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Dear Friends,

26th June, 2020.

URGENT FINANCIAL UPDATE AND APPEAL FOR ST NICHOLAS CHURCH

As you will have heard me say over recent weeks, the lockdown due to the Coronavirus pandemic has had a major financial impact on our church finances at St Nicholas.

Whilst we have been encouraged that a few people have increased or set up new standing orders during the lockdown, our income from giving (envelopes, cash, and on line) is down 22% on what we would normally have received by this time of the year, that's around £8,500. On top of this we have lost substantial income from the cancellations of weddings and by not being able to host funerals. As a result, our projection for the rest of the year (*assuming that our income from giving returns to normal from August/September*) is a deficit of just over £18,000. Of course, if the receipts from giving fail to return to expected levels then the deficit will be higher.

Whilst other churches, and of course many businesses, have faced similar or worse situations, our own context is complicated by our building work. Delays due to the virus have added to the time taken to complete the work, and to the costs, and although we have used every possible means to reduce the final bills, we are expecting invoices to the PCC of around £40,000 within the next month.

So, to balance the budget and pay the final bill for the church building work, we need approximately **£58,000**. However, right now, our available cash sits at only £31,000. **We therefore have a gap of £27,000 which we urgently need to fill.**

I am therefore writing to you to ask you to prayerfully consider what gift you can make at this time. This could be made as a one-off gift or as an extra pledge for the coming 6 months. If you are able to gift aid your donation, this will add an extra 25% to your gift and take us closer to our minimum target.

- 5 people/families giving £2000 each, with gift aid, would raise £12,500.
- 5 people/families giving £1000 each, with gift aid, would raise £6,250
- 5 people/families giving £500 each, with gift aid, would raise £3,125
- 5 people/families giving an extra £100 per month for 6 months, with gift aid, would raise £3,750
- 10 people/families giving an extra £75 per month for 6 months, with gift aid, would raise £5,625
- 10 people/families giving an extra £50 per month for 6 months, with gift aid, would raise £3,750

If we were able to raise all these gifts, and there are some 80 households within our church family, we would exceed our target and have 1 months' expenditure in the bank to aid cash flow money in the church accounts to help with cash flow.

So can I please ask you to prayerfully consider what you are able to give.

An extra £50 per month may sound like a lot of money but it is less than £2 a day. For some of us that may be too much, but we are not judged on what we can't give, but on what we can. So if you can only give a little extra and you do so, you will have played your part.

However, I suspect many of us have saved far more than £2 a day by not visiting coffee shops, restaurants and cinemas etc during the lockdown, not to mention savings on petrol, and so many of us will be able to

give far more. Right now our church needs generous, and dare I say sacrificial, givers. So please prayerfully consider your response over the next week, and then act.

You can make your donation in the following ways:

- By writing a cheque payable to St Nicholas Church PCC and sending it to me.
- By a making direct bank transfer to the Church account: Account name: Stevenage St Nicholas PCC, sort code 20-41-12, account number 70405280. Please mark your donation as *Church Giving*.
- By making an on-line gift using our donate button on the website. You'll find it on the top line of the website (*although this deducts a small percentage as an admin fee*).
- By increasing your standing order which you can do on line or by writing to your bank.
- By starting a standing order to the account above. A form for this is attached.
- By bringing a gift in cash or cheque to church when we start meeting, or by dropping it off at the Vicarage or with Steve or Karen the church wardens. Their addresses are on the Church Family List.

Remember, if you pay income tax, please make sure you have completed and returned a Gift Aid form. This is also attached. If you have done this once for church, you don't need to do it again. If you have a query about this, please contact Robin Bailey.

If you do make a donation or increase your regular giving, could you please also let Jason Cox, our treasurer, know. He can then monitor the situation and keep us all up to date with the response. His email address is treasurer@saintnicholaschurch.org.uk

It might also be that you have been saving up your regular giving of cash or envelopes you would normally have put into the plate, and are ready to bring these gifts along once we have started meeting together again. If that is the case, then I thank you. But please can I ask that you drop your gifts off with me, or one of the church wardens, or call one of us so we can arrange to collect them from you, so they can be banked as a soon as possible.

A Call to Prayer. Wednesday 1st July

Whilst a letter appealing for money may seem rather worldly and unspiritual, especially during a time such as this when issues of life and death are still fresh in our minds, how we spend our money is an intensely spiritual subject. How we spend our money, as much as how we spend our time, shows us just where our hearts are, and what we are most committed to, hence the call to prayer I issued earlier in the week.

So as I close this letter, I want to encourage you to put aside some time to pray next **Wednesday, 1st July**, to seek the Lord's blessing on this project and ask for his promptings about what you should give. You might want to pray on your own, as a family, or to gather with some friends in your garden or on a walk, and pray for the church and our needs. We will also be **opening the church for prayer** from 12-1pm and 7-8pm next Wednesday, if you'd like to come and pray in the building.

But however, and wherever, and with whomsoever you pray, please pray. And may the Lord soften all our hearts to give at this time.

Grace and peace,



Dave Brown
Rector, St Nicholas Stevenage
+ St Mary Graveley.