

15th March, 2026

Dear church family old and new,

It has been such joy particularly since the beginning of the year to gather together for our Sunday services, welcoming some new people, standing together with others who are in challenging times, digging into the bible each weekly, worshipping more wholeheartedly and starting Alpha! I have also continued to meet with home groups over a meal in the Vicarage and I have really enjoyed listening and sharing with you all.

Perhaps we do these things out of habit or curiosity but also because we sense that God is welcoming us to discover him and discover a deeper revelation of his saving love for us and our world. In John's gospel it says 'For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life'. (John 3:16). Surely this love and the generosity of this gift we receive compels us to respond? And week by week as we discover the depth of that love we offer our thankfulness in fuller ways.

In Lent we have been talking about spiritual disciplines that give us a framework not just to encounter God more fully but to model ourselves more and more on him. We want to be transformed to be more like Jesus. It might be that you want to be more patient, or more kind, less ready to get angry or worry less about the future. Understanding his generosity to us more fully compels us to be more generous ourselves.

Also, since the beginning of the year the church council (PCC) has met and received an updated budget from our Finance Committee. Historically we have managed to balance the budget because of the generosity of regular givers and for this I give thanks. However, over the last two years our regular giving has gradually declined while, at the same time, our costs have increased. Some of this is inflation, some is increased maintenance costs, and some is getting the staff team up to full strength. This divergence of costs going up and regular giving coming down has led to a significant gap which last year was masked by one off gifts but in 2026 we are looking at a budget deficit of around £50,000. This is not sustainable for us and so in the short term we are delaying hiring a Pastoral Coordinator and will continue to monitor expenditure very carefully.

Local churches (in the Church of England) have a mission to reach out to the community they are in with God's love often in practical ways but also evangelistically. They are also centres where local Christians can gather to worship and encounter God's love more deeply in worship and prayer each week. Our vision and our 5 'fulls' (grace-full, thank-full, faith-full, joy-full and hope-full) express how we see this at St John's and our activities flow from these statements. But local Church of England churches are also self-supporting. We do not get any funding from the national church and so we need to raise the money for running costs, staff salaries and maintenance of the building ourselves. We are fortunate to have a large modern building and volunteers which combine to provide some income through room lettings and the coffee shop but most of our income comes from

Our vision

As a church...

We long to see everyone know the fullness of God's love in Jesus through our welcome, worship, work and witness.

Based on Jesus' words in John 10:10

'I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full'.

The Parish of St John's Hartley Wintney

Fleet Road, Hartley Wintney, Hook, Hampshire. RG278ED | Registered Charity No: 1130172
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donations from church members. We also choose to follow God's example and be generous and support other Christian (mission) partners.

We long to see St John's continuing to be a vibrant place of encounter with God through his Holy Spirit and his people both on Sunday and also during the week and the maintenance of the church centre and sanctuary spaces are an important part of this, as are our various ministries to young and old, pastoral and evangelistic, which all need leading and resourcing. As a charity we can only plan these activities if we know we have the funding and so regular giving is really important for our church's mission.

Responding to God's generosity to us by being generous ourselves in supporting God's church means that we will need to trust him. In the Old Testament God's people practiced tithing – giving 10% of their income to God's work. But in the New Testament Jesus goes above and beyond – he gave everything! When we give sacrificially, we put our trust in God to provide for us, this is a step of faith but we know that he is our provider and won't let us down. We also trust that the people in our church who manage the money will look after it and spend what we give wisely. It may be that you want to be part of that group and be involved in our community in that way and there will be opportunities to join the PCC at our Annual Church Meeting at 12.30 on 26th April, and hear more about our finances then.

After Easter we will be looking at the Early Church and learning further from them about how we grow in generosity. But in the meantime would you consider your giving to our church or whether you should start giving on a regular basis, based on these principles:-

- Prayerfully
- Sensibly - at different stages of life the financial demands on us vary and this impacts our ability to give (1 Cor 16:2)
- Biblically - we are called to put our trust in God's provision in all areas of our life. We began the year looking at the widow's generosity and how her jar was refilled as an example of the bible's teaching on trusting 'Jehovah Jireh', the God who provides.

You may be aware that we will need to embark on fundraising for the Heating Project soon so it is important that we get our house in order first. If you would like to discuss any of these issues or would like more detailed information about how to give regularly and gift aid, please do talk to me or the Finance Committee. Trudy Rankin our Treasurer, Sarah Lello our Finance Committee Chairman or Justin Hooper our Church Warden would all be very happy to talk further.

With my grateful thanks for our shared life together and God's generous grace to us all.
God bless



The best ways to give (with no charges):

1. Regular giving through the Parish Giving Scheme [here](#).
Parish Code 416005062
2. BACS transfers to our account at Metro Bank,
acc name: St John's PCC Hartley Wintney
acc no 34070407 Sort Code 23-05-80

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