

grateful generous givers

giving strategy 2021-2024

pray - grow - serve with joy

introduction

The book of Ruth begins by telling us the story of a young widow's selfless devotion to her mother in law, Naomi. After the deaths of their husbands, they return to Naomi's home land, Judah, and meet Boaz. Boaz, in a remarkable way, redeems and provides for both Ruth and Naomi. Praising Ruth's devotion to Naomi he asks his workers on the grain field to leave extra grain behind which Ruth is allowed to pick up. Eventually he marries Ruth, providing support for her and Naomi. Naomi's despair makes way for hope and security and the community praises God for her rescue. This story is one of many examples in Scripture in which an individual and a community responds to the Giver of Life with gratitude, generosity and giving.

The church is invited to participate in the mission of God and respond to Him with the same attributes we see in the lives of Ruth, Boaz and Naomi.

In the psalms of David and the letters of Paul we are reminded to be thankful ('I will praise thee, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will show forth all thy marvellous works – psalm 9).

The generosity of our churches, and the communities in which they serve, has been and will continue to be, a blessing to many. Initiatives to share time, talents and money with the elderly, the vulnerable, children and young people in our society is at the heart of the church's mission and ministry.

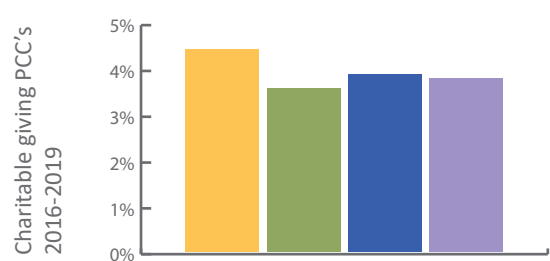
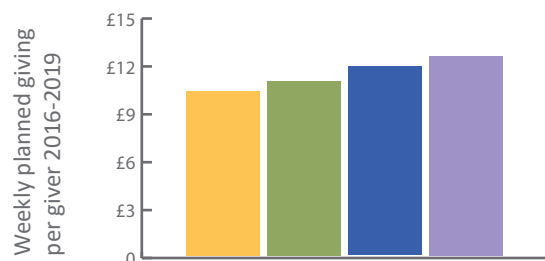
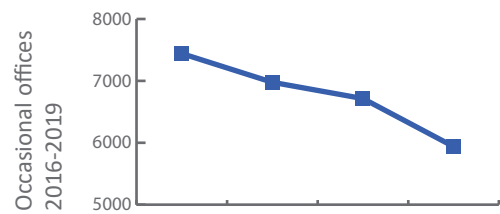
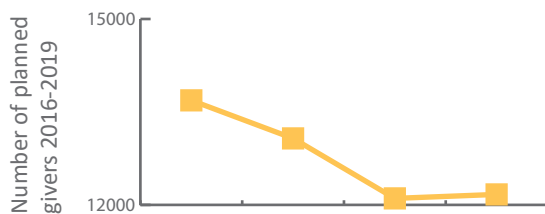
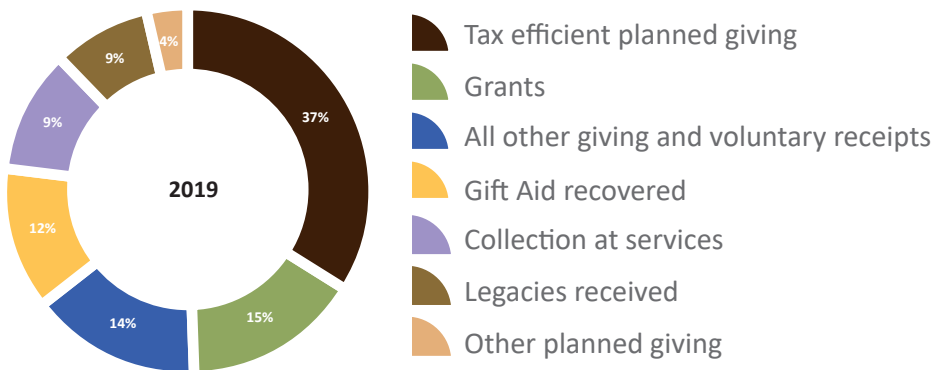
The financial giving of members of the community, whether or not they attend church regularly, contributes to the running costs of a church that wants to be present and inform purposes in the changing seasons of our lives. The church transforms lives, nurtures disciples and provides a sacred place where key events are celebrated and remembered.

It is imperative that we encourage gratitude, generosity and giving in the lives of the people of Devon. This strategy will focus on these three objectives. It will direct the work of Mission Resources, and communicate the desired direction of our stewardship.

background

Since 2018 the progress against the objectives communicated in the Giving Strategy under 'revelation', 'relationship' and 'resource' have been regularly reported. Objectives planned for 2021 have been taken forward into this strategy and amendments have been made after review of data and conversation. Please find below a summary of the collected data.

Voluntary income in DoE 2019



An Exeter Finance led Survey in 2020 suggested that approx. 85% of the responding parishes have not yet set up contactless giving and QR codes. Approximately 30% of respondents requested more information on digital giving.

The promotion of planned giving, preferably through the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) will be important to reverse the decline in the number of planned givers, which remains the preferred way of giving. Information on grants (15% of voluntary income in 2019) was requested by over 45% of respondents and will be an important focus of our work in the coming years. There is concern that clergy are not well equipped to discuss stewardship related matters and approx. 30% of respondents have requested more resources for teaching. Alongside this there is a need for small group materials. The same survey highlighted that in the year 2020 33.5% of the challenges in relation to stewardship were finance related, with the reduction of fundraising activities being the main concern. The closure of buildings, and with that the lack of collection plate income highlighted, once again, the need for PGS encouragement.

background

The Anglican Giving Survey, which was conducted by nfpSunergy in 2020 forms an important aspect of the National Giving Strategy, and resulted in the following key findings;

1. A third of Anglicans do not give to their Church
2. 40% of Anglicans have never been asked to give regularly
3. Nearly half of Anglicans have never been asked to review their giving
4. Only half of Anglicans have heard a sermon on giving in the past 12 months & 60% said it didn't change their thinking on giving if they had
5. The most popular reason to give to their Church was to help keep the building maintained
6. Twice as many Anglicans have been asked to give by collection envelope (60%) compared to direct debit (31%)
7. Anglicans are three times as likely to leave a legacy to charity than they are to church
8. Only 27% of Anglicans view their church's need as 'very important'
9. 49% feel they would be motivated to give more if they understood the impact of their giving
10. Less than a third of Anglicans say they are regularly thanked for their giving¹

The data collected from Parish Finance Returns, the Survey, the Anglican Giving Survey and anecdotal evidence have resulted in the following range of objectives under gratitude, generosity and giving.

¹ <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/building-generous-church/anglican-giving-survey>

gratitude

Responding to God's generosity with thanks.

Objective

Provide biblical teaching on gratitude, generosity and giving (3xG)

Measurement

Suite of online resources, including sermon notes, home group materials, weekly/daily reflections, etc

Timeline

Lent 2022

Organise retreat and training for clergy and lay

IME, CMD and lay programme initiatives

Ongoing

Provide resources on gratitude, generosity and giving accessible for the four key groups. (Children and families, 16 to 25-year-olds, people over 60 and those on the 'fringe' of church life).

In house materials produced or sourced externally for focus groups.

Ongoing

generosity

Responding to God and others with acts of kindness (the embodiment of our gratitude)

Objective

Share good news stories of generosity in time, talents and resources across diocese (congregation and wider community) to inspire and encourage.

Train stewardship advocates

Encourage conversation on vision and mission, with support from M&M team

Improve the understanding of the Common Fund

Promote occasional offices as part of the church's contribution to the community which it serves.

Measurement

Promotion through social media platforms and other communication channels.

Delivery of GROW course (4-6 sessions) and quarterly contact with attendees

Use of tailored questions to help parishes reflect on their Mission Community Plan

Promote and update Common Fund Explained leaflet. Encourage Common Fund contribution across parishes

Promotion (as above)

Timeline

Ongoing

Q4 2021

Ongoing

Q2 2021 / Ongoing

Ongoing

giving

Responding to God and others by facilitating and encouraging financial giving for our congregations and communities

| Objective | Measurement | Timeline |
|---|---|--------------------|
| Encourage review of existing planned giving schemes. | Increase no. of PGS registered churches to 70% of diocesan total by 2024. Slow the decline in the number of planned givers. | Q4 2024 |
| Encourage PGS enrolment and use of online PGS services. | Promotion (as above). | Ongoing. |
| Encourage giving in wider community. | Provide PGS wider community donor forms and promote friends groups. Provide materials and ideas to help parishes fundraise in their wider community. | Ongoing |
| Encourage digital giving and provide up to date information on available options. | Offer series of webinars on range of topics linked to digital giving. Promotion through social media platforms and other communication channels. Increase engagement with digital giving to 40% (average of 16% in 2020) | Ongoing Q4 2024 |
| Encourage grant application. | Offer series of webinars on grant related topics. Encourage use of microsite Church Grants. Promotion (as above). | Ongoing |
| Encourage Legacy giving / in Memoriam giving | Offer webinar with relevant speaker and provide relevant resources. Promotion (as above). | Ongoing |

conclusion

The churches and communities which make up the Diocese of Exeter have incredible potential to resource mission and ministry and contribute to the presence of the Church of England in Devon. Stewardship is a major aspect of discipleship and this should be integral to the life of the local church. The leadership of the church plays a key part in this and it is critical that it leads with teaching and by example. Alongside digital giving, the promotion of PGS will continue to play an important aspect in the support given to parishes. Gratitude, generosity and giving are not only fundamental attributes of a Christian but they are embraced by many in the wider community. A request by a church to the wider community which it serves, for financial support, will be understood.

May we, together, embrace a generous lifestyle, with thankful hearts and joyful service.

appendix

Stewardship related challenges in 2020

