

# An Open Letter to our Parishioners

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**And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body, and be thankful.**

**Colossians 3:15**

## Open for business

It seems we have been given a rather short window to conduct the year's church business! This week has seen each evening filled with 'AGM's which would usually have been held in the spring. As we have conducted the business involved in keeping ancient church buildings protected and worshipping life active, I have also had time to pause and reflect. These meetings tend to look back to what has already happened; this week we have been discussing what happened in 2019 which just seems so long ago it could have been a completely different century! It's hard to remember what happened at the beginning of March this year, let alone last year.

As I have looked back, it hasn't been the church events that have come to mind, but the church people. I am filled with thanks. Thanks for those who kept communication going through the lockdown by forwarding this letter, enabling the parish magazines to operate, by phoning those who may be feeling isolated. I am thankful for those who have enabled the churches to re-open by wading through risk assessments and organising cleaning rotas. I am thankful for our flower arrangers who ensured that the churches looked beautiful for harvest and other occasions. I am thankful for our 'Church Officers' who keep our accounts in order (a tough job when there just isn't enough money to go round in these times of lockdown), who ensure our safeguarding measures are in place, who keep note of the meetings to ensure an accurate recording is made....

I am also thankful for our team of lay ministers, those from our pews who voluntarily undertake training to learn how to preach, how to lead us through the prayers... quite a daunting task. As well as the retired ministers who regularly come out of retirement to help us in our worship and Sunday observances.

I am thankful for those who clean the brass, sweep the floor, mow the grass, and in usual times, provide refreshments after the service.

I am thankful for our musicians, those who read the Bible passages, lead us in prayers, set out the books and light the candles. I am thankful for those who engage our children whether at Sunday School, in after school clubs, or at the toddler group.

I am thankful for those who visit the housebound, who take communion and worship into our nursing homes...

I am beginning to run out of space and there are so many more people to be thankful for. Without any of these wonderful people there would be no church, whether that be the physical building or the worshipping people. So, thank you to all of you.

Love and blessings,

*Vanessa*