

28 May 2020

Dear Friends,

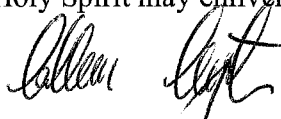
It is one calendar month today since I was commissioned to St Matthew's Cheltenham. It is hard to believe it is such a short time ago! I have thoroughly enjoyed my first month in our parish, beginning the huge task of getting to know you and of learning about the ways in which we serve Christ in our community.

As we celebrate the great feast of Pentecost in these strange times of Covid19, it is encouraging to know that God's Holy Spirit is with us always and that, despite our current physical separation, we are joined together as members of the Body of Christ, and that nothing can separate us from the love of God.

Empowered by God's Holy Spirit, Jesus continues to send those who love him, to unfamiliar places and unknown people, beyond the walls of church buildings. We are called to set people free by embodying the truth of God's freedom and peace in our lives. I believe that these times of isolation have heightened people's awareness of their need for connection and I will be excited to see what role our parish family can play in enabling God's kingdom to come in our local community

Perhaps a first new missional step is the establishment of our own YouTube channel. I am greatly encouraged by the number of times our videos have been viewed. At the time of writing, we have received 827 views. Since 'views' does not tell us how many people were watching, the number of people we have connected with is possibly even higher than that.

I continue to pray for you as individuals and for us as a parish, that the generosity of the God who creates and sustains us, the blessing of the grace of Christ Jesus and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit may enliven our hearts and bless us now and always.



The Rev'd Colleen Clayton