

Tuesday 8th June 2021

Dear

If we have sown spiritual good among you, is it too much if we reap your material benefits? (1 Cor 9:11)

It is five years since we last held a formal gift day at St Mary's, Linton. So much has happened in the intervening time. Who would have guessed that a viral pandemic would have changed all our lives in so many diverse ways? We will all have an unusual story to tell in the months and years to come.

Our response in the community has been to maintain public worship online and in church whenever permitted and advisable. In addition, there has been work with children and families, young adults and our older parishioners. Keeping everyone in touch has been an essential part of our mission. All this supported in prayer from you and for each other.

Paraphrasing St. Paul in 1 Corinthians, we have been working to sustain our community's spiritual life; now, we need to ask for your help in a material sense. We rely on the financial generosity of all who support the ministry of our parish church in Linton. There are other times when we focus on the giving of time and talents.

On Sunday 13th June our clergy, Canon Maggie Guite (on Zoom at 10 am) and Revd Michael Wilcockson (in church at the 10 am Parish Eucharist), will be preaching on giving.

On Saturday 19th June, the church will be open from 10 am until 4 pm for you to come and enjoy our church café, discuss your pledge with me (if you wish) and present it as an offering by placing it on the offertory plate on the Nave Altar.

We want to thank you for your donations during the last year; we couldn't have got this far without them. However, despite remarkable efforts by our church team during the pandemic, our income level has fallen, and we cannot meet regular outgoings with monthly income. We are moving into a vacancy as our Team Rector, Canon Maggie Guite, retires. The way church finances work, we still pay our Ministry Share during the vacancy, and this is our major outgoing. If you would like a copy of the approved accounts or an annual report, please email admin@stmaryslinton.org.uk

Why are you asking me?

You may wonder why we are writing to you – specifically. You may be on our electoral roll, or perhaps you receive our email weekly 'pewsheets'. Maybe you receive our printed virtual worship material, which we deliver by hand - or you have had some other form of contact with St Mary's over the last few years. We remember you with gladness and pray for God's grace to be poured into your heart as you consider our Gift Day and what St Mary's means to you.

Please pray for us

If you prefer not to respond at this time – there is nothing more to do, but please remember the work of your local parish church in your prayers. Our ministry is to everyone

who lives in the parish of Linton of all faiths and none. The village's medieval church is open as an oasis of quiet and calmness every day (as it has been for much of the pandemic lockdowns), and the Peace Garden and churchyard are available as green spaces for us all to enjoy.

What to do next

However, if you can consider the enclosed gift day leaflet and fill in the pledge forms enclosed, you would be helping your church plan for the future. It has been challenging for everyone during the pandemic, and we need your support as we return fully to worship, mission and ministry after the recent lockdowns.

Please read the enclosed Gift Day leaflet and prayerfully consider your current regular giving. Then use the SMART pledge panel to help work through what you might be able to pledge for the coming year. Use the guided prayer on the next panel to help anchor yourself in Christ while you do this. Discuss with family members. Many of our families give as a unit, considering their overall income and expenses.

How can I give? – it always seems so complicated when I can't just put cash on the plate.

Part of your SMART pledge might be to Gift Aid your giving – enabling us to claim back the income tax you have paid on your donations. If you sign up for the Parish Giving Scheme by calling 0333 002 1260, it is easy and quick to set up a Direct Debit that you can review at any time. The Parish Giving Scheme helps us reduce the time we spend on the administration of Gift Aid tax recovery and provides a more regular and predictable stream of income for the church.

The church website www.stmaryslinton.org.uk has a donations page directly linked from the home page with all the available methods of giving.

How can I remember St. Mary's in my will?

Please speak to me, Sue Ellis – Treasurer of St Mary's Linton, to discuss how to include St. Mary's in your last will and testament.

Thank you!

Thank you for taking the time to read the information we have prepared. Because of the kindness and care of generations of village people in Linton and beyond, we still have a thriving parish church and offer Christian ministry to all in the long-established tradition of the Church of England.

Mrs Sue Ellis
Treasurer of the Parochial Church Council
St Mary-the-Virgin, Linton, Cambridge