



# GIVING REVIEW

A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

Seeking  Sharing  Sending

# A time and season for giving

It's wise to review giving and spending at least once a year, both as individuals and as churches. For a church, this can often seem like a daunting task, particularly for those who find talking about money difficult. Nevertheless, an annual stewardship season or "Giving Review" is essential for a healthy church, whether as part of our annual diocesan Generosity Week or at some other time in the church calendar. This dedicated time is not just about financial generosity, but it is certainly about no less.

## Why do a Giving Review?

During difficult times, the current cost of living crisis being a painful example, the idea of a Giving Review can seem counter-intuitive. But as with any time of challenge, we live with the hope and conviction that God has given us all the resources and people we need for any given season. From His abundant provision, we are called to focus not on scarcity but rather to reflect the generous God we believe in.

Opting out of a Giving Review can limit people's opportunity to reflect God's generosity and make mission planning for the year ahead more difficult.

A targeted Giving Review to raise levels of planned giving, the bedrock of parish finances, allows a church to budget better, share resources better and serve communities better.

### The 2020 Anglican Giving Survey\* found;

- A third of Anglicans **do not give** to their church
- 40% of Anglicans have **never been asked** to give regularly
- Nearly half of Anglicans have never been asked to **review** their giving



# Before a Giving Review

## 1 Prepare the data

Before undertaking a Giving Review, it's important to have an understanding of current giving levels and trends. This can help quantify results and measure success. Our **Giving Profile Tool** has been developed to help with this analysis. It can show areas of vulnerability, for example if a large percentage of giving comes from a small percentage of givers, inform areas of opportunity and reveal compelling data about the best method of giving by value.



*Scan to access our  
**Giving Profile Tool***

**Benchmark** giving against diocesan and deanery figures. This may help give a steer to those who are unsure about how much to give, particularly if the church hasn't been through a Giving Review for many years.

**Consider the split** of regular givers who give on a monthly basis via Direct Debit (Parish Giving Scheme) or standing order, and occasional givers who typically give via cash, envelope or contactless when they attend a service. What difference might it make in monetary terms if more occasional givers became regular givers?

Consider also non-givers, those who attend church on a regular or semi-regular basis but don't give financially. **Use the electoral roll** to calculate what percentage of the worshipping community form part of this group and identify a reduction in this figure as an opportunity for growth.

**Identify any giving gap** or shortfall between predicted income and expenditure, including the cost of any new areas of ministry that form part of a clearly discerned and communicated church vision.

Both nationally and in the Diocese of Newcastle, average gifts from significantly deprived areas are often the same, or higher than gifts in wealthier areas

We can conclude from this that **culture rather than context is key**

## 2 Plan the launch

A Giving Review at the end of a broader stewardship season is likely to be much more fruitful than a one off 'Giving-Sunday'. Preaching and teaching on generosity should happen regularly anyway, but in addition many churches choose to run a monthly sermon series, or our 4-week **Exploring Generosity course**, ahead of a Giving Review.

Before launching a Giving Review, it is **key that all PCC members are on board** and wherever possible, are willing to increase their own contribution. This is really important because it shows the congregation that the PCC, as the body that helps steers the life of the church in its mission, witness and service, is completely committed to the Review. Moreover it shows that the PCC is not asking church members to commit to something they aren't willing to commit to themselves.

Ensure all appropriate **giving mechanisms are in place** to make it as easy as possible for people to give to the church.

Be **prepared with any supporting information** you may need to have available such as gift aid declaration forms, 'Parish Share Explained' booklets, PGS registration details or leaflets about the Farewill free will writing offer.

Pick a day when most regular worshippers are likely to be in church and launch the Giving Review as part of a service based on God's generosity to us. Be prepared to additionally communicate details of the Giving Review in writing to everyone on the electoral roll, **hand-delivering letters** wherever possible.

Statistically, there is no link between economic deprivation levels and number of givers, as a percentage of the worshipping community

This reinforces the notion that **giving is a testament to our Christian beliefs** and a hallmark of a lived out faith





# Communicating a Giving Review

Good communication is essential for a successful Giving Review and there are a number of key areas which should be covered in both the launch presentation and follow up letter.

# 1

## Say thank you

A Giving Review is a great opportunity to give thanks for all forms of giving to the church over the last year. Say thank you for all financial gifts and give thanks also to those who have given and served in non-financial ways.

# 2

## Describe the reality

Give an overview of how the church has used the money it has been entrusted with over the last 12 months and paint an accurate picture of its financial health. This should include any giving gap identified earlier. Whilst numbers and data don't appeal to everyone, sharing this information in an open and transparent way builds trust, a key motivator for giving.

Some of last year's income will have contributed to wider diocesan ministry costs through the church's parish share commitment. Use this opportunity to remind people of the system of mutual support that the parish share system facilitates, explaining how it allows us to share the financial load so that all may receive according to need not means.

You may wish to include findings from your giving profile and benchmarking exercise. Experience tells us that this is an area many people are interested in as it lifts the lid on the mystery of parish giving.

Describing the reality can sometimes be uncomfortable but is always necessary. It reminds us that if our giving stagnates, so too does our ability to turn outward to God's mission in the communities we serve.

The 2020 Anglican Giving Survey found that less than a third of Anglicans say they are regularly thanked for their giving

# 3

## Invite ownership and participation

It is worth reflecting that we are stewards of our local church for a season only. We are also beneficiaries of the work of the stewards who came before us. If we want to pass the legacy on to the next generation, the whole church has a responsibility to play their part.

Remind people that to be a truly generous community, we all need to contribute, however little or much we can give. This is an important point to make as people are more likely to increase their giving if they feel everyone is contributing. If the focus is always on persuading existing givers to give more it can feel very demotivating.

# 4

## Inspire

It is vital to articulate a clearly discerned vision for mission before making the ask. Mission requires means, and people are far more likely to give to a compelling vision to grow God's Kingdom. Spend time reminding everyone of some of the key things set out the church's Mission Action Plan.

Some plans may be bold and ambitious but even simple things like paying heating bills and keeping the church open during the day, can be expressed as a desire for the church to be a warm and welcoming way for the community to connect with God.

"Where  
there is no vision,  
the people perish."

*Proverbs 29:18 KJV*

The 2020 Anglican  
Giving Survey found  
that 49% of Anglicans  
feel they would be  
motivated to give more  
if they understood  
the impact of  
their giving





# 5

## Ask

By now it should be clear that the invitation is to be part of an exciting journey in the life of the church. Ask people to join you in being committed to the parish vision and to give generously to ensure the vision is achieved, emphasising the importance of regular committed giving.

This may be the time to mention the increase in average gift, or change in giving profile needed to bridge the giving gap, acknowledging that not everyone can give the same amount.

Ask people to respond to the request after prayer and reflection, being realistic, thoughtful and generous. Recognise that some might need to reduce the amount they give during the cost of living crisis, which in turn means others might wish to give more.

Take care to stress that it is not the absolute sum that matters, but what that sum means to each individual. The amount a person chooses to give is a personal decision and the church is genuinely grateful for all and any amounts received. Ask with grace but not with compulsion.

# 6

## Facilitate

Explain clearly all the different ways people can give to the church. Take the opportunity to promote the Parish Giving Scheme for regular giving, reminding people of the benefits it brings to the parish if givers use this method.

Remember that some people might like to know how they could make a lifetime gift to the church in the form of a legacy. This may be particularly relevant for those who can't give as much as they would like to right now. Ensure information for making gifts in wills is readily available.

*Scan for further tools  
and resources to  
guide conversation  
about financial giving  
and help plan for  
a detailed financial  
review*





# After a Giving Review

# 1

## Reflection and action

It is a good idea to allow people a couple of weeks to respond to a Giving Review. This gives time for prayerful reflection as well as an opportunity for people to take action on standing orders and/or Direct Debits. Any longer than a couple of weeks and otherwise good intentions may wane. Communicating a clear end date and inviting people to return a personal response form by this date can help to avoid inertia. A suggested response template is available on our website.

# 2

## Celebrate

Once all responses have been collated and the impact of the Giving Review has been quantified, results should be clearly reported back. The collective outcome is owned by everyone who is part of the church and hopefully it will demonstrate that when everyone plays a part in the life of their church there is cause to celebrate! Whether it's a service of thanksgiving, a shared lunch or a community event to say thank you, be sure to celebrate the end of this season together.

With thanks to **Benefact Trust** for funding this publication



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Published July 2023 by Newcastle Diocese Generous Giving Team