Diocese of Liverpool

www.liverpoolcofe.org

GENEROUS DISCIPLES



WHAT ARE ‘GENEROUS DISCIPLES’?

Definition;

A disciple is an apprentice, someone who follows Jesus, learns from Jesus, seeks to be like Jesus. We are all called to a life of discipleship; learning to live the life of God we see in Jesus.

Our God is a generous God ‘*who loved the world so much that he gave...*’ (John 3:16). So, we are called to generous discipleship: lives that reflect the grace-filled gift of God who gives us everything in Jesus. We are called to the spiritual disciplines of gratitude, obedience, contentment and to ‘overflow in this grace’- the grace of generous giving (2 Cor 8:7)

We offer our gifts in different ways but always in our worship. Our gifts sustain our churches, resource our ministry, make possible our mission. Most of all, they are gifts of grateful response to a generous God as we pray the prayer of generous disciples:

All things come from you,
and of your own do we give you.
(1 Chron 29:14)



Welcome

In the richness of creation, in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, in broken bread and shared wine each Sunday, our Bible and our worship celebrates the extravagant giving of God.

Yet we also live with anxiety around the cost of living, high interest rates, rising rents and more. Church leaders worry about the costs of ministry and mission. As disciples we wrestle with the Gospel invitation to generous living and giving.

Good stewardship ministry in our churches 'minds the gap' between Gospel abundance and our very real financial challenges. It doesn't just happen. Churches growing a culture of generosity means leaders making decisions.

Understanding your Givers

Understanding who your givers are and where they are on their journey of generous discipleship will be helpful in deciding which steps are best to take next. Like when planting a seed, you should consider the soil, sunlight and water it needs to thrive best.



Generous Disciples Conversations

We have discerned 5 priorities for nurturing generous giving and good stewardship:

1. The Parish Giving Scheme
2. Digital Giving
3. Good Stewardship Practice
4. Legacy Giving
5. Budgets and Planning

Taking Action

There are five key things every church can do, five steps every church can take to grow generous, regular, committed giving. Or, to use Paul's words, there are five seeds we can sow which God can bless with a rich harvest (2 Cor 9:6-10).

The Generous Disciples conversations will help church leaders, lay and ordained, think about the financial health of the church, explore the five key actions, spark ideas and suggest good practice. It will also kick start a conversation about priorities and how the church team can take action and agree a timetable.

I. Why give generously?

e.g The Widow's Mite

Our beliefs speak of our actions, and our actions shape the world around us. Our generosity tells others who we are, and who God is. The four reasons why we give generously are listed below:

Presence: our generous giving sustains our buildings, pays our bills and speaks of the presence of God in our community

Ministry: giving makes possible our ministry, our mission and our share of the cost of priestly ministry in our diocese

Bible: Our Bible requires us to wrestle with those challenging passages about wealth and possessions, about God's gift and our response

Discipleship: generous giving is simply a part of what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ.



We use an image of a Celtic cross because each reason is connected to the others and the life of a generous God is at the centre. Teaching that strikes a balance of these four reasons for giving helps develop a healthy culture of generosity.



Step 2: Five seeds to sow

Use the checklists to reflect on the current situation at your church and tick either the ‘Red’, ‘Amber’ or ‘Green’ box to indicate whether a task needs attention, has started, or completed.

Take a look at the good practice in our diocese and be inspired with new ideas.

Remember; this is for your own reflection and to help carve a path forward. No church has every box ticked green!

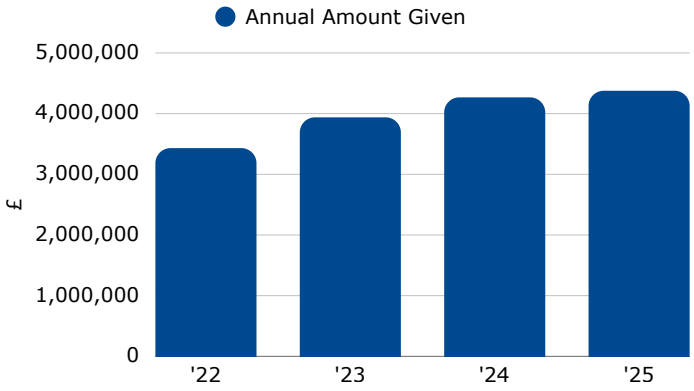
'Honour the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops.' Proverbs 3:9

Using the Parish Giving Scheme

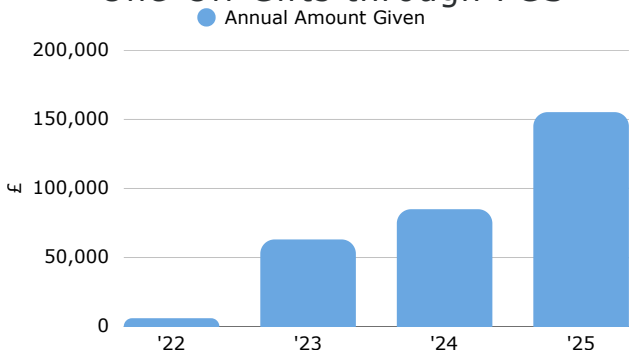
The Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) is the most effective and efficient way to give regularly. It supports the regular planned giving that sustains our churches and the 'first fruits' at the heart of all generous giving.

In Liverpool 95% of parishes use the PGS with over 4,000 givers gifting over £4.5 million to their churches, every year. The PGS is a network of generosity.

Regular Giving through PGS



One-Off Gifts through PGS



What are the benefits?

For the Giver:

- Direct Debit guarantee
- Every gift is safe, secure and simple to manage
- Giving is planned and committed
- You can update your gift anytime

For the church

- The PGS enables budgeting so we can plan for the future
- improves cash flow
- reduces bank charges

For the treasurer

- The PGS reduces administration and workload
- it saves time by making automatic Gift Aid claims and working seamlessly with online software.

Support:

Lucia Miller - lucia.miller@liverpool.anglican.org

www.liverpoolcofe.org/talking-money/parish-giving-scheme

PGS Team - info@parishgiving.org.uk | 0333 002 1260

PARISHGIVINGSCHEME™

PARISH GIVING SCHEME
GOOD PRACTICE



Click to watch our video with Fr Tom Carpenter at Holy Trinity Southport. During his time there he shared both the theological purposes, and practical reasons why Holy Trinity made the transition to the Parish Giving Scheme.



The introduction of the scheme was lead from the front

Revd Alan Conant shared about how the Parish Giving Scheme has impacted the church at St Ann Rainhill, and how their Verger Joan and finance team helped implement the scheme so effectively.





Many churches have printed off Parish Giving Scheme postcards with their church information in order to promote the scheme.



Find templates available on our website:
www.liverpoolcofe.org/talking-money/parish-giving-scheme/

USING THE PARISH GIVING SCHEME (PGS)

5 THINGS TO CONSIDER



Our leadership team understand the many benefits of being registered with the Parish Giving Scheme

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Our local leadership team members (or PCC) use the PGS and model what we invite all church members to do.



We have over 50% of our current givers using the PGS and we are encouraging folk to move from envelopes, standing orders and open plate giving to the PGS.



We are offering the PGS as the first choice way to give regularly for all new church members.



We explain the benefits and importance of PGS to our givers;

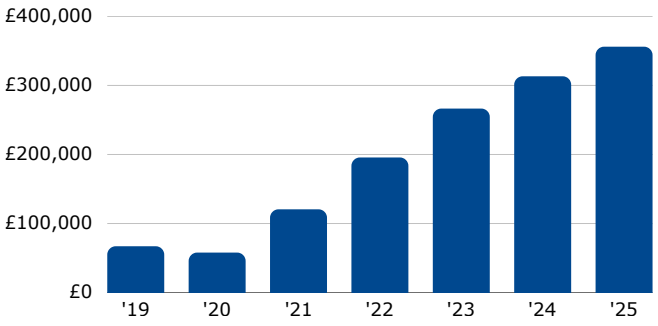
- on our website and achurchnearyou.com page
- through printed literature (visible for people to see when the come into our building)
- and social media channels

'Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.' Luke 6:38

Going Digital

Between 2020 and 2025 in Liverpool Diocese, digital gifts have grown by 515%. We know people of all ages, including pensioners, are using cash less and the option to make a quick and efficient gift is attractive as well as practical. The Parish Giving Scheme is a form of digital giving that underwrites regular planned giving, and has also seen a huge increase in use of the platform for one-off gifts. Churches must offer other digital giving options to make giving easy and accessible, online and in church. If not, we miss opportunities for people to give, every week.

Value of all recorded Digital Giving



*data does not reflect gifts made via JustGiving or PGS one-offs



What are the benefits?

For the Giver:

- Digital Giving reduces the handling of cash donations
- it is a safe way to make a gift to church - in church or online.

For the church

- Online and contactless giving meets the changing needs of our givers
- Younger church members are invited to generous giving
- Digital gifts are, on average, much higher than gifts made in cash.

For the treasurer

- Online and contactless giving reduces bank charges
- counting and banking cash gifts is reduced
- simplifies the hand over of responsibilities

Support:

Lucia Miller - lucia.miller@liverpool.anglican.org

www.liverpoolcofe.org/talking-money/tmdigital-giving

Digital Giving Team - digitalgiving@churchofengland.org

CONTACTLESS GIVING
GOOD PRACTICE



All Saints w/ St Aidan's in Speke have a CollecTin, and other giving information available



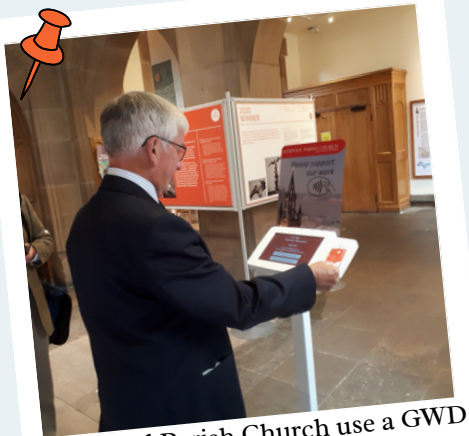
St John Knotty Ash also promote the Parish Giving Scheme alongside contactless donations



St Peter's Hindley use cards for the collection plate to demonstrate a donation on the contactless machine



St John the Baptist Tuebrook have a table and board to draw the eye to their contactless donation area



Liverpool Parish Church use a GWD to capture donations from the many tourists that visit their church



Mossley Hill Parish Church use a Payaz with additional signage

GOING DIGITAL

5 THINGS TO CONSIDER



We have a contactless card reader in church for use on Sundays, midweek activities and the occasional offices. People know how to operate it and make sure it is working.



We have made sure the contactless giving station is visible, accessible and attractive and that it connects with our worship and liturgy.



We have a confident giving invitation from our clergy and all who lead our public worship, occasional offices and any special services.



Our church website and *A Church Near You* page link to our online giving platform (e.g. Give a Little or PGS); we are familiar with options such as image changes and campaigns.



We check our device for hardware and software updates. If we are having technical troubles we know how to contact the manufacturer, software provider or diocesan support.

'excel in the grace of giving'.
2 Corinthians 8:7

Good Stewardship Practice

The financial challenges we face are rarely solved by fundraising longer, harder, better. We need good stewardship, biblically informed principles and practice to resource mission and ministry, abundantly. Church leaders are the architects of stewardship; we have the raw materials and creative resources to enable churches to design and build something sustainable.

What are the benefits?



For the Giver:

St Paul writes of 'the grace of giving'. because generosity is our response to God's goodness. Giving generously is part of our discipleship, part of our diocesan Rule of Life.

For the church

Generous giving is usually our largest income stream and the most responsive when needs change. Creating a generous culture and nurturing generous givers is vital to resource our mission.

For the treasurer

Treasurers are key team players in prayerfully designing and carefully building a stewardship ministry, confident that generosity is the primary resource to enable mission and ministry.

Support:

resources.team@liverpool.anglican.org

Giving in Grace - www.givingingrace.org

www.liverpoolcofe.org/talking-money/tmgenerous-seasons

GOOD STEWARDSHIP PRACTICE



Generous Seasons
St Thomas Golborne explored generous discipleship over two Sundays, themed to the liturgical season. With strong local leadership finances have stabilised with a welcome increase in Parish Giving Scheme giving and a growing contactless card reader income which paid for itself in just a few months.

Journey of Generosity
I thoroughly recommend the Journey of Generosity; it was a relaxed and informative day and good to consider God's generosity to us... enabling generosity as an end to itself rather than being aware of a financial need.
(Participant Jan 2024)



Ince Benet: A Centre for Prayer, Retreat and Learning

Giving in Grace

The multi-church parish of Wigan South made use of the comprehensive Giving in Grace resources in a recent stewardship initiative. Harvest provided a rich liturgical context so the parish leadership felt that the Luke preaching series, titled *Seasons of Giving,* was a good fit.

Background notes and sample sermons helped resource a four week preaching series. Using the template options they created a parish wide leaflet with simple financial information and a gift array to address the financial challenge.



givingingrace.org

GOOD STEWARDSHIP PRACTICE

5 THINGS TO CONSIDER



We have a planned, annual focus on generous giving in our worship, drawing on the diocesan Generous Seasons and/or national Generosity Week resources.



We hear sermons on generous giving and living regularly and we encourage and support our clergy and all preachers to preach about giving with confidence.



We write a letter of appreciation to our regular planned givers annually, alongside thanking people in sermons, notices, magazine, website and social media.



We plan a stewardship programme (e.g. Giving in Grace) at least every three years; we are aware of resources for Gift Days and Journey of Generosity days.



We include a focus on generous giving to our church in any confirmation or nurture courses and welcome programmes for new church members.

'You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.' 2 Corinthians 9:11

LEGACY GIVING

Our legacy is a gift of life, made today and blessing our church tomorrow. Around £4.5 billion is gifted each year to UK charities in legacies. But while church giving outstrips many of our best known and loved charities, we generally don't see the number or value of legacy gifts found in the wider charity sector. We are hesitant to ask, but there are simple steps every church can take and resources to help.

What are the benefits?



For the Giver:

Making a will is an act of loving and prudent care for those we love. Leaving a legacy is a natural part of our stewardship journey.

For the church

Legacies help make the seemingly impossible, possible. A gift in our will helps enable vision and ministry; lasting gifts making a world of difference.

For the treasurer

For churches and charities legacies proved a lifeline in the pandemic, sustaining mission and ministry, worship and service in desperately difficult times.

Support:

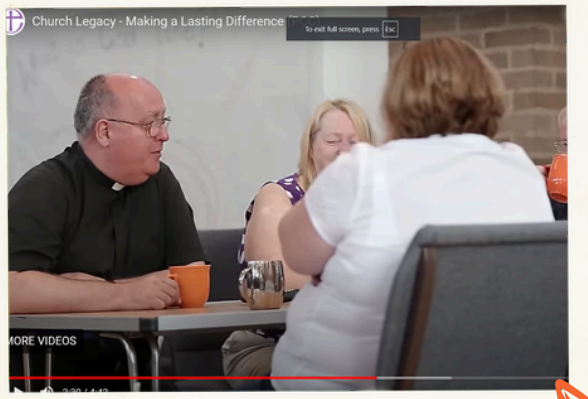
Vicky Sime: vicky.sime@liverpool.anglican.org

www.liverpoolcofe.org/talking-money/tmlegacies/

National Legacy Helpline - 08445 870875; legacy@churchofengland.org

www.churchofengland.org/faith-life/church-legacy

LEGACY GIVING
TELLING GOOD STORIES



In a video produced by the National Legacy team, Revd Andrew Stott shared the story of how a £35k legacy left to the church of St Luke in West Derby made a big difference, and honoured the person who left the gift.

A £6k legacy left to St Helens Parish Church was used by the PCC to refurbish the kitchen area in the church. Updated facilities enabled the church to be used by other organisations in their journey to becoming a Minster church.





A former parishioner generously left a gift in her will of £300k. This allowed Holy Trinity Formby to sign off on a long planned significant reordering of their large Victorian church. This lovely gift, opened the door to further committed and sacrificial giving from within the congregation.

LEGACY GIVING

5 THINGS TO CONSIDER



We have started a serious conversation about legacy giving and are developing a well thought through legacy strategy and a legacy policy, tailored to our church.



We talk about legacy giving on our website and tell the stories about how legacies have made a difference to our church.



We have attractive legacy literature available in print and online, with a named church contact and a link to the C of E free will-writing service in partnership with Farewill.



We talk and preach carefully and sensitively: first, making a will as an act of wise and loving stewardship; second, a legacy as a natural part of generous discipleship.



We have hosted or are thinking about hosting a legacy social event to talk about legacies, for our church, our parish or shared with others in our deanery.

'Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it?' Luke 14:28

Good Budgeting

A budget is more than income, expenditure and monitoring money. A budget helps us paint by numbers, It captures our vision. It paints a picture of our mission. A budget ask what mission costs and how it can be resourced. We want a mission shaped budget, not budget shaped mission.

First, we create our budget and then we share it creatively with the church. We know our numbers; we talk about the difference they will make. It takes thought and time; there are resources to help.

What are the benefits?



For the Giver:

A budget clarifies the church's needs and the impact it makes. It builds trust that our gifts make a difference and helps guide our giving decisions.

For the church

A budget paints the church's life and mission in numbers. It captures our vision, plans for income and catches problems before they catch up with us.

For the treasurer

Budgets are a tool for planning, monitoring and communicating the financial wellbeing of the church. Knowing where we are at helps us know where we are going.

Support:

carolyn.spittle@liverpool.anglican.org

www.liverpoolcofe.org/talking-money/tmbudgeting

GOOD BUDGETING

5 THINGS TO CONSIDER



We have a small finance or stewardship group ensuring we balance our books, resource ministry and mission and grow generous disciples.



We produce, or are working to produce, a robust budget each autumn focused on the coming financial year and looking to a 2 or 3 year horizon.



We discuss our budget in focused time at the Local Leadership Team meeting (or PCC) so that we can stand behind the budget we commend to the congregation.



Our finance or stewardship group or Finance Assistant monitors progress against the budget at least quarterly and reports to the Local Leadership Team.



We communicate our budget on a Sunday early in the year, as creatively as we can; e.g. presentations, leaflets, video, social media.

Step 3:
My suggested priorities

Thank you for completing the checklist. The final step is to spend just a few moments to list the four or five priorities for action that came to mind as you worked through the checklist. Go with your instincts.

Some priorities you jot down here may reflect immediate and pressing concerns. Some priorities can be addressed quickly and easily, such as getting started with digital giving. Other priorities will need a bit more thought, time or energy, such as developing a legacy strategy.

Key Step	Action Point	My notes
(e.g. Digital Giving)	(e.g. update giving page)	(our page is out of date and has too many options)



Diocese of Liverpool

SUPPORT & CONTACTS

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Digital Giving Advisor | Lucia Miller
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Budgeting Support | Carolyn Spittle
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