland on 01243 552825. You can also leave requests in the box in the church porch.

**~ Volunteering**

We are making preparations to facilitate volunteers linking up with the housebound. We would encourage you to help your immediate neighbours without referring to the church. But if there is no one to help you, or you have time to run errands for others, then please contact the Church Office which will be operating as the hub. The telephone will be monitored daily (01243 552792.) This service will be open to all villagers both as volunteers and recipients.

There will shortly be a dedicated email address for volunteers. Volunteers should expect to fill out a simple self-declaration form and be registered by the Parochial Church Council. Volunteers should expect to buy goods out of their own pockets and then be reimbursed by cash or cheque on delivery of the goods with a receipt. A log of all contacts will be kept. Entering houses will not be part of this role as that would require a DBS check.

### **~ Financial Help**

For those facing financial hardship we will be using The Walberton, Binsted and West Barnham Sick Poor Fund (Reg Charity 243280). Many of us have plenty of reserves but some do not. The Sick Poor Fund is the parish charity run by the vicar, churchwardens and up to three trustees. It has an income of about £8,000 per year. We currently have about £9,000 in reserve. We can make emergency grants of up to £200 as well as other more regular grants. We usually do so through food vouchers or paying heating bills. A few years ago we changed the qualification for help from being 'sick and poor' to '**sick or poor**'. The area of benefit is Walberton, Binsted and West Barnham (up to the railway bridge). People need to live, work or attend educational establishments or community organisations or churches in the area of benefit.

If you know of anyone who is financially struggling - especially anyone who is under the Statutory Sick Pay threshold for earnings of £118 per week - and has lost their income, then, please, do let me know by phone or letter, preferably asking them first. (01243 551488). Down the road we will need the wealthy in this community to bless those falling into dire straits through no fault of their own. If you would be willing to contribute, come the time, then, please send me an email and I will send you the charity's bank details when the need arises. Email: [vicar@walberton.stmarys.org.uk](mailto:vicar@walberton.stmarys.org.uk)

### **~ Church Office**

The Church Office at Unit G, William Booker Yard, The Street **is still manned but closed to the public**. Please contact it by phone during normal office hours 9am-11am Tuesday to Friday or by email. (See the letterhead above)

I hope all that makes sense. Do contact me at my email or phone below. May God bless you and your families at this difficult time. May we discover resources within our community that we didn't realise we had and be a blessing to each other.

Yours truly

### **Rev Tim Ward**

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