

Dear church member,

Thank you. Thank you for all you give to St Peter’s using your gifts and skills, time and money.

It is money I am writing about today. Please would you carefully consider your level of giving to St Peter’s. We are currently spending around £1200 a month more than we receive. Although we have some reserves, these are rapidly declining. And if we are to carry out the exciting things in our Vision we will need to increase our income.

Although we are exploring other ways of raising money, such as grant applications for our building work, the money we need for our day-to-day mission and ministry can only come from us, the members. We are very aware that this might be a difficult ‘ask’ in a period of considerable increases in the costs of living, but as a church we are facing these too. In this pack is material to inform you as to St Peter’s (Eastgate and Carlton) needs and to help you review your giving.

Giving is not just for needs. It is a central part of our discipleship, our walk with God. And giving is more than simply financial. We are very grateful for the considerable amounts of time people give to the mission and ministry (both up front and behind the scenes) within and beyond our churches. We, though, like any organisation, need a certain amount of money to do all the things we ***need*** to do - and more to do all the things we ***want*** to do. The materials in this pack give you more detail.

The Christians who went before us in this place understood this. They recognised that their faith needed to be reflected in the way they used their money. Our wonderful Church is only here because of their generosity and your ongoing support.

What does God expect of us? What principles should guide us? We will be looking at this in detail in our sermons and study notes over the next few weeks.

Here are two key principles of Christian giving:

**Proportional** – the place Christians have always started is the ‘Tithe,’ giving 10% of your income just as in the past people gave 10% of the crops. The principle of giving proportionally continues into the New Testament. Quite rightly this means that if our income or critical costs go up or down, it is right to revise our giving. As churches we adopt this for our mission giving – we give 10% of our planned giving away.

**Putting God first** – in both Old and New Testaments giving is seen as a generous response to our generous God. Our Harvest hymns are stirring but waiting until ‘all is safely gathered in,’ sensible and pragmatic as that may seem, is not what the Bible talks of. In ancient Israel Harvest festival was at the beginning of the season, firstfuits. And the regular tithe was on top of this. In an agricultural society that was a huge risk.

The Bible teaches that giving money to support the work of the church is a mark of spiritual maturity. Every Christian should aim to be giving regularly for Christian work at home and abroad.

The other causes you support alongside St Peter’s may well be asking you to review your giving too, because of all the need that there is. We ask you to consider us within this wider context as well as your own circumstances. Where will St Peter’s fit within your ‘giving mix’?

Some years ago, the CofE General Synod agreed that the principle of the tithe (10%) was a good overall one to keep to, and suggested that church members give half their tithe (i.e. 5% of your income) to their local church.

These are the principles that Jan and I have adopted. I cannot speak for anyone else in the church (as I make it a policy not to know any details of the giving of others) but felt it right to share what we do.

Please pray about your response to our church family’s needs and use the other materials in this pack to explore what the Bible says about God’s generosity and our grateful response. And thank you for all you already give, and for all you will give.





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