

North Wingfield Team

St Lawrence Church, North Wingfield - St Bartholomew's Church, Clay Cross - St Barnabas Centre, Danesmoor
St Mary's Church, Pilsley – St John's Church, Tupton

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18th June 2020

Dear Friends,

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A LETTER FROM THE TEAM RECTOR – 18/6/20

Dear Friends,

It seems a long time since 'Lockdown' started in March and it is my sincere hope and prayer that you have managed this difficult and unprecedented event safely so far. I know from personal experience the situation has thrown up all kinds of difficulties and uncertainties quite apart from simply trying to avoid infection.

I have been impressed with how churches in the North Wingfield Team Ministry have responded, trying to keep the community of the congregations together, remembering that churches are not buildings but people. Responses in the various congregations will have differed, and I am sure we have all made mistakes, but what I have seen is people doing their best in exceedingly difficult situations.

My main reason for writing this letter is to let you know I have decided to retire next year. I will be 65 in December but feel it is right to celebrate Christmas with you, probably leaving in February sometime. This gives 8 months to think through, 'What next?' and to navigate through the further easing of 'Lockdown' restrictions for church gatherings. I believe, then, a new, younger, Rector with fresh ideas is the best way ahead.

My main aim until my retirement is to continue to serve you conscientiously and help navigate through the remainder of the crisis to a new start. However, let me finish by reminding you that church is not just a gathering in a building on a Sunday (important as that is) but a community of people who are disciples of Jesus of Nazareth. We are to be his 'hands and feet' empowered by the Holy Spirit to continue his ministry in the world. During the 'Lockdown' you have endeavoured to do this in difficult circumstances. Let me encourage you to look forward to the future with the determination to keep serving him in the North Wingfield Team Ministry.

With love in Christ,
COLIN COOPER (Team Rector)