

Modern ways of giving make difference

Q: WE should be encouraging people to give to the Church using more modern methods – not just dropping their loose change in the collection plate.

A: Many of our financial transactions these days happen electronically – buying cinema tickets online using a credit card, or paying for our gas bill by direct debit. Most of us trust our banks or supermarkets to make sure our personal details are kept safe.

When it comes to our Christian stewardship, some of us do plan to give a regular amount to the Church each week or month, and set up standing orders or direct debits to do so. But a remarkable number of committed churchgoers either haven't done so or, if they have, they haven't changed the amount they give for several years.

The amount we give to the Church can become haphazard. It's to do with the loose change we have in our pockets on a Sunday morning, or the odd cheque from time to time. It's not necessarily based in prayerful consideration

frequently asked questions

Last year's Archdeaconry consultations gave you a chance to ask central diocesan staff questions about their work. Those questions were noted down and are the basis of this Pompey Chimes feature – in which we try to answer the questions that you're asking.

of how much we should give, or on our current income. That's one of the reasons why we introduced the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS), to help our parishes manage and develop their congregation's planned giving.

The idea is that donations to the local church are all made by direct debit on the first day of each month. The scheme then claims gift aid on all eligible donations simultaneously, and that amount is paid as a lump sum into your parish's bank account. This makes your treasurer's job so much easier and improves church cash flow.

The scheme also allows us to choose to increase the amount we give each year, in line with inflation. We can, of course, opt

not to do this. But it can make our lives easier if we know our giving will at least maintain its value to the Church, without being eroded by the impact of inflation.

This is, then, a prompt for us to prayerfully reflect on our giving and make any other adjustments that might be appropriate each year. The PGS is therefore an excellent stewardship tool, which brings real benefits to parishes. When coupled with good stewardship teaching in parishes, it helps our church membership further develop this important area of discipleship.

Our diocese introduced this scheme a year ago with just nine parishes piloting the scheme with 10 donors each. Since then, we've offered it to the whole diocese.

Now more than 60 parishes are on board, and 1,000 individual donors are giving via the PGS. That represents 11 per cent of planned givers in our diocese, and 63 per cent of them are opting to increase their giving in line with inflation.

It is having a really positive effect on giving levels across our diocese – and other dioceses nationally. It helps all of us think about our Christian stewardship of our money and other resources, it makes it easier to collect, it helps us to reclaim tax via gift aid more effectively, and it means our parishes' income grows in line with inflation.

Average giving as part of the scheme in our diocese, excluding gift aid, is around £15 a week, higher than both our diocesan average and the national average.

Now we've reached 1,000 donors, the next milestone to celebrate will be Portsmouth becoming the first diocese to have 50 per cent of our churches registered and actively using it.

If your church hasn't signed up yet, why not come along to one of our information evenings, at 7pm on June 14, at our diocesan

office in Portsmouth; or at 7pm on June 15, at St John's church hall, Newport. Anyone interested is welcome – it's not just restricted to treasurers and gift aid officers.

For details, please contact our stewardship adviser Victoria James on 023-9289 9655 or victoria.james@portsmouth.anglican.org. There's much more information and a guide at www.portsmouth.anglican.org/PGS.

We also hope our new diocesan website will include the ability for individuals to pay online for a whole range of things – including training courses that you will also book online, the Bishop's Lent Appeal and so on.

It's not just that it is much more convenient to pay online. It's now true that just the thought of paying in the traditional way – having to dig out a cheque book, sign a cheque and put it in the post – is enough to put people off from making a donation or signing up to certain activities.

Our world has moved on so much that what we previously thought of as normal now feels like an enormous effort! Hopefully, we can soon make this easier for everyone.



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This Christian Aid Week you've embodied Jesus' love and made a huge difference to our neighbours around the world.

Thank you!



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We believe in life before death