

The Stratfield Mortimer Benefice of

St Saviour
Mortimer West End

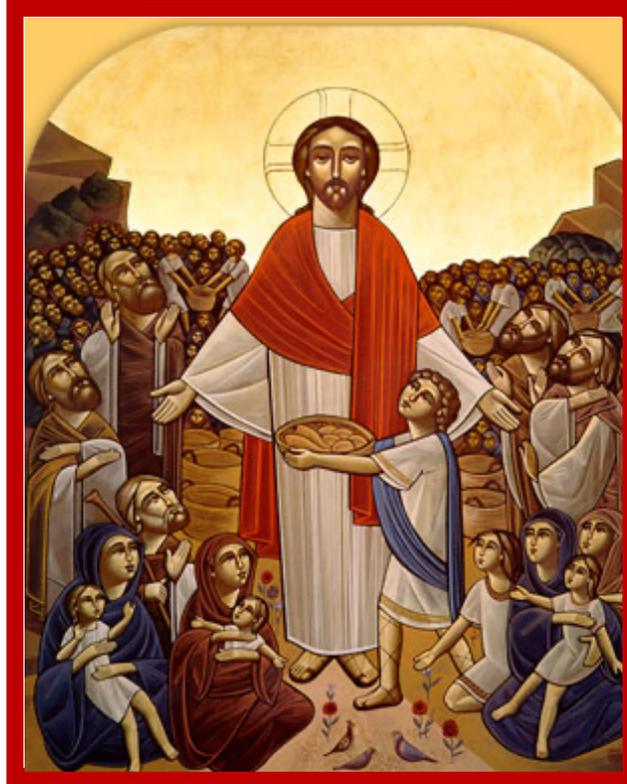
St Mary and St John
Stratfield Mortimer

St John the Baptist
Padworth

St Mary's Church of England School

St John's Church of England School

Diocese of Oxford



'Christ Feeds the Multitude'
An icon in a Coptic Church in Egypt

The Parish Sunday Eucharist

The Eighth Sunday after Trinity

Sunday 25th July 2021 at 10.00 a.m. at St. John's, Mortimer
and online at Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6931233940>

Prayer thoughts: This Sunday's Gospel story tells how a boy offered his food – five barley loaves and two fish – for the feeding of others and, thus, how 'miracles' happen when we share our blessings with those in need. And when physical hungers are satisfied then we are challenged to meet the hungers for love, mercy, forgiveness, companionship, peace, and fulfilment.

For the early Christian community the story of 'The Feeding of the Five Thousand' was a powerful symbol of the Eucharist – 'the sacrament of unity' – where the followers of Christ offer their gifts, represented by bread and wine, and the sharing of the broken bread becomes a sign of a community that is expected to provide for the needs of others. That's the meaning of the Eucharist. It's where we commit ourselves to share what we have with others and 'co-operate' with God in the communicating of his compassion to all. That's what the early Christians did - share what they had with the needy. Part of the Church's mission is to encourage people in every generation to share, even when they might think they have little to offer.

Today's Gospel shows two 'attitudes': that of Philip and that of Andrew (Jn 6:7-9). Philip said, in effect: 'The situation is hopeless; nothing can be done.' But Andrew's 'attitude' was: 'I'll see what I can do myself; and I will trust the Lord to do the rest.' We are called upon to embrace Andrew's attitude, which is that we too can perform wonders in our own time and place. One help to do this is by practicing what are sometimes called the four 'Eucharistic verbs' of Jesus – whereby we take, humbly and thankfully, what God gives us; bless it by offering it to others in God's love; break it off from our own needs and interests for the sake of others; and, with gratitude to God who has blessed us with so much, give it away joyfully. We are called by Christ to become Eucharistic people, that is people who 'give thanks' for what we have received by sharing those gifts – our time, talents, treasure, ourselves – so that God can use them and us to work 'miracles' in creating joyful communities of faith, hope and love. God bless, Paul

The Parish Sunday Eucharist

This holy 'memorial' is known by various names: 1) 'The Eucharist' - which means 'Thanksgiving' - because Jesus offered himself in love; 2) 'the Lord's Supper' - or 'Breaking of the Bread' - because we celebrate it as a shared meal; 3) 'Holy Communion,' because we become one with Christ by receiving him; and 4) 'Holy Mass' - holy sending - because it gives us a mission: to go in peace to serve the Lord.

If you are not able to come to St John's please do share in this service online from your own home. May God bless us as we join to worship together. The present guidelines about attendance, distancing, singing & speaking in churches will be followed carefully.

THE GATHERING SONG

**Gather around, for the table is spread,
welcome the Word and pray.
Wide is our circle with Christ at its head,
he is our host today.**

*Learn of his love, grow in his grace,
pray for the peace he gives.
Here at this meal, here in this place,
know that his Spirit lives!*

**Once he was known in the breaking of bread,
shared with the chosen few;
multitudes gathered and by him were fed,
so, will he feed us too.**

*Learn of his love, grow in his grace,
pray for the peace he gives.
Here at this meal, here in this place,
know that his Spirit lives!*

THE GATHERING

Priest In the name of God - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

All Amen.

The priest may introduce the Eucharist.

THE GREETING

The greeting proclaims the presence of the Lord with us. The Penitential Rite, the Gloria and the Opening Prayer follow. The purpose of these preliminary rites is to help the people, gathered for the celebration of the Eucharist, to join with each other as a worshipping community, and to prepare to listen to the Word of God and to celebrate the Eucharist - the Great Thanksgiving.

All The Lord be with you
And also with you.

PRAYERS OF PENITENCE

*We call to mind our sins to repent of them / turn from them and to ask forgiveness of God and each other.
The Invitation to Confession.*

As we prepare to celebrate the mystery of God's love,
revealed in Word and Sacrament,
let us call to mind our sins.

A pause for silent reflection follows.

All I confess to almighty God,
and to you, my brothers and sisters,
that I have sinned through my own fault,
in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have done and in what I have failed to do.

The Absolution

All + Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.
Amen.

THE GLORIA

Glory to God, glory to God,
Glory to the Father!
Glory to God, glory to God,
glory to the Father!
To God be glory forever!
To God be glory forever!
Alleluia, Amen!
Alleluia, Amen!
Alleluia, Amen!

Glory to God, glory to God,
Glory to Christ Jesus!
Glory to God, glory to God,
glory to Christ Jesus!
To God be glory forever!
To God be glory forever!
Alleluia, Amen!
Alleluia, Amen!
Alleluia, Amen!

Glory to God, glory to God,
Glory to the Spirit!
Glory to God, glory to God,
glory to the Spirit!
To God be glory forever!
To God be glory forever!
Alleluia, Amen!
Alleluia, Amen!
Alleluia, Amen!

THE COLLECT

Priest Let us pray.

Together we spend a few moments in silence, realising, and giving thanks, that we are in the presence of God our Father to whom we make our prayers. The prayer 'collects' our thoughts.

Priest Almighty Lord and everlasting God,
we beseech you to direct, sanctify and govern
both our hearts and bodies
in the ways of your laws
and the works of your commandments;
that through your most mighty protection, both here and ever,
we may be preserved in body and soul;
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

The Liturgy of the Word consists of readings from the scriptures; a sermon/homily, which expounds the readings; the Profession of Faith, which is the Creed of God's people; and the Prayer of the Faithful or General Intercessions in which the people of God intercede for all humankind and all creation.

In the Liturgy of the Word God speaks to us of redemption and salvation and nourishes us with his 'word.' We are not only listening to past history. The God who speaks to Israel and to the early Church speaks to us today through the power of the Holy Spirit working within us as we listen to him and as he reveals the pattern for our lives. 'The word of God is something alive and active: it cuts like any double edged sword but more finely...it can judge the secret emotions and thoughts'(The Letter to the Hebrews 4:12).

THE FIRST READING - Ephesians 4: 1 - 6. - Read by Mel Strang

St. Paul, writing from prison, reminds the Ephesians – and us – that Jesus united Jews and Gentiles by bringing them together in one faith and by means of one Baptism, which is open to all. And St Paul urges us to become that true community where people bear with one another in love, with humility, gentleness, patience and peace and help each other by sharing their blessings.

Reader A reading from The Letter to the Ephesians.

I, the prisoner in the Lord, implore you to lead a life worthy of your vocation. Bear with one another charitably, in complete selfishness, gentleness and patience. Do all you can to preserve the unity of the Spirit by the peace that binds you together. There is one Body, one Spirit, just as you were all called into one and the same hope when you were called. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God who is Father of all, through all and within all.

At the end of the reading:

Reader This is the word of the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

Now we hear the Gospel (the Good News) and acknowledge that we are his people and called to be part of his mission to the world inasmuch as we share his message and his life with faith, hope and love.

THE GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Your words are spirit, Lord,

John 6: 63. 68.

and they are life:

you have the message of eternal life.

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

THE GOSPEL READING - ST JOHN'S GOSPEL 6: 1 - 15.

This Gospel story tells how a boy's generous response in offering his own meal – his five loaves and two fish – enabled the crowd to be fed. The message is that God's grace can work through the generosity of humble people who are willing to share what they have with the hungry. The Gospel is a clear call to all of us to offer our gifts compassionately and generously to meet the most basic human need, namely hunger. The Gospel story also reminds us that creation provides enough for everybody – surely the world today produces enough food for every human being on the planet – and it behoves us to pray and work for true social justice for every community and country. The story is recognizably 'sacramental' in every telling of it in the four gospels. There is clear reference to the Passover – as where the people are divided into 'fifties' after the Exodus. And Jesus' actions – whereby he took the bread, blessed it, broke it and shared it – are similar to his actions at the Passover/Last Supper where he instituted the Eucharist. And, of course, as at the first Passover, everyone who needed food was invited to eat with no exception.

The Lord be with you.

All **And also with you .**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

All **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Jesus went off to the other side of the Sea of Galilee – or of Tiberias – and a large crowd followed him, impressed by the signs he gave by curing the sick. Jesus climbed the hillside, and sat down there with his disciples. It was shortly before the Jewish feast of Passover.

Looking up, Jesus saw the crowds approaching and said to Philip, 'Where can we buy some bread for these people to eat?' He only said this to test Philip; he himself knew exactly what he was going to do. Philip answered two hundred denarii would only buy enough to give them a small piece each.' One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said, 'There is a small boy here with five barley loaves and two fish; but what is that between so many?' Jesus said to them, 'Make the people sit down.' There was plenty of grass there, and as many as five thousand men sat down. Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks, and gave them out to all who were sitting ready; he then did the same with the fish, giving out as much as was wanted. When they had eaten enough he said to the disciples, 'Pick up the pieces left over, so that nothing gets wasted.' So they picked them up, and filled twelve hampers with scraps left over from the meal of five barley loaves. The people, seeing this sign that he had given, said, 'This really is the prophet who is to come into the world.' Jesus, who could see that they were about to come and take him by force and make him king, escaped back to the hills by himself.

At the end of the Gospel

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All **Praise to you, O Christ.**

THE SERMON

We are a Eucharistic community - united around in word and sacrament. Through the readings God has spoken to his people of his redeeming love and of the nourishment which his Spirit gives. The sermon reflects on our readings and relates them to our Eucharistic celebration and to our ordinary life.

After the sermon there may be a short period of silent reflection.

THE PROFESSION OF CHRISTIAN FAITH - THE CREED

We make the profession of faith in response to the word of God written in the Gospels and spoken in the sermon. We testify that God is our Father who gives us new life through his Son and who calls us together in the power of his Spirit to be a Eucharistic people, a 'thanksgiving people', a living community of his abiding self-giving love.

All We believe and trust in God the Father who made the world.

We believe and trust in his Son, Jesus Christ, who redeemed the world.

We believe and trust in the Holy Spirit who gives life to the people of God. Amen

THE PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL OR GENERAL INTERCESSION

We are invited to pray for the needs of the Church's mission and for all people. Through baptism we have been made one with Christ, our great high priest, and we share in his intercessions before the Father for the needs of his Church and of all people. Our intercessions flow from our listening to the Gospel and sermon by which we have been made more aware of our Christian commitment.

This Prayer of the Faithful, or General Intercession, is announced and consists of a series of intercessions; we pray for the universal Church and its mission and for our bishop and for our benefice - our parishes and our two Church schools; for the world, for our Queen and country, for our local communities, families and friends; for the sick and suffering and for all in pain; for the departed. And in communion with Mary, St John the Evangelist, St John the Baptist and all the Saints of God we entrust one another and all people and all creation to God's saving love.

Priest: In the power of the Holy Spirit of God, and in union with Christ Jesus, let us pray to the Father.

The deacon or minister continues:

Heavenly Father, we pray to you for your Church throughout the world; for Justin, our Archbishop; for Steven and Olivia our Bishops; for our parishes and two church schools of St Mary's and St John's; that we may share the Gospel and serve those in need.

We pray to you Lord.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, we pray to you for Elizabeth our Queen, for our Government and for our District and Village Councils. Give to them and all in authority wisdom that they may direct the nations and peoples of this world in the ways of justice and peace that people everywhere may honour one another and seek the common good.

We pray to you Lord.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, we pray for the hungry of every nation: for those who struggle to find food for their children; for all those who lack food today; for those who are starving. For each one of us that we may imitate the generosity of the boy in today's Gospel story and not hesitate to share what we have with those less fortunate than ourselves.

We pray to you Lord.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer

Heavenly Father, Your Son shared the life of a family: we pray to you for our families, friends, and neighbours and ask you to help us learn how to serve Christ in one another, and to love as he loves us.

We pray to you Lord.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, we pray to you for all who suffer in body, mind or spirit...; give them hope in their troubles and bring them the joy of your salvation...

We pray to you Lord.

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, we remember before you all who have died recently ...

We pray to you Lord.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, you provide for us abundantly. Help us to live as befits people created in your image, to be good stewards of your gifts, and to share our blessings.

We pray to you Lord.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, we rejoice in the fellowship of Mary, the Blessed Mother of Our Lord, St John the Evangelist, St John the Baptist and all your saints and we commend ourselves and all people to your unfailing love.

Priest Merciful Father,
All **Accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, Our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.**

THE LITURGY OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST

At the Last Supper Christ 'took some bread and when he had given thanks, broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying "This is my body which will be given for you; do this in remembrance of me". He did the same with the cup...' (Luke 22:19-20). The Church, joyfully obedient to the Lord's command, celebrates the Eucharist taking care that our 'liturgy' corresponds to the words and actions of Christ: 1) Taking bread and wine - we take our own gifts to the Altar, such as our time and talents and our money for the poor and for ministry. 2) Giving thanks (the meaning of the word Eucharist) - in the Eucharistic Prayer the priest, in the name of us all, says the great hymn of our thanksgiving to God for the whole work of salvation, in which the offerings become the Body and Blood of Christ. 3) The breaking of the one bread is a sign of the unity of the faithful - a sign of the unity which comes through sharing in Christ. 4) And in Holy Communion we receive Christ. In this way, Sunday by Sunday and day by day, the Church tries to carry out what the Lord asked his disciples to do in remembrance of him.

THE PEACE

We acknowledge and give thanks for our unity with one another in Jesus Christ our Lord, which his death and resurrection have brought to us. He is the peace between us. The sign of peace echoes Christ's own resurrection greeting to his disciples. Before we share in the same bread we express our love for one another in Christ and pray for peace and unity (cf Luke 1.78,79).

Priest Christ is our peace.
 He has reconciled us to God in one body by the cross.
 We meet in his name and share his peace.
 The peace of the Lord be always with you
All **And also with you.**

THE PREPARATION OF THE ALTAR

The peoples' gifts of bread and wine are brought to the altar. The offerings of money is made and promised to support the wider ministry and work of the Church. Taking the Gifts: We give thanks to God for the gifts in the following words.

Priest **BREAD**
 Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this bread to offer,
 which earth has given and human hands have made. It will become for us the bread of life.
All **Blessed be God for ever.**

WINE
 Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this wine to offer,
 fruit of the vine and work of human hands. It will become for us the cup of salvation.
All **Blessed be God for ever.**

OUR TIME, TALENTS AND TREASURE/MONEY
 Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have the gifts of our
 time, talents and money to offer. May our offerings of our gifts be a sincere sign of our
 gratitude and our dedication to your service.
All **Blessed be God for ever.**

*The priest prays quietly: Lord God, we ask you to receive us and be pleased with the sacrifice we offer you with humble, contrite and thankful hearts.
The priest washes hands as an expression of the desire for inward purification, praying quietly: Lord, wash away my iniquity; cleanse me from my sin.*

PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS

Priest Pray my brothers and sisters, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God,
 the Almighty Father.
All **May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name,
 for our good, and the good of all his Church.**
Priest Amen.
 God of peace, as we bring our gifts
 make us one in thanksgiving.
 We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.
All **Amen.**

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

The Eucharistic Prayer is the centre and high point of the whole Christian celebration. This great prayer of praise and thanksgiving proclaims the wonderful works of God and through it we join ourselves with Christ in praise and thanksgiving to God the Father and in offering ourselves to him in union with Christ's self-offering on the cross. We express our share in the prayer, which is said by the priest on behalf of all the people, by listening inwardly and joining in the acclamations (joyful shouts or songs) and the Sanctus (the Holy, Holy, Holy which concludes the preface), the memorial acclamation and the great 'Amen' which concludes our Eucharistic Prayer.

Priest The Lord be with you.
All **And also with you.**

 Lift up your hearts.
All **We lift them to the Lord.**

 Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
All **It is right to give thanks and praise.**

The Preface praises God for his mighty acts:

And now we give you thanks
because at the Last Supper, as he sat at table with his apostles,
he gave us this memorial of his passion to bring us its saving power until the end of time.
In this sacrament you feed your people and strengthen them in holiness,
so that the family of humankind may come to walk together in the light of faith
and in one communion of love:

All **Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

We pray to the Father for the sending down of the Holy Spirit and recall the Lord's Supper.

Priest We thank you, loving Father, because when we turned away
you sent to us your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

He gave his life for us upon the cross.

He shows us the way to live.

Send your Holy Spirit that these gifts of bread and wine
may be for us Christ's body and his blood.

On the night before he died, when darkness had fallen, Jesus took bread.

He gave thanks, broke it, and shared it with his disciples, saying:

‘This is my body, given for you. Do this to remember me.’

After they had eaten he took the cup of wine, gave thanks, and shared it with his disciples,
saying:

‘This is my blood, poured out for you and for many, for the forgiveness of sins.

Do this to remember me.’

So, Father, with this bread and this cup we celebrate his love, his death, his risen life.

As you feed us with these gifts, send your Holy Spirit upon us
and change us more and more to be like Jesus our Saviour.

Help us, Father, to love one another,

as we look forward to that day when suffering is ended

and all creation is gathered in your loving arms.

And now with Mary, the Blessed Mother of our Lord,

St John the Evangelist, St John the Baptist, and all your saints,

we give you glory, through Jesus Christ

and in the strength of your Holy Spirit, today and for ever.

All **Amen.**

HOLY COMMUNION

The communion rite lays strong emphasis on peace, unity and our prayer for forgiveness. We come together to the Lord's table in accordance with the Lord's command, 'Take, eat... take, drink', as a community bound together by the love of God manifest in Christ. We can all be confident in Christ's mercy as we respond to his call to come to his table. Our communal recitation of the Lord's Prayer - the prayer he taught us - prepares us for Holy Communion with our Lord.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Priest Looking for the coming of his kingdom, as our Saviour taught us, so let us pray:

All **Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.**

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

The priest takes the host and breaks it over the cup, praying quietly: 'May this mingling of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ bring eternal life to us who receive it.' 'Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread' (1 Corinthians 10:17) Christ's gesture of breaking bread with his disciples at the Last Supper gave the Eucharist the name of the 'breaking of bread.' This gesture signifies that we who share one bread and one cup are made one. The breaking of the Eucharistic bread becomes a sign of unity and charity as the one bread is distributed to the family of God's people.

Priest We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

All **Though we are many, we are one body, because we all share in one bread.**

The priest prepares quietly for Holy Communion. We may all join quietly in this prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, by the will of the Father and the work of the Holy Spirit your death brought life to the world. By your holy body and blood free me from all my sins and from every evil. Keep me faithful to your teaching, and never let me be parted from you.

PREPARATION FOR HOLY COMMUNION

Priest Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. *cf. John 1: 29*

Blessed are those who are called to his supper.

All **Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word, and I shall be healed.**

The sign of communion is more complete when given under both 'kinds' since then the sign of the eucharistic meal appears more clearly. However, we live in exceptional times when communion can only be given in one 'kind'

The priest takes the host, raises it a little and shows it saying: The Body of Christ. And the same with the cup saying: The Blood of Christ. When receiving Holy Communion the response and assent to Christ is:

+ Amen.

THE SONG DURING HOLY COMMUNION

***One bread, one body, one Lord of all,
one cup of blessing which we bless.
And we, though many, throughout the earth,
we are one body in this one Lord.***

***Many the gifts, many the works, one in the Lord of all.
One bread, one body . . .***

***Grain for the fields, scattered and grown, gathered to one for all.
One bread, one body . . .***

After Holy Communion we may keep a further period of silence.

PRAYER AFTER HOLY COMMUNION

Priest Let us pray

The priest invites us all to pray that the Holy Eucharist will have its effect in transforming our lives and bring us all to God's kingdom. We pray together silently for a while before the Post Communion prayer.

Priest Strengthen for service, Lord,
the hands that have taken holy things;
may the ears which have heard your word
be deaf to clamour and dispute;
may the tongues which have sung your praise be free from deceit;
may the eyes which have seen the tokens of your love
shine with the light of hope;
and may the bodies which have been fed with your body
be refreshed with the fullness of your life;
glory to you for ever.

All Amen.

THE NOTICES FOR THE COMMUNITY ARE GIVEN.

THE CONCLUDING RITE

The Lord be with you.

All and also with you.

THE BLESSING

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds
in the knowledge and love of God and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

+ and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.

All Amen.

Go in the peace of Christ.

All Thanks be to God.

OUR 'SENDING OUT FOR MISSION' SONG

Mayenziwe 'ntando yakho.

Your will be done on earth, O Lord.

Mayenziwe 'ntando yakho.

Please donate regularly to support the Church's mission and work. *The church here needs your help in order to serve our villages, our diocese, our nation and our world in the future. Our doors have been closed due to Covid 19 and with no regular Government or Church of England funding we have lost significant income. Please see the website to see how to give efficiently.*

