

3rd May 2020

Dear People of St Matthew's,

It is a great joy to write to you as your vicar! I am now settled very comfortably into the vicarage and am enjoying the huge amount of work that has been done to renovate it. I am sure I will be very happy there. Particular thanks to Sue Polites who I believe has been the main overseer of the work.

It was strange to be commissioned with so few of us in the church but I was grateful to be surrounded by your prayers and support; the Communion of Saints in Cheltenham. I was also very happy to have an online presence from Parish Council and the Incumbency Committee plus my children and some very dear friends. I hope it will not be too long before the video of the event will be available on our website.

Thank you so much for the letters and photos that greeted me on my first day in the office. It has been lovely to read a little bit about you and to begin to hear stories from the parish. I look forward to getting to know you over the coming months.

A word of thanks also to Claire Johnston for making me welcome in the office and answering the many, many questions I have each day.

One of the joys of these first few days in the parish has been to sit in the chapel and pray Morning and Evening Prayer. I will pray my way through the parish roll, naming some of you each day, present with me as part of the Body of Christ.

There are difficulties in beginning a new ministry under these circumstances but, to paraphrase St Paul, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses let us trust that God's Holy Spirit is present with us and will bless us as we persevere in faith.

Pax et bonum,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colleen', written in a cursive style.

Colleen