



## **The Parishes of Cudham and Downe**

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### **YOUR CHURCH NEEDS YOUR HELP!**

In 2019 – BC (Before Covid!) people from our villages were invited along to church to start to look at how we could all work better together to support one another and to see what our churches could offer the communities, widening our appeal to the younger members as well as continuing to offer worship to our regular and occasional visitors. On 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 we had the first national Covid lockdown; churches, schools and businesses closed for an extended period of time. Recovery from the effects of the pandemic has been slow, and here we are 4 years on.

We've not been idle though. Our pastoral team now has regular contact with over 30 vulnerable or needy people in our parishes; 'warm welcome' events have been held throughout the year and we have two 'Anna Chaplains' who support this ministry. Initiatives like Café Church and Messy Church are part of our regular worship patterns and we're looking for new ways of 'being church'. Collective worship (assembly) is led weekly in our schools by Rev John Musson or John and Kim Curle. Thanks to volunteer and paid help both churchyards are looking better than they have done in a long while and, looking forward, we have ambitious plans to make our church buildings fit for purpose in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

As a church we pray regularly for you, each week remembering particular streets in our parishes. If you have any prayer needs, please let us know.

Unfortunately, the 'Friends' of both churches, set up some years ago to raise funds for repairs to the buildings, have run out of steam and need new members, running costs, most especially heating and lighting, are increasing and our churchyard funds are also in need of extra finances if we are to continue the improvements we've started.

Having a full-time vicar for our parishes, so vital in offering things such as weddings, baptisms and funerals, as well as pastoral and spiritual support, also is something the local church has to fund. Church of England churches, despite the name, receive no state aid nor financial support from 'headquarters'. We'd love to see our churches continue to offer to our communities something special in the remaining decades of this century, something which we should not take for granted, given that more than 400 churches have closed in the last decade.

Future provision of clergy is partly based on an annual census of those attending worship, so please come along to church as regularly as you can. We'd love you to come anyway!

With all of this in mind your church in Cudham will be holding a .....

## **Day of Prayer and Gifts on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> March, 9am to 5pm**

We especially invite you to join us for the service at 11 am (Sunday Club will welcome your child/ren) then linger a while afterwards and talk with others or find a quiet corner to pray. Tea and cakes will be on offer!

Please also use the day to respond to the needs of our church, which are:

**Our churchyard:** Supporting the cost of regular maintenance to keep the churchyard looking as good as it now does. Clearance of the fenced area needs to be completed (which is being done by contractors), the mowers need maintaining and storage provided for them and the gates coming from Church Approach need to be replaced. You will be very welcome to join in the monthly churchyard working parties on the first Saturday of every month.

**The Friends of Cudham Church:** Sadly, two of the founder members have died in the past year and the Friends have not been able to run any events since Covid. This group has provided much needed fundraising for the general maintenance of our church building and more extensive repairs such as those to the windows and the spire. Could you be part of the Friends fundraising committee, or give towards the ongoing cost of maintaining our historic church?

**Ministry and Mission:** 'Worship, witness and welcome' is our mission statement and with this to the forefront we want to continue to serve our community, young and old alike. The cost of having a vicar is the responsibility of our local church, shared with St Mary's Downe, and we therefore invite those for whom such ministry is important to give generously to support this ongoing work. We are also in need of actual help in church, during the services, helping with Sunday Club, cleaning for example. Please pray whether God is calling you to serve in this way?

To conclude, on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> March, with the church open all day, there will be opportunity for you to visit. We hope you will do so; come to offer a prayer and make a gift or leave a note offering any help you can give. Some of you might want to give to just one of the aspects of our church life highlighted above, others generally – please mark your gift accordingly, so it goes to the right 'pot'!

Cheques should be made payable to 'PCC Cudham' and if you are not able to visit on the day please post it to 'Day of Prayer and Gifts', Parish Office, Church Approach, Cudham, Sevenoaks, TN14 7QF'. Bank transfers can also be made, to PCC Cudham, Account Number: 14123940, Sort code: 60-16-03, using 'gift' and which 'pot' you wish your gift to be used for as the reference. Alternatively you can use the weblink [parishgiving.org.uk/donors/find-your-parish/cudham-st-peter-w-st-paul-sevenoaks/](https://parishgiving.org.uk/donors/find-your-parish/cudham-st-peter-w-st-paul-sevenoaks/) Please also contact us if you are a taxpayer and wish us to reclaim gift aid on your donations. If you have any thoughts or wish to offer help please write, or email [admin@pcd.org.uk](mailto:admin@pcd.org.uk). One final thought, have you considered including a legacy to Cudham church in your will? This is a tax-efficient way for your estate; please contact us for details.

With every blessing,  
Rev John Musson, Vicar of Cudham and Downe