

## **Stop, start, and stop again**

My first car was a Morris Minor Traveller – do you remember them? Mine was a 1966 model with trim made of real ash. My Morris was not a very reliable car. Two things threatened its smooth running – water, and the car's fuel supply. If it was raining heavily, I had to be careful driving through puddles. If water splashed over the engine, it would misfire, and my car would lose power and very often stop completely. I knew what I had to do then – get a cloth, spray it with WD40 and rub down the HT leads which powered the spark plugs. Then, all being well, I would be off again.

You would think I would have been ok driving my Morris Minor on a fine day, wouldn't you? Usually yes, but on a very hot day I would dread hearing a clicking sound when I was driving. The clicking mean that the fuel pump was beginning to stick. If the click got worse and the car began to lurch, I knew I was in trouble, and it would not be long before my engine packed up. Again, I knew what I had to do – get a hammer and tap the fuel pump until it was free to run. Once my impatience caused me to hit the pump too hard and I'm afraid it cracked and had to be replaced. Well, it served me right.

Life for all of us feels as though it is "Stop-Start" and lurching from crisis to something like normality before we're back to crisis back again. As I write this letter on 18<sup>th</sup> December, Sadiq Khan, the Mayor of London, has just declared a major incident to help the city's hospitals because the UK has recorded its largest daily increase in Covid 19 infections since the pandemic began. There are calls too for a nationwide circuit breaker mini lockdown to slow down the spread of this pernicious disease. As you read this you will know a lot more about what decisions have been made and what the outlook is for the beginning of the new year.

As Christmas approached, we hosted 9 school carols services and nativities and we ran 4 Christingle services and what a joy it was to welcome children and their parents and teachers into our churches again. Hosting these services for young people and their families brought two things home to me. Firstly, it reminded me how much we at The Church in the Woottons love having young people in church. Secondly it made me realise how little we have been able to provide for and serve children and young families since the beginning of the pandemic.

We used to depend very heavily on South Wootton Village Hall to run Breakfast at 10 twice a month. This special service attracted many people including children and their families. Quite rightly though, from the beginning of the pandemic, the Village Hall was set aside exclusively for the use of the Pre School. During the periods when we were able to re-open our churches again for Sunday worship young families naturally stayed away because we haven't got the space in our church buildings to allow social distanced and safe activities for children. It has all been very frustrating and difficult.

But we have a plan. Depending on how the pandemic develops, we intend to start Breakfast Church at All Saints Church on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> January at 9.00am. Breakfast Church will run each week. We will offer a simple, uncooked breakfast. This will be followed by a story and some thinking and chatter before we pray and draw Breakfast Church to a close. Everyone will be welcome. Before you come, do please check The Church in the Woottons website [www.churchinthewoottons.net](http://www.churchinthewoottons.net) for confirmation that we are able to start Breakfast Church on 23<sup>rd</sup> January as planned.

We face many difficulties, frustrations and uncertainties while the pandemic continues and my prayers are for everyone in the Woottons community whatever your particular circumstances may be. Let's all continue to pray for and support everyone who staff our hospital and medical centres, those who work in the emergency services, those who work for the local authorities, in our schools, and in social care. We at The Church in the Woottons continue to support King's Lynn Foodbank, the Nightshelter and King's Lynn Debt Centre each of whom face increasing demand for their services and each doing wonderful and vital work – much of it voluntarily.

May I wish you all a peaceful and more certain New Year  
With my blessing in God's name

James