

20 October 2020

Dear St Swithin's friends,

"The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 58 Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain." – *1 Corinthians 15. 56-58*

This Coronavirus Season

Since March the nation has been in this unique and challenging season of Coronavirus. As a church we've sought to continue to worship and meet in our homes, on-line, in gardens and parks, in groups, and over the last couple of months in the church building and gardens, all the time seeking to listen to God and respond to what He is calling us to do. The church has been doing this for 2000 years.

We believe the local church is God's hope for the world and we believe St Swithin's purpose is to display God's Splendour and join in God's mission. Whilst in the midst of a crisis we have felt that it's not right to panic, hide, jump ship or get fearful but that we're called to learn to walk by faith in this difficult season and look for the opportunities God is providing each one of us. At the same time we've tried to be wise, faithful and generous in being a good and faithful employer to our staff, who have worked tirelessly and sacrificially on our behalf. We've utilised the government Furlough Scheme to help us navigate this season well, unsure what's ahead, but committed to the life and work of the church.

This letter provides an update on the church's Financial Position, which the PCC reviewed in September.

Finance Overview

We are humbled by your continued generosity and willingness to give during this season. Our regular giving is holding up and we're extremely grateful to God and you. We have at this stage lost some one-off income that comes in each year, as well as the income from the external events that would usually have taken place in the church building. This is the material part of the current forecast gap.

Our costs are lower due to the building not being used as much, and as mentioned above, we have utilised the government's 'Furlough Scheme' to help reduce our staffing costs and avoid making more radical staffing changes, so that we can continue the mission and ministry of the church. We have not opened the café to the public and we've also hired the 'Tent of Meeting' to help a greater proportion of us to meet together in person at the same time, which has been a joy (see Psalm 133).

We want to avoid using the legacies we have received to prop up our day to day mission and ministry, if at all possible, so that these can be used to develop our vision and mission in the future. With the uncertainty over the next six months this means that we are going to have to continue to walk by faith, as the church has always been called to.

So where are we?

At present, without further action, we would be £22,000 adrift at the year-end (December)

What are the main factors contributing to this gap?

One-off Income shortfall	£12,000
Café/Events Trading shortfall	£16,000
Cost reductions (technology)	(£6,000)
Extra costs (Tent of Meeting)	£2,900
Government Furlough funding received	(£6,600)
Other	£3,700
Financial Gap to bridge in last few months	£22,000

What are we going to do?

In the light of these forecasts, we are asking you to consider whether you are in a position to make a one-off financial gift to help us through this season. We are asking you specifically because we think this is necessary. We would love you to consider this prayerfully, but offer whatever you can joyfully. (God loves a cheerful giver, 2 Cor 9. 6-7) We are very aware that everyone's circumstances are different, and that there will be many within the church community who are having significant financial struggles. However, for some it may be that you've not spent as much this year on holidays, events etc and are in a position to give some more. If so, this would be greatly appreciated. Anything you can give makes a difference.

We will look for opportunities to reduce our costs, continue to take the opportunities to utilise the government 'Job Support Scheme', whilst maintaining our core ministry and mission as a church. We would like to continue to be generous to our mission partners and our local missional activities, but realise that some tough choices may also need to be made.

How can you respond?

Please pray. We have seen God's provision in the past and we believe this is an important moment for the church too. Please get behind the leaders in the church in every area of church ministry through your time, encouragement, prayer and support. Please make a financial gift, if you are able, by completing the form overleaf and return it to the Treasurer in an envelope at the church office or send in an electronic copy marked "For the treasurer's attention" to office@stswithinswalcot.org.uk by **Sunday 8th November**.

With our thanks for your encouragement, prayers and support

Nicola Stuffins	Acting Treasurer
Paul Brewster	Warden
Becs Armstrong	Warden
Rev Tim Gleghorn	Rector

St Swithin's Walcot
Financial Gift Form

Name and Address:

Contact:

Either a single gift

I enclose a single gift of

£ (in figures);.....(in words)

In response to the call to resource the Church for Mission. This is given in as cash/cheque/bank transfer

NB Please make cheques payable to Walcot PCC

Or

Amend your giving and notify your bank by the amount below;

.....

Please tick the appropriate box

I wish Gift Aid to apply to the enclosed donation. I confirm I will pay in this tax year an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax at least equal to the amount that all charities and Community Amateur Sports Clubs to which I give will reclaim for this year (25p for each £1 given). I understand taxes such as Council Tax

I will not be adding Gift Aid to my giving

Signed:

Date