

What can I do?

If you are not already part of the Planned Giving Scheme, please join it. In this information pack you will find another leaflet which gives details of how you can do this, and includes a Standing Order form, and a Gift Aid Declaration.

If you are already part of the planned giving scheme, please think about how you might increase your giving in the coming year.

How much should I give?

Enclosed with this leaflet is also a summary of St Paul's teaching on Christian giving. This recognizes that no two people are in exactly the same financial circumstances; so rather than be prescriptive, Paul encourages us to work out for ourselves what we can give, remembering always that "God loves a cheerful giver".

Statistics show that in 2005 across the Church of England the average giving per week per electoral roll member was £5.08. Because that's an average, it means that some people were able to give much more than that, while for others that was more than they could afford. The same will be true for our congregations.

Freely you have received

Last year's October count (an annual measure of church attendance) showed that on average our churches minister to 240 adults and over 100 children each week. In addition, we serve the wider community in many ways. We can't put a value on ministry, but it does cost.

Jesus said to his disciples: "Freely you have received, freely give" (Matthew 10.8). That is true for us also. In reviewing your giving again this year, please reflect on all that we receive from our generous and loving God. And then may we **give as good as we get**.

Where does the money go?

Among the comments made during *Going for Growth* was that we could improve the way we communicate how the money you give is spent and that budgetary expenditure is under control.

In this financial year the main headings in a total budget expenditure of £152,000 are:

Parish Share*	£79,600
Administration <i>incl. salaries</i>	£18,100
New ministries	£15,000
Outward Giving <i>calculated at 10% of income</i>	£11,700
Clergy expenses	£ 3,750
Outreach	£ 2,000
Youth	£ 1,800
Ministry Training	£ 1,600
Education	£ 600

**80% of the parish share that we give to the diocese goes towards the employment and housing of the stipendiary clergy, and the training costs of clergy, readers and other licensed ministers.*

The 2007 Annual Accounts showed expenditure was well within budget, despite major work on the Egmont Road house. So far this year, expenditure is in line with budget. The budget for 2009 is about to be compiled; it is forecast to grow to £172,000 to cover the new developments in our ministry to children and young people, and our outreach to the community, as described above.

Legacies

Within the past year the parish has received three legacies, which will benefit our churches' ministry and outreach in many ways. Have you thought of leaving St Mary's and St John's a gift in your will?



Parish Commitment 2008

Sundays 5th and 12th October

*To be a growing, loving family,
with Christ at the centre,
reaching out to all*

It began with a vision – a vision that came from God as over a six-month period we sought God's will for St Mary's and St John's.

Why do we need a vision? The Bible tells us that "where there is no vision, the people perish". Although "properly speaking, there is only one vision, and that is Christ" (Bishop John V. Taylor), every parish needs a specific vision from God to let us know what we should be doing now. Our Vision Process, which included the PCC Vision Day and the eight weeks of *Going for Growth*, had one aim – to discern God's vision for this parish at this stage of its life.

The vision that emerged consistently during each stage of that process affirmed the continuing validity of our Mission Statement; only now there was a new resolve to turn it from an ambition to reality. It also showed a deep appreciation for much that was already happening in the parish.

When the outcomes of the Vision Process were shared with the congregation in April '07, the top priorities for new action and development were:

- commitment to the community in outreach, social involvement and action;
- ministry to our children and young people.

As a result, the PCC resolved to do two things:

- to produce a Mission Action Plan (MAP), in which we aimed to identify what needed to be done, who would do it, and by when;
- to work towards a major parish funding/stewardship campaign in the autumn of 2007. Our campaign was called ...

Funding the Vision ...

The aim was to do exactly what the title implies: in the light of the vision God had given us, to encourage us all to take a fresh look at our giving, so that this vision might be properly funded. There were presentations in both churches to which many of you responded, some by increasing their giving, others by joining our Planned Giving Scheme.

The result was an increase in pledges of well over 20%. Although some of the pledges have yet to be translated into actual giving, the 2008 budget reflects the success of *Funding the Vision*.

... One Year On

Well over two-thirds of the recommendations from the Vision Process and in the Mission Action Plan have already been achieved or are in hand.

In obedience to our God-given vision, three new members of staff have been recruited to serve in the parish. On September 14th Bishop Ian licensed:

- Sheila Samuels to serve as a Church Army evangelist in local communities in Walton;
- Patrick Samuels to serve as a Church Army evangelist in those same communities and to develop mission in the workplace;
- Mandy Watts, our first full-time Children's and Youth Minister, to lead, develop and co-ordinate the nurture and spiritual care of our young people.

These three appointments were made with the unanimous support of the PCC as part of our response to the Vision Process.

Why do we need to increase our giving?

Funding the Vision made a significant improvement to our regular giving. But we were starting from a very low base and our giving is not yet at the level needed to 'fund the vision' God has given us for ministry and mission in Walton.

Part of this relates to running costs, which go up year on year. For example, Parish Share went up by £2,000; and we're all aware of increases in the cost of living at the moment.

We have also launched the new vision-related projects mentioned above and have taken on the staff necessary to carry them out. Now we have to ensure that our giving increases so that these projects can be funded securely for the future.

So what is the target?

To sustain the existing ministry of our two churches and to carry out faithfully the vision we've been granted, we need an increase in our giving of at least 14% this year.

We believe this increase is achievable, even in today's economic climate – but it will take all of us to make it happen.

One key to success in funding the vision sustainably is ...

Planned Giving

Regular planned giving helps us give as we want to give, rather than rely on what we may have in our pocket or handbag on a Sunday morning. As the title suggests, it helps us plan our giving as part of our regular financial commitments.

It also helps the PCC to budget for the year ahead, giving solid financial foundations for the ministry and mission of our parish and enabling us to plan for the future with confidence.