

THE SHRIVENHAM & ASHBURY BENEFICE

The Vicar: Rev'd Norma Fergusson

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To the residents of Longcot

May 2020

Before I say anything else in this letter, I want to ask how you are and whether there is anything you need from St Mary's by way of help or support, whether that is through prayer or something perhaps more immediately practical. My contact details are at the top of this letter or you can telephone the Churchwarden, Dennis Blease, on 01793 780708. It is interesting to see how the simple question "how are you?" which used to be such a commonplace thing has now become something much more serious and heart felt. We do want to know the answer and hope that things are as good as they can be for you and your families.

As you know, St Mary's has been closed for public worship since lockdown began. That doesn't mean that the church in its wider sense has not been active, and we have all become a lot better at livestreaming on sites such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Zoom and StreamYard (other sites are available, as they say, but frankly this is as much as I can cope with so far!). However, even though the building is closed, just like everyone else we still have the regular bills for utilities, insurance and so on. We are doing what we can to reduce expenditure but no longer have the weekly income from the collection and have had to cancel or postpone planned fundraising events.

I imagine that some of you are also experiencing uncertainty about your own or family finances at present and if that is the case, please know that you will be in our prayers and I quite understand that this letter is not for you right now – although we would appreciate your prayers for us. However, if you are able, could you consider making a one-off donation to St Mary's or consider making a regular donation by standing order or direct debit? And if you were able to gift aid your donation, the Chancellor would give us an extra 25%. Our bank details are:

Account Name: Longcot Churchwarden's Account. Sort Code: 20-90-91. Account No: 70590770.

In addition, we have just set up the facility to donate by phone: texting LONGCOT to 70085 will give us an immediate donation of £4.

Our treasurer, Keith Reid (01793 783324) would be pleased to answer any questions you may have, and we will also be exploring ways of possibly holding online events such as a quiz or a coffee morning. More information about those to follow.

Thank you for reading this and for your support of St Mary's, whatever form it may take.

God bless you and keep you safe

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Norma Fergusson', with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the signature.

Rev'd Norma Fergusson