



## Comfort and Joy 2020

It is hard not to be aware that Christmas will be different this year, but we are hoping it will be different in a better way.

In previous years we have organised a Christmas Voucher scheme to support the homeless and those on the margins. We have each year been overwhelmed by the generosity shown raising over £150K in just over 15 years. These vouchers – and the greetings cards that have accompanied them – have supported a number of charities and agencies in the area supporting a wide variety of people in difficult circumstances from families, to single young people, to those seeking asylum and those seeking refuge from domestic abuse, those sleeping rough and those in hostels and temporary accommodation and those accessing drop in meals provision. Listening to the stories of the impact of the gift and card has been moving and inspiring.

**This year we are working in partnership with The News, HIVE Portsmouth and the City Council to broaden the scheme and seek to increase the impact and benefit it can bring. If we are to achieve this we need your support and that of your community, organisation or faith group.**

This week we are launching ‘**Comfort and Joy**’ –it will build on the recent ‘With thankful hearts’ Harvest campaign.

**We are encouraging everyone in our city as individuals and as groups to share some love in Portsmouth this Christmas.**

We hope that together we can demonstrate, throughout Portsmouth, there are people who have love, care and respect to give. We want to invite the whole community to share some comfort & joy, especially at Christmas. Whether it is an elderly neighbour, someone on their own or a family that needs some seasonal joy.

We are asking people to think about their neighbours and community – is there someone who could benefit from a seasonal gift and a greetings card to show that people care?

So firstly **to show that recognition of another person**, to share that love with those around you, **we are inviting everyone to write a Christmas card (or two) to send to a neighbour or someone in your street who you feel might be alone at Christmas**

Then, to give the most precious gift we might have – the gift of choice – to those who do not have too many choices in their life. For some of them that might enable them to choose a box of chocolates, a new toy or even essential food shopping. We don’t want to make that decision for anyone – each individual knows what will bring them Comfort & Joy this season.

**So, we are asking you if you would be prepared to contribute to our ‘Comfort & Joy’ campaign this winter? How to make a donation**

- **Donate a gift card or voucher** (In previous years we have suggested £5 cards)
- **Donate a cheque** (payable to St Mary’s Church) or **cash**
- Send your donation to **St Mary’s Vicarage, Fratton Road Portsmouth PO1 5PA** or hand in at **St Mary’s Church any morning between 9am & Noon.**

**The deadline for receiving donations is Dec 18<sup>th</sup> –**

We will then ensure these are passed on to the charities we have worked with in the past to reach those most in need.

This year we are not producing leaflets etc -instead we hope that each organisation and individual will spread the word. If you need a copy of the logo please contact us. There will also be a social media campaign you can share and articles in The News.

If you would like more information please email [portsmouthdeanery.admin@portsmouth.anglican.org](mailto:portsmouthdeanery.admin@portsmouth.anglican.org)

Or contact Fr Bob White 02392822687 [vicar@portseaparish.co.uk](mailto:vicar@portseaparish.co.uk)

*With best wishes*

*Father Bob White*

*on behalf of the Christmas Homeless Voucher campaign*

