



August 2022

Dear friends

The quieter pace which the summer brings gives a welcome opportunity to reflect and recalibrate. In that spirit I write this parish letter to all those who are part of the church family at St Paul's. We're at a time of significant transition and opportunity as we emerge from the pandemic and continue to grow faith in Winchmore Hill. Now is a good moment to update you on some of our plans for the future as well as news of the present.

## Coming up this September

St Paul's Covid recovery has been comparatively good, and I am thankful for the ways in which, by God's grace, we have shown resilience and courage over the past few years. In September we're going to be exploring some themes which I'd like to introduce you to now:

**Welcome and Belonging** St Paul's is one of the larger church communities in the Diocese. Unlike some churches, our numbers have held up reasonably well since the pandemic. I'm conscious, however, that the increased opportunity and appetite to travel and visit family and friends over the past year has impacted people's regularity of attendance. And, after the enforced break from attending church services during lockdowns, there are some people who haven't returned to Sunday worship. If this any of this applies to you, then I want you to know that you are *welcome*! Sometimes the biggest barrier to people returning to church is a sense that they will be judged for not having come to church. Please be assured that there is no judgement here, and we'd love to have you worshipping with us regardless of how long it was since we last saw you. We'd particularly love to see you on Sunday 11 September, when we'll be exploring the themes of welcome and belonging.

**Volunteering** A church like St Paul's relies on an enormous number of people who give their time and their talents in so many ways. Thank you! However, this is the area where we have recovered least well since the pandemic, an experience which is common among many churches, charities and organisations which rely on volunteers.

On Sunday 18 September our focus will be on volunteering, and the ways – big and small – in which we can offer our time and skills in the Lord's service. You can find more information about the ways in which you can help at St Paul's by visiting [www.spwh.org/volunteer](http://www.spwh.org/volunteer)

**Financial Giving** St Paul's is also reliant on people's financial generosity. We have an annual turnover of typically around £250,000, and our financial responsibilities include staffing and clergy costs, upkeep of our buildings, and funding services and activities. The cost of living crisis will have a significant effect on the parish's finances, as I know it will on many of yours.

On Sunday 25 September we will be focusing on generosity, exploring how we can contribute to the financial life of the church. We want to do this sensitively; we understand that many people are

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