



## The Diocese of Southwark

## The Bishop of Southwark

The Rt Revd Christopher Chessun

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2 February 2022

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we begin 2022 my fellow Bishops and I wish to thank you and your parishes for your faithful generosity in supporting the Parish Support Fund (PSF) over this last year. During these exceptional times, with ever fluctuating restrictions, our parishes have continued to honour their pledges and at the end of December over 99% of pledges had been received. This is an outstanding result! It is very close to our pre Covid levels. We give thanks that most of our parishes have paid their parish pledge in full and some have made additional gifts during the year. Please convey our deep gratitude to your PCCs and congregations for your steadfast partnership in resourcing the mission and ministry of this Diocese and ensuring that the Diocese may continue to offer parish ministry beyond those parishes which can readily afford it.

As a Diocesan family we are all enormously grateful to you for navigating the challenges of the past year and how you have held fast serving your parishes, bringing comfort and healing, and being “joyful in hope, patient in tribulation and steadfast in prayer”. I am encouraged by the many stories of how our churches have been characterised by generosity, care and hospitality, priests and people, parishes and Diocesan teams, working together in joyful partnerships in the Gospel.

As we step into 2022 I recognise that for many this New Year is fragile, and the future still uncertain. We are reminded at this time of year of several journeys of faith where people responded to challenging circumstances, including our Saviour’s family as refugees in Egypt and the Magi fleeing from Herod. They too walked by faith and not by sight. May we continue to be rooted and rejoice in our foundation of hope, stepping forward in confidence together to seek to proclaim afresh and build God’s Kingdom in creative ways, in every corner of our Diocese.

At its heart, the PSF is a part of our response to the extraordinary generosity we receive from our loving God. Last summer I invited you to help rebuild the PSF by not just maintaining your pledge but by increasing it for 2022. I am most encouraged that your pledges have risen by over 2% for 2022 and we are nearly half-way towards recovering the £1m drop in pledges as a result of the pandemic, which we need to try and restore by the end of 2023. I am confident that by mutually sharing our resources, supporting each other as the Body of Christ, your generosity will have a multiplying effect, enabling us to serve the marginalised, challenge injustice and spread the joy of knowing Christ, in the lives of the people of South London and East Surrey.

Thank you to many of you who in setting your pledge are living out the steadfast hope in these fractious and anxious times. I rejoice in the eight parishes who became self financing in 2022. This is a significant step towards our strategic goal of having two thirds of our parishes covering their ministry costs, so that it is the minority of parishes requiring financial support from those who are able to give more.

As we and our nation face many challenges, may we continue as people who are Christ-centred and outward-focused, with hearts on fire in all things.

With my prayers and good wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christopher Southwark". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**The Rt Revd Christopher Chessun  
Bishop of Southwark**