



The Parish of St Mary the Virgin
East Grinstead
Funding our Mission

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Almost one year ago, we asked you to think about your financial giving to God in this parish. We appealed to you to consider increasing your monthly giving, in order that our parish funds increase. Over the past year, we have critically assessed our expenditure and our income, and have identified areas for improvement. Money is not always an easy conversation to have and so I want to be very open and honest with you. Included in this letter is an explanation of the importance of giving as Christians, our current financial position as a church and some useful questions to consider.

Thank you!

Let me start, however, with a **big thank you**. Many of you give generously to St Mary’s and have done so for a long time. God bless you for that and thank you. Your commitment to the Church has enabled Christian ministry to be lived out in this parish, as well as others across our diocese.

The Church relies on your generosity to continue to grow the kingdom of God in our community. We at St Mary’s have been blessed with a healthy congregation with a good mix of ages and this is something to truly praise the Lord for.

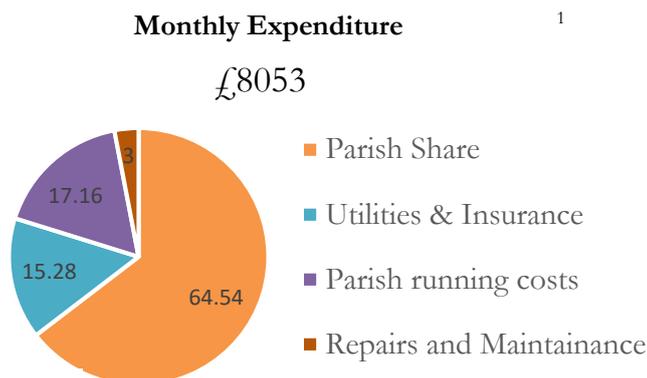
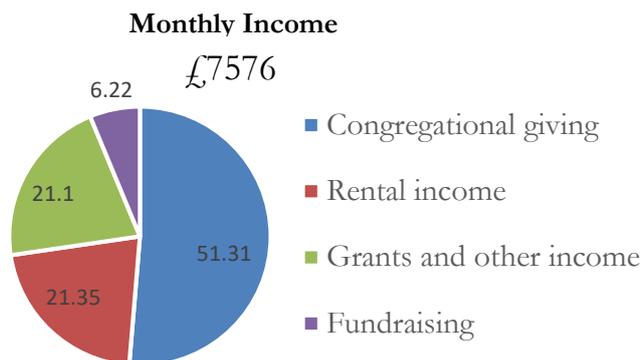
The Importance of Giving

Giving is a natural response to our faith. It is a sign of the commitment that we have made through our baptism and confirmation, and a marker of our support of God’s Church. Our giving enables the work of the Church to be carried out across our parish, and elsewhere in our diocese. It brings the love of God to his people and shares with them his grace. Without the financial support of Christians, the Church’s mission will fail.

St Mary’s Church, just like every Church of England parish, does not receive income from the government, council or directly from the Church of England.

Each parish is expected to contribute financially towards the mission of the Church in order that parishes in all areas from the most wealthy to the less advantaged are able to receive the ministry of the Church. This is known as the Parish Share. With these funds the Church is able to carry out its work across our diocese. The Church of England makes up the biggest voluntary network in the country and the Parish Share is a huge part of what makes this happen.

Our Current Financial Position



Annual deficit £5719

¹ Figures based on 2018/19 accounts

We have worked through our finances and it is clear we have a hole in our budget. As the charts show our expenditure is exceeding our income and we need this to change.

Our average monthly income through giving in this parish is **£3888**. Our average congregation size is 75 adults, which means that our average monthly giving per adult is **£52 per month**.

For some of you, that may seem lower than what you currently give, for others, it may be more. The Bible teaches that each Christian should give 10% of their earnings to the Church². The Church of England suggest 5%, with an additional 5% being given to other charities.

We currently have a shortfall of **£477 per month (£5719 per year)**. To break-even each of the average 75 members needs to raise their giving by **£6.35** per month.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if we did more than breakeven and instead achieved a healthy surplus with which we can truly realise the mission of our church and the future of our parish? This is my commitment to God, and I hope you will join me in achieving it.

Our aim in 2020 is to raise our monthly giving by £900, an increase of £12 per month per adult in our congregation. Is this something you could sign up to?

How to Approach Church Giving

For many people living on a fixed income, finances can sometimes feel stretched. For some of us, it will be impossible to raise our monthly financial commitment. To those of you who feel this way, we thank you most sincerely for your contribution.

For those of you who may be able to increase your giving ask yourself these questions. 'Where does God fit into my finances?' and, 'How does my faith affect my spending?'

Below are the average prices of some normal household 'luxuries' that we might consider comparing to our giving in church. In doing so, we might be able to compare and contrast our spending on 'luxuries' and our giving in church, and ask ourselves what this might say about our faith.

Coffee and cake at Costa Coffee with a friend- £10.40

A pint of beer with a friend- £9.60

Daily newspaper- £12.50 per week

Pub lunch for two- £45

Gym membership- £50 per month

Cost of average night out for two- £100

When praying about this, ask yourself the questions above and the following: 'What alternatives are there which would allow me to divert some of my spending so I can make a regular giving commitment to my church and to other causes I treasure?'

Before I conclude this letter I want to say that I don't want anyone to feel any pressure. Whatever you decide, know that God will guide your thinking. If you would like to talk to someone about this topic, I, the churchwardens and members of the stewardship committee are here for you. We can also help you understand the different and most effective ways to support the parish.

With prayers and blessings,



² Malachi 3:10 2-chronicles 31:4-5 Nehemiah 10:35-37 ect- Tithing was a principal of Hebrew life. The early Church was expected to continue this practice, and ideally, exceed it.