*Dear St George’s*

*Some of you will know that I have had some health problems which have been investigated over recent weeks.  Just before New Year I received the diagnosis of pancreatic cancer which has spread to various other parts of my body and is deemed incurable.  I am now faced with decisions about the way forward for me both as a disciple of Jesus and as vicar of St George’s.  I hope that you will understand that for the moment I am keeping a low profile as numerous things are sorted out and worked through, not least the timescale of my illness which at present is unclear.  I will be supported by family members in the Vicarage from time to time, and so day-to-day needs are being met for the moment.*

*I know that on hearing this news you will want to help in any way you can. Thank you for that. Please understand that I must ask for the moment that there are no unsolicited phone calls or visits to the vicarage. I promise that I will ask for the help I need, so please do not try to instigate it yourself. I will contact you if there is something you can do for me.*

*The diocesan authorities are supporting me and will continue to support St George’s and its staff and ministry team.  In my absence the governance of the parish rests with the Rural Dean, Canon Hugh Jones, and the PCC.  Exactly how this will work out will develop as other things become clearer, but Richard Steel has agreed to be licensed specifically to St George’s as honorary assistant priest in order to help with some of the administration and day-to-day ministry.  Our curate, Kath, is supported by a ‘training triplicate’ and so should be able to continue serving her title here, for which I am very grateful. It is important however, that the church family doesn’t try to make her ‘acting vicar’ – this is a training post!  Please don’t expect too much or put too much upon her. I am grateful to Hugh, Richard and Kath for the support given and work done so far, and especially to Gavin, our Archdeacon, for the enormous support he has been, and continues to be. Also to the bishops who have been in touch with me and are also being very supportive. Please support them all in all that they need to, also the other members of the staff and ministry team. I have no doubt that the life and mission of St George’s will continue faithfully and fruitfully despite all of this.*

*As I write I am at peace about the whole situation, and in a ‘good place’. Please pray for me as I adjust to developing circumstances. You may ask what you should pray, and I would ask that you pray that I will have the courage, faith and integrity to meet each stage as it comes, and that I would know the presence and peace of Jesus as he walks with me through it all. Of course, God can heal anything, but it is very rare and exceptional that he chooses to do so in this sort of circumstance. I am not praying for healing for myself. Please pray that the palliative care I receive will keep me as comfortable as is possible as I journey towards the end of this life, which of course is not the end, but a new beginning. I will continue to pray for you all, and I will try to keep you informed as to developments.*

*The Archdeacon and Rural Dean will be available to talk if you would like this, and are in regular touch with me.  Please be patient if the information you would like isn’t forthcoming exactly when you want it:  I am in the same boat myself!*

*And may the glory go to God.*

*With much love in Jesus,*

*Tim*