

Giving for Life

How can we increase our giving in our parish?

So you would like to increase your PCC's income . . .

You are looking at your church members as those with prime responsibility to build a confident financial future . . .

What do you need to bear in mind?

Give some vision

It will help if you have things you want to do, not just bills you need to pay. People give to **people**; they give to causes in which they believe. So spell out what the church will do with their money.

Explain how Parish Share funds mission and ministry not only in your parish, but in others across the area, including those who could never pay for their own priest.

Give examples of what your church could do with the money you're asking them to give:-

- Buy new materials for children's or community work
- Employ a youth worker
- Run a lunch club
- Support a mission project (at home or overseas)
- Provide quality prayer materials for visitors to your historic church.

Give the facts

Few people realise that nowadays we are a self-supporting church. Prepare some very simple statistics that will show exactly what's going on at the moment:-

- How much of the PCC's income currently comes from regular giving?
- How many givers are there?
- What is the average gift?
- On a weekly/monthly basis, how much do you need to cover costs?

The Taking Stock workbook, downloadable from the Christian Giving and Funding section of the website, may help in this process.

Start with the PCC!

It is no good expecting others to do what we do not do ourselves . . . Then **invite the wider church community to follow your lead**. A planned giving review does not have to be a major operation.

Letters, sermons, meetings and meals may have a part to play. But the important thing is that every church person has the chance to consider their own response to God's love to them.

Use some yardsticks to help people make their decisions

It is rarely helpful (or productive) simply to say 'if everyone gave an extra 95p per week'. Some could easily do much more than that, for others it would be a hardship. It's much better to:-

- Give people the financial facts
- Remind them of the basic Christian teachings about wealth and generosity. Incorporate this into the regular sermon based on set readings.

Then ask them to consider their best response. There are many measures of giving:-

- Some Christians tithe their earnings.
- Others adopt a standard percentage of their income – it might be 5% or 2½%.
- The average gift per planned giver in Bath & Wells diocese (2017) is £11.90 per week.
- Warning – the Church corrupted the word 'tithe' until fairly recently.

Encourage people to take it seriously

Rather than looking for a 'quick fix', invite people to sit down with their bank statements and work out where their money actually goes. This is part of Christian discipleship – 'all things come from you and of your own do we give you'. Encourage people to reflect and act:-

- Are these really the right priorities?
- Talk to your family about what is right for you.
- Pray about it.

Make sure that HMRC is doing its bit!

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Is everyone who can, using **Gift Aid**? Remember – any UK taxpayer can give this way. It does not have to be Income Tax – it works for tax on savings, Capital Gains tax, etc . . . It adds 25 pence to every pound they give.

For loose cash collections, you can use the **Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme** to reclaim a payment similar to Gift Aid on individual cash or contactless donations up to & including £30, to a limit of ten times the amount of your Gift Aided donations claimed, to a maximum of £8,000 of donations.

Smile!

'God loves a cheerful giver', said St Paul. Warmth and enthusiasm about the future of the church from the leadership will communicate itself to everyone else. No-one wants to contribute to a dying organisation: but people will give generously and maybe sacrificially to a church that is making a difference in its community.

For more information about Christian Giving and Funding, contact Sue Whitehead, PA to the Giving and Funding Adviser:

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