



Hello Everyone,

The churches in our benefice are at that busy time of the year where they hold their annual Parish meetings. The minutes of last years meeting at Holy Trinity, where I attend with my wife, have just been distributed, and as I read the minutes, I couldn't help thinking about last year's meeting and comparing it to the meeting that is planned for this week.

Last year we met after a service in the church that included hymns and the choir singing beautifully. We were able to enjoy a cup of coffee after the service and a chat with others in the congregation before the meeting began. We sat together in the pews at the front of the church and listened to reports from various members of the clergy, PCC, and the wardens on the administration of our church.

What will happen this year during the meeting I am not fully certain, but the service where we worship together will be so different. There will not be coffee and cakes or biscuits before the meeting. We will have to spread out around the church and make sure that others do not get too close to us. We will be wearing our masks. We cannot share the Eucharist together in the way that we are used to. Several regular worshipers and members of our church will not be able to attend because they are shielding or in isolation. One thing that I am certain of is that anyone who went to APCM meetings in 2019 would not have expected to be going to meetings like this in 2020.

We live a different world to that which existed last year. So much in our daily life has changed, and so much in our church life has changed. We have not been able to worship together as we would wish. We have not been able to support each other as we would like because of the risk of infection from physically meeting. We have not been able to enjoy fellowship with each other. We have not been able to raise funds for our churches or for the charities that we support.

This means that as a church we will have to change to be meaningful in this new world. What is always constant, and no matter how much our lives change, is the love that God has for us and our love for God. Our personal relationship and our prayers to God will continue no matter what. Please pray for our benefice at this time as we look back but also as we look forward. Pray that we find the resources that we need to continue being God's people here in West Hereford. Pray that our giving of time and money to our churches is sufficient to let us continue as a church. Pray that the process of choosing our new rector identifies the person God wants to come here to work with us, and that that person hears the call from God to come.

Finally lets us pray that when we meet as Parishes again next year, we do so in a safer and more settled world.

We know that for many of you the uncertainty and anxiety about lockdown restrictions and health continues. We want to remind you that we are here for you. If you find you need a chat, prayer, or some practical help then do reach out – either by phoning 01432 273086 or by contacting your Pastoral Coordinator.

We hope these resources help you feel connected as we worship as a scattered Church. Please be assured that you are not forgotten and that you are remembered in our prayers – and that we long for the day when we can meet again as the whole church in one body and one place.

God Bless,

Stuart Vince (Licensed Lay Reader in the Team)