

## A Financial Update from St Edward's - June 2020



Dear friends,

In these strange times of isolation, social distancing and locked churches we have been encouraged by the way our churches have responded. A church that people used to 'come to' has become a church which 'comes to you'. An amazing number of people have used Zoom to join together for our Sunday 'Services in Exile' and a similar number are enjoying these at home, either on-line or posted through their letter boxes. People are joining Martin and Trish for coffee on Saturday mornings, more people are 'Listening to God' and the midweek Zoom group looking at our 'Luminaries' is up and running. We are all looking out for each other and for our neighbours. We are a Christian community in action. This is all hugely encouraging.

At a more practical level, as Treasurer, Church Warden and Rector, we are writing to supporters, including everyone on our electoral roll, about the impact of Covid-19 on our finances. Like most charities, our income has steeply declined. But we still have to meet regular outgoings including insurance, parish share (our contribution to clergy salaries) and utilities.

As there are no services, cash and envelope giving on the church collection plate has gone. This is compounded by the loss of income from visitor donations, and collections and fees from weddings, funerals and baptisms. Thankfully, we are still receiving donations through the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) but after we have paid our bills each month, we still have a shortfall of at least £1500.

People are being affected by the lockdown in different ways. Some are challenged by loneliness or boredom, others struggle with their mental health, and others are rushed off their feet working, home-schooling and simply trying to cope. Others have appreciated the change of pace and the privilege of the being locked-down in rural beauty.

Incomes and prospects have also been affected in different ways. Some people have lost almost all their income and are uncertain about returning to employment. Others are finding that they have more money in the bank because their usual spending on things like fuel, going out and holiday travel has been reduced.

In the light of our practical needs and your position, we ask you please to think about how you could respond to the church financial situation. We certainly don't wish to trouble anyone who has had their income reduced.

If, happily, your income is secure, and you are a PGS / Standing Order giver, would you consider doing what some others have done and increase your giving please? Simply email PGS on [info@parishgiving.org.uk](mailto:info@parishgiving.org.uk) and ask them to do this for you or ring them on 0333 002 1260. If you give by Standing Order you can use your online banking to increase the amount.

Equally, if you usually give via the collection plate or envelope scheme, and your income is secure, please would you consider either joining the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) to give monthly, or doing a bank transfer to the church bank account? With PGS you can give as little or as much as you wish - a few pounds a month or more as there is no upper limit. A PGS direct debit can be set up by calling 0333 002 1271 and quoting the parish code which is 253-STOW.

You may prefer to consider writing a cheque or making a one-off bank transfer to help in our current circumstances. Cheques can be sent to the Treasurer at Cedarwood, St Edward's Drive, Stow GL54 1AW. Transfers can be made to the church bank account, PCC Stow on the Wold, sort code 30-95-75 and account number 00469303, using your surname as the reference. If you wish to donate with Gift Aid, please complete the relevant form in church as and when you are able.

Everyone recognises that returning to a new normal is going to take some time. In the meantime, we are very grateful for any help you can give. If you would like to talk to any of us about any of this, our contact details are below. Many thanks for reading this, and may God bless you and keep you in these challenging times.

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