



### **The Rectory – Chiddingstone – TN8 7AH**

Dear friends of St. Mary's,

We very much hope that you have enjoyed being with us to-day as we meet to celebrate the life and work of the church in this community.

You may know that there has been a church on this site for over a thousand years. The wall behind the altar is, perhaps, the oldest surviving piece of the fabric of the earliest building. Over the centuries, St. Mary's has been enlarged with the addition at various times of the aisles, the tower and the porch. Most recently, the construction of a well-used and much appreciated small chapel, refreshment facilities and toilets has continued to see our church improved and enhanced. Over the centuries this has only been possible through the generosity of countless parishioners, visitors and benefactors.

To-day the building is used daily for Christian worship and available for the use of our village Church of England school. In addition, everyone who lives within our parishes is entitled to be married and baptised in our church and laid to rest within its churchyard. It hosts hundreds of visits each year by schools, organisations and individuals, all of whom come to be absorbed in the prayerful atmosphere of this ancient place.

However, the church in any parish is not simply the building where it meets. The church is a "gathering together" of faithful Christians and we rely on the generosity of individuals and families to maintain the worship and ministry of the church in this parish. As a Christian church we attempt to continue the work of Christ himself; bringing comfort to the sick and the dying, providing encouragement to those who seek to live lives of Christian discipleship and helping anyone, as the Book of Common Prayer describes it, "in any kind of need". In order to do this we rely on your help and without your generous assistance this ministry would be diminished.

Please consider the possibility of making a regular contribution to the life and work of St. Mary's by a Bank Standing Order or if you already do so, increasing the amount you generously donate. Gift Aiding increases the amount we receive by a quarter.

Thank you for joining us to-day and for taking the time to read this and the enclosed.

Best wishes,

Martin