



**THE BISHOP OF HERTFORD**  
**The Right Reverend Michael Beasley**

***A message from the Bishop of Hertford***

Thank you for taking the time to read this parish profile of St John's, Harpenden. At its very beginning, the profile says this:

We are an inclusive, welcoming church, with a liberal theology, a strong community spirit and a clear sense of social justice. We believe that every person, regardless of age, sexual orientation, ethnicity or disability is valued and equal. We enjoy the creative arts and have a strong musical tradition. We are a parish that is growing in confidence in our vision and direction, with a sense of momentum on which we hope our new vicar will build. In the face of the Covid pandemic and the resignation of our previous vicar, we have shown resilience, hopefulness and commitment.

I'm delighted that St John's has been able to give such a candid and accurate description of its identity, priorities and hopes for the future. The profile's words match brilliantly the experience of St John's that I have whenever I engage with the wonderful people of this church.

If you've read the St John's introductory paragraph with a view to applying for the role of vicar you will almost certainly have focused in with concern on the words 'the resignation of our previous vicar'. The previous incumbent's departure has been a great sadness to the people of St John's and they have felt it important to flag this in their profile, for which I can only applaud them. If he were speaking to you, the previous incumbent would want you to know that his resignation did not in any way stem from local circumstances or from relationships in Harpenden or the wider diocese which were only ever positive, loving and cordial. All of us have supported the previous incumbent in the decisions he has made and salute the integrity that he has shown in moving on, for a season, from active ministry as a priest.

Undoubtedly the resignation will have left a legacy of pain and hurt which will need gentle healing to be undertaken by the next vicar. But none of all that is wonderful and positive and true about St John's has been lost and the church continues a place of opportunity, joy and love for whoever comes to minister there. So please read this profile with confidence and consider if you'd like to apply. If you would value a longer conversation about the church either with me or with the Archdeacon of St Albans we would be glad to hear from you and would value the opportunity to discuss your application more.

Yours sincerely,

+ Michael

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