

St Matthew's

“Money Matters”

(A practical guide to Christian giving)



All members of our church are encouraged to give regularly to the work of the church. This enables us to continue to spread the gospel by our ministry (both within the local community and further afield), to pay our staff, and to maintain our buildings.

Money can often be a problem to us, but it is important that we all have some understanding of how our church's finances work, and both why and how every one of us can be involved.

Please ask a member of the finance team (see back page) if you would like more information about anything in this leaflet.

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St Matthew's with St Luke's PCC, Oxford. Regd Charity no: 1128916

Why and How to Give

1. Why Should We Give Money to our Church?

Giving is our thankful response to God for His love for us, an expression of our love for Him, and is part of our worship. It should be a prayerful response from our heart, not a forced activity. The Bible teaches that everything we have belongs to God and has been entrusted to us by Him (1 Chronicles 29: 14b); so when we give to God we demonstrate our recognition of this fact.

The Old Testament in the Bible establishes the concept of tithing, whereby God's people give 10 per cent of their income back to Him; He encourages us not to short-change Him in this, even promising to bless us (Malachi 3).

In the New Testament Jesus encourages this practice of tithing, to show how our lives can reflect our love for God, and He teaches that we should not become legalistic or mechanistic about it (Luke 11: 42). Today, when we give willingly like this, in proportion to our income, it allows us to be a part of God's economy whether we are rich or poor in the world's eyes. Tithing to God, through the church, enables the church to be effective in its worship, work and witness.

And giving is good for us; we get blessed when we give (Acts 20: 35).



Love



So, why should we give money to the church...?

1. Because God loves us and we love Him.
2. Because it enables God's church to continue and to grow.
3. Because we get blessed when we do.

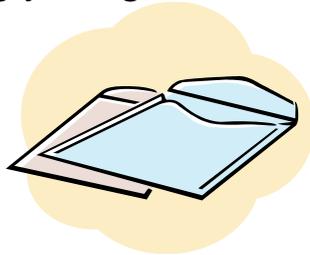
Why and How to Give

2. How Can We Give Money to the Church?

It is important that we give regularly to the church (not just when we think we can spare a bit) because the money we give goes to sustain and expand its activities. This includes paying our staff, maintaining our buildings so they continue to be used effectively, and supporting mission work both inside and outside our parish (see page 5 for details).

We recommend our members to give in the following ways:

- **Parish Giving Scheme:** this method requires the least administration and is the best way to give to St Matthew's. You don't have to remember to pay each month, and it helps us to plan our budget. A leaflet is available about this at the back of the church.
- **Bank Standing Order:** if you have a bank account, a standing order also works well. You decide how much you want to give and when you want to give it. A form is included in this leaflet.
- **Envelopes:** if you prefer, we can give you a supply of dated envelopes in which to bring your gift to church.



Give-as-you-earn (GAYE) is another tax-efficient method of giving which some employers support. The money is deducted by your employer from your pay and sent to the church's bank via the GAYE scheme. If you would like to use this method, your employer will need our GAYE registration number: 216480.

We can also accept CAF (Charities Aid Foundation) vouchers.

Our Church Budget

Our church budget is not a secret; it is good for all our members to know where our money comes from and how we spend it. Please ask our treasurer if you would like to know more, but here are some of the summary figures:

Where Our Money Comes From (2020 PCC accounts)

Most of the money we spend has come from our own church members, though a very useful chunk also comes from hiring out the Parish Centre. See the table below for an approximate breakdown.

Regular Giving Income	£120,000
Gift Aid tax received	£27,000
Collections and one-off gifts	£36,000
Parish Centre lettings	£15,000
Grants	£22,000
Other	£5,000
Total	£225,000

Our Church Budget

Where Our Money Goes (2020 PCC accounts)

We spent a total of £249,000 last year. An approximate breakdown of this is shown in the table below. The biggest chunk is our Parish Share; this is what we pay to the Diocese of Oxford, and it includes the cost of our vicar (including stipend, housing, pension, etc.).

Parish Share	£71,000
Youth work	£37,000
Other staff costs	£67,000
Parish Centre costs	£27,000
Church costs	£12,000
Mission giving	£22,000
Church growth costs	£5,000
Other	£8,000
Total	£249,000

We normally plan to spend roughly the same amount as comes in; this is wise stewardship. In 2021, however, because of problems caused by Covid-19, our income is likely to be less than our expenditure.

Other Matters

Gift Aid

+25%!!

If you are a tax-payer you can increase the value of your gift to our church by 25 per cent simply by completing a Gift Aid Declaration. This entitles St Matthew's to reclaim the tax that you have already paid on the money you give to us. A form is included with this leaflet; if you haven't completed one already, please do so now and return the form to the Church Office. Even better - join the Parish Giving Scheme; leaflets are available in the church.

Legacies



For the longer term, please do consider whether or not you are able to leave a gift to our church in your will. The rise in house prices means that, if you own your own home, even a small proportion could amount to thousands of pounds and make a real difference to our church in the future. And legacies to any charity (including the church) reduce the inheritance tax that has to be paid. Speak to our treasurer who can give you the wording of a brief codicil to be added to your will; there is no need for it to be completely re-written.

Do You Have Money Problems?

Many of us struggle with our finances. Often we find we just don't seem to have enough to survive; others struggle with having too much. How we spend our money can be a source of confusion and worry, and it can affect our relationships with our family and friends, as well as with Father God. If you are feeling overwhelmed by your financial situation, or if you are struggling with debts, or if you would simply like advice in preparing a budget to help you control your money, please don't suffer in silence! And don't hope the problem will just go away. Instead, have a quiet word with our vicar, or one of the church wardens, or our treasurer. They will be able to put you in touch with some real help. It is not God's will that we struggle; Jesus came to bring life in all its fullness (John 10: 10).

So what should I do now?

Pray; consider your finances carefully, and discuss with God how much it is right for you to give to Him. For many people, this is a hard aspect of their faith, so prayer is important. And although we are encouraged to keep the details of our giving secret (Matthew 6: 4) it is often a good idea to chat the principles through with wise Christian friends.



Decide how much it is right for you to give at present, and which of the two methods of regular giving outlined on page 3 you would prefer.



Either fill in the Parish Giving Scheme form, or a Bank Standing Order form, or contact the church office to request a supply of envelopes.



If you are a tax-payer, complete the Gift Aid Declaration form enclosed. One form signed now will cover all your future giving.

Make a mental note now (or put it in your diary) to review your decision regularly.

Further Thoughts

- God's giving to us is extravagant and generous in every way.
- Everything we have comes from God.
- Giving is not just about money; our generosity can be about offering our hospitality, our time, or our skills in the service of others.
- Our giving should be prayerful, planned, and proportionate.
- It should be cheerful, and not grudging.
- And it should be a priority.

Further Information

Any of the following will be happy to answer the financial questions you may have, and advise on tax-efficient and alternative methods of giving:

- Nicky Rayner (Treasurer)
- Alice Boughton (Churchwarden)
- John Price (Stewardship Secretary)

The church office can provide copies of the Parish Giving Scheme form, or the Gift Aid and Bank Standing Order forms which are referred to in this document.