



## Six Top Tips for Encouraging Generous Giving during Coronavirus!

### 1. Don't forget the offering! Be creative in encouraging generosity in online worship

It is important to continue to give thanks to God for his generosity, and to value and bless those financial gifts people are continuing to give electronically.

- Use our liturgy including [introductory sentences](#) and [offertory prayers](#).
- Try reading out part of your Vision or Mission Action Plan before the prayers to help remind people that we are giving to enable our churches to continue to carry out God's mission and serve our communities.
- Post a link to your online donation site at the end of any service you are streaming on YouTube or Facebook - see this example from [St James Bermondsey](#)'s Facebook page. Some of the online platforms are enabling links to videos, for example CAF Donate and MyGiving.online (Data Developments).

### 2. Foster a generous church and keep in touch with regular givers, particularly those who give by envelope

How can our church members be encouraged to give now that our church buildings are closed? It has been very exciting to see so many examples of churches being creative in their care and support of their congregations and communities - setting up WhatsApp groups as well as innovative ways of sharing prayers, worship and services.

In this time of isolation, people appreciate contact, being included and invited to help. Giving is important to enable our churches to be sustainable, and whilst we need to be sensitive to people's different financial circumstances, consider how to:

- explain that your church will need ongoing financial help to support the work of the church, to keep your food banks and other projects going, and ask if they can continue to support this with a donation or regular gift
- encourage those who usually give regularly by cash, via the plate or in envelopes, to reimagine the way they give and change to standing order or online donation. Sample letters are included in the appendix
- please encourage them to sign a Gift Aid form if they can
- include a message on your website about the importance of giving to resource your ongoing mission (an example is shown on the Parish Resources website [here](#)). Ensure that you have standing order details and Gift Aid forms on there as well. You could link to volunteering opportunities, using people's time and skills.

Some churches have hardship funds. If this is the case for you, please ensure that the criteria for accessing these funds are clear and your decision-making process is transparent. If you are considering raising money for a hardship fund, please explain clearly to donors how you will use excess money if you have a surplus when the crisis ends, for example for general church funds.

### 3. Make it easy for people to give - add an online donation button to church websites and Facebook pages

Whilst we cannot meet together physically, online donations or giving by text are useful ways of enabling those who usually give by cash, in envelopes or in the plate to continue to give.

Make it easy for people to give - set up online donations. There are a number of providers and there is advice on online platforms on the Parish Resources website here -

[www.parishresources.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Receiving-Online-Donations-2020.pdf](http://www.parishresources.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Receiving-Online-Donations-2020.pdf)

Text giving may be an alternative to giving via the collection plate - see mobile giving:

[www.parishresources.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Text-Giving-2020.pdf](http://www.parishresources.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Text-Giving-2020.pdf) A provider such as Donate will offer help to develop text and online giving.

Set up the church to benefit from apps such as Easyfundraising, [www.easyfundraising.org.uk/](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/), and Amazon Smile. This way, your church can benefit from free donations as people shop, at no extra cost to them.

If you use Twitter and Facebook you can use them to support people, share services and gently remind people to give - see a [Facebook post](#) from the cathedral as an idea, which asks people to join the Dean for morning or evening prayer with a simple reminder to donate.

Parishes using Facebook are finding a huge reach with their recent posts. Use a combination of social media channels to reach as wide an audience as possible, for example your church website, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Add regular updates and make your page interesting and inspiring. Different people may be prepared to manage different channels - consider those who are younger or those who have been furloughed and may be happy to use their skills in this way.

#### **4. Saying thank you**

Sending an annual, personal “thank you” to regular givers makes them feel valued and provides an opportunity to encourage them by giving them information about how their gift is enabling the work of the church. If you haven’t sent a thank you letter this year, now, at the end of the tax year, is a good time to do so. Templates are available [here](#).

Help people understand the impact of their giving. Using people’s stories/testimonies to demonstrate how lives have been changed through the work of the church, is just as vital now.

- Ask people to record a short video on their phone to use in your services.
- Use blogs to share people’s experiences.
- Include examples of how giving has resourced the church, and enabled ministry and mission, in your weekly bulletin or send out an occasional e-mail.
- Use TTT, This Time Tomorrow, as a way of praying for, thanking and honouring those in the health services, volunteers and other key workers in our communities or those supporting families and others adapting to their new lifestyle.

#### **5. Brainstorm virtual fundraising ideas!**

Many parishes have had to cancel fundraising events which are very helpful to their finances. So, why not be innovative and see what ideas you can muster to raise money via virtual events. Could you hold virtual coffee mornings, Zoom quizzes (with Bring Your Own food and drink) or virtual Agape or Pentecost meals with a donation to the church? Lockdown might even provide the opportunity to run a competition for the best Easter garden at home, a sponsored silence, or donating money which people might otherwise have spent on going out. We look forward to hearing about your ideas on Twitter!

#### **6. Look for and ask funders, for example individuals or grants**

Consider whether there are regular financial givers who could accelerate their giving or provide other financial support.

Use this time to ask for help in researching and preparing applications for grants for current or future projects ([National List of Charitable Grants for Churches PDF](#), [London Community Foundation](#), [Grants Online](#), [Surrey County Council](#)).

## Appendix

### Letters to share with congregations to encourage generous giving.

Please find below some key points which you could include in a letter to your congregation, together with some example letters which may help you. Please do send us copies of your letters so that we can share examples to help other parishes.

#### Five key points for letters

1. Greeting - including thanking them for all that they contribute to the life of your church.
2. The church is alive and active, sharing the love of Christ in your community even if there is no public worship.
  - a. Include an example or two of what your church is doing at this time, for example streaming worship, supporting isolated people and so on.
3. The church needs the church community to give financially in order to carry on its mission and ministry.
  - a. You could mention any particular financial issues your church is facing, for example loss of hall hirers, cash collections and so on.
4. How can they help now?
  - a. For those people who normally give by envelope or cash in the plate it would be very helpful if they could set up a standing order or, if you have the facility, donate online and complete a Gift Aid form if they pay tax. (Either include the details for making a standing order or attach a form with a Gift Aid form.)
  - b. For those people giving by standing order, please continue as their gifts are essential to your current and future mission.
  - c. If there is anybody who is on a stable income and could increase their gift at this time to help you, you would be very grateful.
  - d. You realise that some people will have lost income owing to the Coronavirus crisis and therefore may need to reduce their giving. Please could they let you know if they would like prayer or practical help.
5. Sign off - thanking them for their help and assuring them of your prayers for them at this challenging time. The letter should come from the Incumbent and maybe the Treasurer/Churchwardens.

There are three different sample letters - please adapt to suit your particular circumstances.

### Sample letter 1

Dear Friends,

We hope you are keeping as well as you can at this difficult time and thank you for all that you do to contribute to our community here at St Agatha's, Anytown.

Although we are not able to open for public worship, the church is alive and active, and we are busy sharing the love of Christ in our community as we enjoy our services via Facebook. We are also helping to support the vulnerable around us with shopping and telephone conversations.

However, St Agatha's, Anytown needs the church community to give generously so that we can continue to carry on our mission and ministry. We are no longer receiving collections on Sunday nor income from our hall. This means that we will find it difficult to cover our expenses over the next couple of months.

Please can you help us?

- If you normally give your offering in an envelope or by putting cash in the plate, please could you set up a standing order or alternatively give online.

Our bank details are:

Name of Account: St Agatha, Anytown PCC

Sort code xx-yy-xx,

Account No 12345678

Name of Bank

- If you already give by standing order please continue as your gifts are essential to our current and future mission and ministry.
- If there is anybody who could increase their regular gift to help us at this time we would be very grateful.
- We realise that some people will have lost income owing to the Coronavirus crisis and therefore may need to reduce their giving. Please let us know if you would like prayer and practical help.

Thank you for your generous help and please be assured of our prayers for you at this challenging time,

Incumbent (and maybe Treasurer or Churchwardens)

## Sample Letter 2

Dear Friends,

May I begin by assuring you of our thoughts and prayers during this unprecedented and difficult time. Although our church buildings are closed for public worship, we are all being church and thank you to all those who are busy and active engaging with members of the community in new and different ways, sharing the love of Christ. We are *[insert a few sentences of what the church is doing, for example streaming services on Facebook Live, available to take prayer requests via e-mail or phone, food bank open, children/youth activities online, dropping supplies round to those in isolation and so on]*.

As with many charities and small businesses, the Coronavirus crisis is causing our church some financial challenges. Although we are not currently meeting, the majority of our costs remain the same such as buildings insurance, contributing towards the cost of our clergy through our pledge and *[insert other costs that the church is paying at the moment, for example any maintenance costs]*. At the same time our church income is falling as *[insert areas where income has fallen such as church hall bookings have decreased or the church café is no longer open and so on]*.

At all times, normal and exceptional, our church relies on the financial contributions given by the people who come to it. This includes donations received weekly and monthly from standing orders, on the plate and in weekly gift envelopes. As we are not meeting for church services at the moment any gift that is normally offered through the plate is not being received.

In light of this:

1. if your normal practice is to give cash or envelopes on the plate I would ask you to consider moving your giving to a standing order payment. By doing this you will help us to secure our income during this difficult time and into the future. Please find a form attached which you can fill in and post to your bank, or you can also set this up using internet banking. If you pay tax, we are able to claim Gift Aid so please complete the attached Gift Aid form
2. if you would rather not set up a standing order please consider using a digital form of giving regularly, for example giving by using our online donation platform... *[Insert where to find a donate button, or link to website/Facebook page]*
3. if you already give from your bank account and can afford to maintain your gift during this time we would be enormously grateful. Additionally, if you have not reviewed your giving recently, have a safe income and could increase your gift that would help us greatly and help compensate for lost *[hall, fundraising]* income
4. if you are someone whose finances have been negatively affected by Coronavirus then we understand that you may not be able to do these things now, and that you may need to give less for a while. Please do let us know by contacting *[insert how they can best let you know?]* so that the church can offer you prayer and practical help.

It is at times like this that I am reminded that God measures the value of our giving, not by the amount but by what is found in our hearts. Regardless of the pounds and pence you give in response to this letter I am thankful for all those who are giving regularly, generously and cheerfully towards the ministry and fabric of our church.

Thank you for your generous help and please be assured of our prayers for you at this challenging time,

Incumbent (and maybe Treasurer or Churchwardens) and contact details

### Sample Letter 3

*"As for those who in the present age are rich, command them not to be haughty, or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but rather on God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share, thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that really is life." 1 Timothy 6.17-19 (NRSV)*

Dear Friends,

We find ourselves facing the biggest challenge of most of our lifetimes. In the interests of protecting the NHS, one another, and saving lives, our churches are now closed until further notice. This is difficult for all of us, and while online services allow us to be connected virtually and telephone and social media networks offer support, we recognise that it is not the same as being able to gather to worship together.

However, it is important to remember that while our church buildings are closed, our church remains Christ-centred and outward-focused, and we are busy supporting our communities with prayer and compassion, as we continue to reach out and serve others across South London and East Surrey.

Giving to our church is as valuable now as ever, if not more so. Although we are not able to gather in worship for some time, our mission remains constant and alive, and we need to resource that mission and ministry. Our giving enables our church to be a place of hope, prayer and support during this difficult time. As with many charities and small businesses the Coronavirus is causing our church some financial challenges. Although we are not currently meeting for public worship the majority of our costs remain the same, such as buildings insurance, contributing towards the cost of our clergy through our pledge and *[insert other costs that the church is paying at the moment, for example any maintenance costs]*. At the same time our church income is falling as *[insert areas where income has fallen, such as church hall bookings have decreased or the church café is no longer open and so on]*.

In light of this we may need to reimagine and reconsider the ways in which we give to our churches in the coming weeks. That may be by:

- continuing or, if you have stable income and are able to help us further, increasing your standing orders
- setting aside your cash offering prayerfully and deliberately at home
- considering transferring to a digital form of giving.

If you regularly give by envelope, please may we encourage you to transfer your gift to standing order. This will enable us to continue to receive your weekly gift in a way that is safe and secure and will help our finances greatly. (This can be done on the internet, or by sending the attached form to your bank.) If you are someone whose finances have been negatively affected by Coronavirus then we understand that you may not be able to do these things now, and that you may need to give less for a while or benefit from some support. Please contact me so we can see how we can help.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like to discuss any of the ideas in this letter or would like some help with this.

Thank you, for all you are able to give

With prayers and best wishes,

*Incumbent, contact details*