



Stanton House

Retreat Centre near Oxford
marked by warm hospitality for the pilgrim,
offering Rest, Restoration and Renewal

***As Stanton House prepares to reopen (with appropriate social distancing) on 21 June,
a letter from Canon Charlie Cleverly, Chair of Trustees***

Dear Friends of Stanton House and Newcomers to Stanton House

Greetings and love to you from the Stanton House Community.

At Stanton House we believe we can provide an oasis, a haven, a place of prayer for rest, refreshment and renewal. We believe this, and regular retreating, can be deeply healing to the soul, as well as just plain common sense. As is the case for many centres, we have closed our doors and rested for almost a year. This has been an opportunity for recovery and fresh vision. Now, as we slowly leave lockdown, we prayerfully send you this message.

When visiting Stanton House this week I was reminded of the stunning beauty of this place of prayer and rest, nestled in the country with bubbling streams and flowers appearing and beautiful views all around. A word that I feel applies to Stanton House and all who visit her is the famous Song of Songs passage: *“the winter is past - flowers appear on the earth - and spread their fragrance. Arise, my love... and come away.”* (Song of Songs 2 vs 11-13)

In this new season, as well as the legendary hospitality of SH, we want to add value to some retreats for any who would like. We plan to design an additional prayer walk to add to the one we have at present, the chance to do a guided retreat if your stay lasts three days, and the chance to join in the Community's 'Morning and Night Prayer' as a rhythm on retreat, as well as the opportunity to have a silent retreat at meal times should you so wish. In the future, we will also offer art and poetry and other themed retreats.

At the same time, if you wish to simply be still at SH and follow your own plans in the format which over the years has been so popular, you are most welcome.

We hear a lot at present of threats to health and mental health and general well-being post COVID. My wife, Anita, and I were struck with mild COVID just as we retired last October from leading St Aldates Oxford – a large Church at the heart of a busy world-class city.

Part of what we aspire to do now is offer the chance - and a place - for people who realise they need, for their own survival, to *“be still and know God”*. We believe that this can save us and restore us as almost nothing else will.

You may have had a good lockdown or you may be apprehensive of what is next. You may look forward to a Retreat or you may feel, as life unlocks, that you don't have time to retreat. But I feel the fact is: taking time to retreat into the presence of a loving God can help us to advance into the future. Henri Nouwen once wrote:

“When I trust deeply that today God is truly with me and holds me safe in a divine embrace, guiding every one of my steps I can let go of my anxious need to know how tomorrow will look, or what will happen next month or next year. I can be fully where I am and pay attention to the many signs of God's love within me and around me.”

Continued ...

Stanton House, Pound Lane, Stanton St John, Oxford OX33 1HF

We are writing to say: please consider booking in to Stanton House for one or two or even three times of Retreat in the months to come – and maybe encourage another to do the same?

May God bless you in this extraordinary time.

Charlie Cleverly

On behalf of the Stanton House Team and Community

One further thought: *Might you also consider... a financial gift to Stanton House?*

As for many retreat centres, lockdown has been very challenging for the sustainability of Stanton House and has drawn on our small reserves. If you believe in this vision for spiritual refreshment and health for people at such a time as this, and are able to invest in it, please consider a donation at this time, or help us by giving regularly by standing order. Our goal this year is to encourage 50 people to give by Standing Order to Stanton House. Any donation, small or large, to the Trust would help us continue to invest in the future and would be gratefully received.

Our details are: Stanton House: HSBC Sort: 40 24 01 a/c 21373447. These details are on our website. God Bless you in this also.

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