Dear Brothers and Sisters

2020 has been a year that none of us could have expected and I want to thank you personally for the considerable time and effort you have put in to supporting your Parishes through these challenging times. As a Diocese, we are making every effort to walk alongside you through this crisis, we value the irreplaceable work that you do and don’t want you to feel that you are having to deal with the Covid pandemic alone.

As a starting point, we have put in place a Parish Share relief scheme, which is funded entirely from DBF reserves, that we trust will provide many of you with some breathing space. At the same time, we are looking to make significant savings ourselves as a diocese to the value of at least £750k by the financial year 2022 with further substantial reductions anticipated in subsequent years. As Diocesan CEO, I am undertaking a review of all of our central services to ensure that any savings are being borne in Flourish House as well as across the diocese.

We plan to focus our resources on what is important and will be looking to engage more in activities such as fund raising and making better use of our investments to support the Common Fund going forward and we hope to be able to make more practical support available in a number of areas to those PCCs who would find it useful.

As Bishop Ruth commented at a recent Synod, the impact of Covid and the needs of those we serve requires the Church to be “simpler and humbler… but no less bold for the Gospel” and “One of the things the Church is relearning during this time is that we are not just here for the needs of those who belong, the 1.5% who attend Church, but also for the 98.5% who don’t.”

Looking forward, Diocesan Synod has recently agreed a budget for next year that ensures there will be a maximum per member increase in Parish Share of just 1.1%, the current rate of inflation. PCCs will not be requested to make any additional increases due to changes in numbers of worshippers across the diocese this year.

We understand that the financial pressures that many of us are facing can cause real stress and anxiety. We do not want anyone to lose sleep over their Parish’s financial situation. So please get in touch with Matthew Pinnock or Jessica Cook to discuss anything that is worrying you. We want to work with you, in partnership, to navigate our way through this difficult period.

Yours faithfully

**Sharon Kindleysides**
CEO / Diocesan Secretary