



— Diocese of —
Hereford
Proclaiming Christ ✦ Growing Disciples

Collections in Church at Funerals, Memorial Services, and Services of Thanksgiving

Churches often invite the congregation at funerals and other services commemorating the life of someone who has passed away to make a contribution to church funds by way of a collection during or after the service.

However, it is also increasingly common for families to ask for a collection to be taken for a named charity in memory of their loved one.

From time to time, difficulties have arisen in connection with these collections.

This leaflet is intended for the guidance of bereaved families, funeral directors, clergy, and church officials such as Churchwardens, Treasurers, and sidespeople.

The Church of England fees structure strictly limits the amount of fees which a church is permitted to charge for a funeral or memorial service.

The [Table of Parochial Fees](#), updated annually, can be downloaded from the Church of England website. This lists the statutory fees payable for funeral services, burials, and interments of ashes, and gives guidance as to levels of donations that might be appropriate for other services commemorating someone who has passed away. Those donations for other services are not statutory. Some additional expenses, such as extra heating, vergers fee, organist fee, may be charged at cost price by prior agreement with the family. These are listed on the Table of Parochial Fees. No other 'extras' are permitted.

However, there are many hidden costs (e.g., parish administration) for which the church is not allowed to charge, and the church therefore often invites donations from mourners. Some PCCs have a policy that states that a given percentage of all collections taken in church will be retained for church funds. **Such a policy must be agreed by a PCC and minister jointly, and recorded in the PCC Minutes. It is good practice to review that policy from time to time. If a PCC has such a policy then the minister must clearly explain this to the family or friends planning the service at their first meeting.**

Many families are receptive to the suggestion that the church or a project associated with the church might be designated to receive a proportion of the collection, but we must be sensitive and supportive where the family has instructions left by the deceased, or a particular cause or clear ideas of their own.

With the agreement of the church, it may be possible to take a collection for a named charity or charities agreed in advance, during or at the end of the funeral or other service.¹

It is important that each PCC makes and records a clear decision to give the parish priest discretion if he or she needs to make decisions during pastoral visits about collections at funerals. The parish priest should also

¹ The objects of the charity or charities must not be contrary to the Church or Christian values.

communicate clearly with the PCC on occasions when they have used that discretion.

If there is a church policy of retaining some percentage of the collection for church funds, this needs to be communicated to the congregation at the start of the service as well as to the family in advance and, if possible, outlined in the order of service. It is a problem if people think that they are giving to one cause and then some of their donation is used for another cause – in this case, the church.

Process – please note this will vary slightly depending on where the money given in the collection will be going

1. Agreement is reached with the family and the funeral directors as part of the funeral planning.
2. There should be announcements to the congregation, either verbally at an appropriate time in the service or, if possible, printed in the order of service, backed up with a written notice clearly displaying the information at the point of donation.

3. If a collection is wholly for church funds

The church's own offering bags or donation plate should be used to receive the collection. After the service, sidespeople (two) count, record, and secure the cash. It is good practice to invite a family representative to join the sidespeople for this process. Few families in practice wish to do this, but the offer may still be made. It is helpful for the Treasurer to have a simple form identifying the service or occasion, the amount given, and that it was wholly for church funds. The money is paid into the PCC bank account. Finally a letter to the family, issued promptly and stating how much was raised in memory of their loved one, is usually greatly appreciated.

4. If a collection is partly for church funds and partly for a nominated charity or charities

The money would normally be collected in a donation box supplied by the funeral director.

The funeral director would then be responsible for paying the

proportion of donations given to the church, both via the collection box and any online giving option, to the PCC Treasurer in a timely manner, and for writing to the PCC specifying how much was given in total and therefore how much was passed on to the PCC in the proportions agreed. A letter to the family acknowledging the amount given to the church is usually greatly appreciated.

5. If a collection is wholly for a nominated charity or charities

The money should be collected in a donation box supplied by the funeral director, and the PCC will have no part in counting the money or passing it on to the charity. That will be the sole responsibility of the funeral directors.

6. Use of the church's contactless giving devices (where relevant)

Because it may be difficult to specify and identify where money donated via contactless devices or QR codes is ultimately to be given, if the collection is to be split between the church and a charity then all money given via contactless giving will go to the church. This should be clearly explained to the congregation, with a written notice to that effect next to the contactless device.

If all the money is to be given to a nominated charity or charities then it is recommended that the church's contactless device(s) and QR codes should not be used. In such cases, if the device is portable, for the avoidance of confusion, it should be temporarily moved to the vestry or another suitable secure location within the church until after the mourners have departed. If it is not possible to move the contactless device then the churchwardens or sidespeople should place a notice by the device clearly stating that it is not to be used for donations on this occasion.

The Ven Derek Chedzey, Archdeacon of Hereford

The Ven Fiona Gibson, Archdeacon of Ludlow

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