



St Paul's Church

Scotforth ✦ Lancaster



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December 2020

Dear Friends,

As 2020 comes to an end we can slowly begin to reflect on the year. The global coronavirus pandemic impacted all of our lives in ways that we are only now starting to come to comprehend. In March, and again in November, the government ordered all places of public worship to close for regular services. This was a painful, but necessary, measure in the life of our parish and our nation. Even as our church buildings slowly re-open, we do so cautiously and carefully, trying to maintain social distancing and Covid-19 restrictions. Given our limitations, we have yet to resume our Book of Common Prayer or Hala Worship Centre services.

The last nine months have made us question who we are as a church, what type of church we want to be, and our place in the wider community. While we continue to pray that this phase in our church life will pass, and we can all worship together in person, we also value the positive growth and flexibility we have made as a church family. As the body of Christ in our parish, we have been the hands, feet, voice, and spirit of God here in this place.

And yet, we must acknowledge where we have struggled and the problems we face as individuals and as a community. Many of us have been challenged by illness, loneliness, loss, and real physical, spiritual, mental and financial burdens. We in the St Paul's family know this reality, because we are also facing an unprecedented financial burden. During both national lockdowns our Parish Hall and Hala Centre have been closed; the lack of letting income has resulted in substantial debt. Along with two periods of no in-person worship, and reduced numbers as we slowly re-open, our collection income is also significantly reduced. We are thankful for everyone who continued to give financially, moved to standing orders, or managed to give offerings through the Vicarage letterbox. Please be assured of our gratitude for your faithful giving. Your giving enables all of us to better minister, care for, and serve our local community. 2020 has shown us that the Church is here to serve in the name of Jesus Christ.

We are writing today to ask for your continued prayers and financial assistance to enable our mission and outreach in our parish. We must face the reality that the current pandemic has had a negative impact on our church here in Scotforth and Hala. As this year comes to an end, we currently owe our diocese over £33,000, which is approximately half of our Parish Share.

On Monday 23rd November, we had a meeting with the Archdeacon and members of the Diocesan Finance team to discuss our position. We were able to share the positive ways in which

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we see God moving in our parish. In recognition of the pandemic's devastating impact on church giving the Diocese has agreed to cover two thirds of the expected £15,000 loss from the Parish Hall and Hala Centre with a £10,000 reduction on our parish share debt. While this is most welcome, it leaves us in the regrettable position of having to use our small reserve funds for the remaining amount we owe.

To mark the end of lockdown, as we journey together through Advent and prepare for Christmas, we are asking you to pray and consider giving St Paul's a financial Christmas gift. Each of us is encouraged to give a one-off financial offering, which will enable us to continue reaching out with God's love at a time when our church, like many other charities, is struggling.

We know that times are tough and ask you to consider giving only what you are able to give, with joy and thanksgiving. In giving to our church, we partner together in the life and mission of our parish. Without generous, indeed sacrificial giving, our church faces a very difficult future.

Please pray and see how you can best support St Paul's Scotforth and Hala with your talents, prayers, and with your finances. Thank you for supporting and enabling the ministry and mission of St Paul's Scotforth and the Hala Worship Centre. We continue to trust in God's providence as we work together in ministry and mission as the St Paul's family.

Blessings,

R A Aechtner

J Weatherill

A Walker

Reverend Rebecca Aechtner
Vicar

Jayne Weatherill
Church Warden

Tony Walker
Church Warden

There are many ways for you to give:

*Online through 'give a little' on the St Paul's Scotforth webpage: stpauls-scotforth.org

* Direct into our church bank account:

Santander UK plc

Sort Code: 090156

Account Number: 72366800

Account Name: ST PAUL'S SCOTFORTH P C C

(please make sure you include all the spaces between letters)

* Or by cheque (made payable to St Paul's Church PCC) posted through the letterboxes at the Vicarage or Parish Hall or brought to church



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