Staying safe - Online

Spotting e-mail scams and phishing mails

Over the past couple of weeks, we have had a few problems with plausible looking, unsolicited e-mail coming to people's inboxes via their St. Catherine's forwarding e-mail addresses.

It is sadly inevitable when e-mail addresses are posted online that they may end up being harvested by algorithms, although this is not the only source of such mails. If someone has a computer virus their e-mail address book can be compromised.

The final result is spam e-mails, some downright vulgar, many offering products that are plausible but unwanted and fake e-mails purporting to be from real people. Many of these will be picked up by spam filters and you'll never see them (sadly, sometimes, along with the church news, so it is always worth checking on a regular basis that there is nothing genuine in your spam folder.)

What to check...

If you receive an e-mail purporting to be from someone you know but with an unlikely text (usually asking for money, or to buy things) there are several things you can check:

- **Does the sender e-mail address match the name?** If the sender e-mail address is not the one you usually receive e-mail from this person this should arouse suspicion, especially if the e-mail address is random and non-personal.

- **Does the signature match what you know about the person?** Mails that say "sent from my galaxy mobile" at the bottom when the person they are claiming to be from has an iPhone

- **Check the text.** Copy a sentence from the e-mail into a search engine and put it in quotation marks. Most spam / phishing mails have been around for a while and the text will appear on websites designed to identify spam.

- **NEVER click on a link or open an attachment in an unsolicited e-mail.** These will almost certainly contain malware or viruses to propagate the spreading of more spam.

If in doubt check with the sender by some other means. Do not reply to the suspect e-mail.

(*If problems are persistent, we can change the St Catherine's forwarding address and delete the e-mail address that is receiving large quantities of spam. e.g warden@ could become churchwarden@*)