**Incumbent’s Comments**

I had hoped and expected that my tenth year serving the parish of Farncombe would have worked out differently! Instead I’m making these comments five months behind when I normally would and in very strained circumstances. And they will be no more than a bare summary.

We devised a new Mission Action Plan, but have had no opportunity to do anything to put it into practice. We went through a time of vandalism and disruption, and then lockdown, from which we began emerging in mid-July. Now we find ourselves operating on restricted basis and many of the things we usually do have become impossible, at least for the time being. We have successfully built up our rental income only to see it hacked back by the virus, and thanks to remarkable generosity from some members of the church who I can only commend and honour, we are just about holding our own financially. We are, as a community, still dispersed to some extent, and that will continue to be the case for some time to come. We have lost both Derek and Sheila Strugnell, Dot Court, Anita Phillips, Margaret Tickner, Vera Honey, and Pat Walden, as well as Nick Powell, Sarah Hammond and Stephen Hall who while not members of the congregation were part of our extended community.

Enormous thanks to everyone who has kept things running over the last few difficult months – to Ray and Rhys, Maggie, Graeme, Helen and Paul, and all those who’ve contributed to the audio worship which will continue for the time being, not least David who has assembled a virtual choir and got to grips with the program that puts everyone’s efforts into usable form! And all of you for your prayers, support, and tolerance. Whatever else may have happened, I never had any doubt that the St John’s congregation would adapt and cope.

The future will be different again! The virus will not always be with us, if the experience of every past pandemic is anything to go by. We will again sing God’s praises, we will again share the common cup of the Lord, we will again take each other by the hand and sit and have tea and biscuits together! But in some ways we will also be rebuilding our church life from the bottom upwards. We have kept the pilot light of the Holy Eucharist burning and now are up to gas mark 2 or so. But with reduced capacity (and with Maggie leaving in summer 2021) we will face choices about what we do with what we have to make the Kingdom of Jesus Christ known in our place and time in the next stage of our life together. God bless you, friends, and bless us all.

*James Rattue, rector*