*This is an edited version of a letter sent by a rural church to their village community.*

*The details are for illustrative purposes only, so please do edit this to reflect your local context.*

[Dear neighbour / Dear friends]

Here in [name of village/town] we are fortunate to enjoy a great community spirit. The magnificent church hall, a huge success after years of effort and fundraising with our neighbouring communities, shows what we can achieve while having fun at the same time.

For more than 850 years St Mary’s Church has served the people of the village. We welcome all the pupils of our school, which is linked with the church, every term for their own special services. The church is full to celebrate national occasions like the Queens Jubilee and also to mark solemn occasions such as the centenary of the First World War. Our crib services are overflowing, we welcomed over 100 people last Christmas Eve. We are here when members of our community need us – for baptisms, for marriages and sadly for funerals. Our churchyard is a haven for wildlife as well as a place of tranquillity and inspiration.

**So we know [name of village] values St Mary’s, and is keen for the church to continue to play an important part in village life.**

The annual running costs of our church are £xxxx. This covers our contribution towards the cost of our vicar- who we share with four other churches - and bills like electricity, oil, insurance and general upkeep. Our income comes solely from collections at services, generous donations and wedding/funeral fees – we don’t receive any government funding or other grants.

At present there is a growing gap between the amount we need to keep the church going and the amount of money coming in. **Will you help us to bridge this gap?** We know that household budgets are tight generally, but we would be most grateful for any contribution you could make.

Many households in our community already support the church through giving monthly or annually. Please do consider joining them.

*It is now possible to support the church through Direct Debit, as you might any other charity, through the Parish Giving Scheme. This is a national scheme to make giving to church simpler and more efficient.* ***Simply complete the Direct Debit form enclosed with this letter and return in the pre-paid envelope.***

Thank you in advance for your support for our community’s beautiful and much-treasured church. Any contribution you can make would be so gratefully received.

Yours sincerely