

St Mary Stoke Church, Ipswich

FAITH – HOPE - LOVE

Rector: Revd Sophie Cowan – rev.sophiecowan@gmail.com - 07800909768

An Invitation to Support St Mary Stoke's Mission and Ministry

28/09/25

Dear Church,

May I begin by thanking you for your service and commitment not only to Christ but also to your church here at St. Mary's. The ministry of our church changes lives both in our church and in the wider community, and we continue to see people growing in faith, hope, and love every single week. Your faithfulness has helped to enable this to be our reality, and I am so grateful for all that you contribute to the church.

For many churches finances are exasperated as the cost of living impacts what people are able to give in terms of money, and St Mary's is no exception. We are currently working as a Parish Church Council (PCC) and Finance Committee to think about how our life and mission at St Mary's will continue to grow and develop creatively, despite financial limitations. We want to prayerfully build on some of our more recent ministries and continue to develop new initiatives through the 'On the Way' course and ministry team meeting, to reach out in new ways to our church and wider community, as we try to increase faith, hope, and love in our parish and congregations. However, our general funds are dwindling, and we must rely heavily on grants as well as the generosity of our congregations and visitors. This brings into question our financial viability to continue to be able to support the ministry and mission we seek to offer. Our projected budget predicts a total of £56,406 in expenditure this year, most of which enables us to fulfil our ministry here, with the remainder going on the cost of running and maintaining our buildings. We predict that by the end of December our total income will be approximately £47,233, which will leave us a deficit of £9,172.

We have, in the past, taught on what the Bible has to say about how we give, and we will be doing a little more of that in the coming months. Most of us know that Jesus talked about giving many times, and it is a key part of our Christian discipleship. Therefore, we do feel that we now need to be more proactive in reaching out to our church community and asking you to help us continue to ensure we can keep on providing mission and ministry as we have been able to do in recent years.

To meet our financial challenge we are asking each individual and household in the church to do just two things:

- 1. To review your financial commitment to our church and consider whether you may be able to begin / increase your financial commitment to St Mary Stoke.**

Biblical giving is often linked to the idea of a 10% tithe of income. Some are able to give this from their total income and others from what remains after necessities have been paid for – both are valid and appreciated means of giving. For some that may seem an insurmountable ask – as a suggestion, if this way of honouring God is new to you, then perhaps start with a smaller percentage and just see what happens! If you currently give at 3% would you be willing to raise it

to 4%, for example? Or, if this way of giving is totally new to you, could you start with 1% and review it in 6 months or so.

2. To sign up to our giving scheme which is administered by the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS).

To help us manage our budget, it is easiest for us if you commit to monthly giving, but obviously you are free to choose a different option. PGS operate in a very efficient way and communicate clearly, in addition, if you ever need to make changes they will implement them swiftly.

You can do this online where you will find all of the information you need. PGS is much better method for us than giving by cash / envelope / card machine. Please complete the online form and PGS will be in touch with our Treasurer (Andy Palmer) with what is being given. The Finance Committee and our auditor have access to this information so that the necessary records are maintained, otherwise, the information is held confidentially and is not shared more widely. PGS also gives the option for you to sign-up completely anonymously. You can access the form electronically, either by scanning the QR code here, or by putting this link into your browser:

<https://www.parishgiving.org.uk/donors/find-your-parish/ipswich-st-mary-at-stoke-ipswich/>



It is never easy to ask for money but, I hope and pray that as you consider the life of our church you are willing to take a step of faith as you review how you give both financially and in other ways.

With my love and thanks,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'S' followed by a horizontal line.

Revd. Sophie

(On behalf of the PCC)