**A Letter from Fr. Paul**

Jesus had the habit of not hanging around too long in one place. As soon as people began to cling onto him, he ‘legged it’ to another town or village to share the Good News with a different set of people. Jesus was the model ‘interim vicar’ – passing through, bridging the gap, healing the hurts, building-up, releasing gifts, enabling, encouraging…and then moving on.

That’s the job I was appointed to do here at St James’. I came for a year as your Interim Vicar in early 2019 and ended up, thanks to Covid-19, staying for a further year! We might have appointed a new vicar last May, but Covid-19 put paid to those plans. But now the Good News is that a vicar ***has*** been appointed and will be joining you soon.

This means that I can move on to do whatever God might have in store for me next. Although God appears to have gone quiet at the moment and seems to be keeping his plans for me under wraps that will, thankfully, give me breathing space to put my feet up for a while and prepare for my next adventure in the service of God’s Church.

I will be sad to say goodbye but will take with me some hugely fond memories – souvenirs – of the wonderful things that we have achieved together. It’s been a challenge at times, but I have felt all along a willingness and spirit to overcome past difficulties, to pull together and rebuild.

Despite the setbacks of the situation around Covid-19 the foundations are in place for continued renewal and growth. With a new leader alongside you and with a return to something like normality once the Covid vaccine has been fully rolled out I have every confidence that what the Lord has begun in this place will continue to flourish.

Thank you all for allowing me to journey for a time alongside you; for your generosity, hospitality, care and encouragement.

I wish all of you the very best for the future.

Blessings and Prayers.

Fr. Paul (Interim Vicar, April 2019 - January 2021)