

CLERGY LETTER

Dear friends

"May there always be such peace and comfort found here. In times of trouble, in times of despair and desperation, here my soul finds peace. God bless all who come here in anguish. Listen well for God is talking to you. Amen xxx"



This was a message that was recently left in Headcorn church by a lady who sang in the choir as a child. Another was left in the visitors book at Sutton Valence from someone who said:

"Today I needed some strength. Your beautiful church helped. Thank you."

You have no idea how moving I found these messages, as well as others like them that are left from time to time, and how gratifying it is to find that people genuinely feel helped and supported by coming into our lovely churches and simply sitting quietly knowing that they are in the presence of a God who loves them, who listens to them and who wants to help them through whatever might be troubling them in life. Indeed I am certain that barely a

day goes past without at least one person taking time out from the pressures of life to do exactly that.

I'm also pretty certain that the majority of these people will not be active churchgoers and that I am unlikely to see them on a

Sunday morning. However, I don't mind that at all, far from it, I am actually pleased that there are so many people who are acknowledging a need for God in their lives – even if it is only to help them through a temporary emergency or difficult stage. I pray that God will answer them and help them all through whatever is troubling them.

Having said that, I should also admit to praying that having received the help and peace of God they will then be filled with a desire to get closer to him and that some, at least, will feel moved to join our worshipping community.

However, I know that this can be a daunting prospect. The idea of walking through the doors on a Sunday morning and sitting alongside a group of people who know each other and the service well, but have

no idea themselves as to what might happen in the service, what might be expected of them or how they might be received can be very challenging. Other people have told me that they have been concerned that as soon as they walk through the doors someone will pounce on them to ask them to volunteer to do something.

So, if you are one of these people may I try and allay some fears. Every single one of us has, at some time in lives, walked into a church for the first time – so we know how you feel. I can assure you that you will be met with a warm welcome, but we will not try and overpower you. Our services are laid out in such a way that they should be easy to follow and we try and make sure that clear explanations and

instructions are given every step of the way. Having said that, if all you want to do is sit quietly in a corner and listen to what is going on, that's fine – no pressure will be put on you to do anything you are not comfortable with.

We know that many people find help and support from embracing the presence and peace of God in our churches on the odd occasion during the week. I wonder, how much greater would these feelings be if we took that extra step?

Please do feel free to contact me if you would like to know more.

With every Blessing for the coming month.



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The final deadline for the submission of material is the 14th of the preceding month. Acceptable formats for articles are MS Word, MS Publisher or text files. PDF files can sometimes be used, but as their proportions cannot be altered without distortion, they can't always be used. Suitable picture formats include: Jpeg, BMP, PNG, GIF, etc.