

Team Rector Report – APCM 2020

Thank you. First and foremost a big Thank you to so many who have helped support the mission and the ministry and the presence of God's Church in our parish. Thank you too for making me welcome.

Little did we know – a year ago – what sort of a future we had ahead of us. Corona-virus has required us to do things differently and has restricted us in *worship* (singing, Communion etc), in *fellowship* (gathering, socials), in *mission* (unable to meet or do things together), and it has tested our faith. We all know those who have died, and those whose livelihoods have been upended.

But politically our world is also much more precarious than it was a year ago, and recent documents from the diocese remind us that the financial health of the Church of England is not good, and there are going to be major changes to how parishes are grouped and how stipendiary clergy are deployed, and these changes will also come faster than might have been the case. The winds are viral, political and economic and they are cold winds!



So we need to think carefully about our worship and our fellowship and our mission. We need to **look within** – individually – how am I growing in faith and living with integrity of faith? and corporately – How are we growing in faith and living with integrity of faith? The values and virtues of grace mercy and peace are at the heart of this. And we need to **face up** draw our strength from God, acknowledge God as Creator, Saviour, Lord and as Holy, yet knowing God loves us and welcomes us. Again we are – I hope – inspired by God's gifts of grace mercy and peace. And we need to continue to **face outwards** – concerned for the wellbeing of our community especially the most vulnerable and struggling, but also concerned for the needy in poorer and more troubled areas who do not have the

benefits we have here. And, Yes, again we want to share God's grace, God's mercy and God's peace.

And although our worship, fellowship and mission are curtailed or limited, they are not destroyed. We have shown that we can worship online; we can learn better to pray at home; we can keep in touch with phone and messages and cards. Jesus said: "I am with you to the end of the age".

And I hope we can get involved and encourage others to get involved. It is not going to be an easy year, and we will need a resilience and an inner strength. Things are going to change and some treasured things will be broken and damaged in the winds. We are allowed to feel sad – "How can I sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" (Ps 137) We are dependent on generous giving for our finances – we are dependent on the gifts of time and skill and energy so that the parish can "operate", the buildings be cared for, the grounds kept, the paperwork done – all so that we live out those values of grace mercy and peace – all so that the church is a place of light and hope and love not least for those who most need it.

Thank you to all who do so much, and thank you to all who will give time, love, money and care to the mission and ministry of our churches in the coming year. May God bless us and may we share that blessing with others. May we know God's grace, mercy and peace and share it freely.

Peter Reiss – October 2020