

Newsletter

Annual thank you letters

Annual thank you letters are a great way to acknowledge your supporters' giving and generosity at the end of the tax year. More details on [page 6](#).

Training dates

Upcoming training dates from the diocese, Church of England, and other external partners, including how to register to attend. More details on [pages 4-6](#).

Digital Gift Aid declarations consultation

Gift Aid Lite members are invited to comment on ideas to establish and maintain an HMRC compliant audit trail. See [page 9](#).

Digital giving is making a big impact

Digital giving, from online and devices, is continuing to make a big difference in churches across our diverse diocese. This is predominantly new money that wouldn't have been received in another form. Average giving levels are £20 for online giving and £10 for device giving. If your church wants to set up digital giving, [please get in touch](#).

Gift Aid Lite

Manchester diocese has provided the Gift Aid Lite scheme to its churches for the last 35 years. Currently over 200 churches are members, it is free to join, and there is no admin fee to process claims.

During the last six tax years it has claimed £4,416,902 of Gift Aid and Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme (GASDS) repayments back from HMRC. This is based on donations of £17,667,607 received by member churches. For more information on how to join, [please get in touch](#).

Two exciting projects launched in our diocese



PARISH GIVING SCHEME

The Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) is a well-established planned giving scheme for churches and recommended by the National Church as the preferred way of receiving planned giving at parish level. For further information and how get involved at your church, [see page 2](#).



CORNERSTONE

Cornerstone is an online learning platform focusing on the finances of your church and how to improve them via giving, generosity, and thankfulness. The site includes several pathways providing step-by-step guidance on how to implement planned improvements. Further information and how to get involved at your church is on [page 3](#).

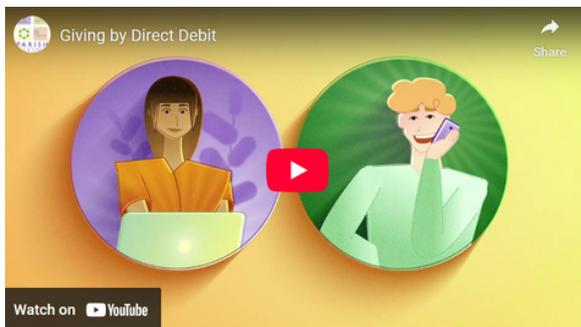
Parish Giving Scheme

The Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) is a free resource to help churches to offer a simple and secure way for people to give on a regular basis. Most people give monthly but there is also the option to give quarterly, annually or as a one-off. PGS does not replace your current planned giving arrangements, but it is made available as an additional mechanism for giving. For more information, please click on the YouTube image shown below.

PGS giving is processed once a donor has set up a Direct Debit covenant with PGS. The donations are clearly allocated against a specific church, and most importantly this includes an option to increase their giving in line with inflation each year. The donations, including any Gift Aid, are received and processed by PGS, and these monies are paid directly into your church's bank account without the removal of any transaction or administration fees.

Gift Aid Lite and PGS

For information, PGS is not a replacement for the Gift Aid Lite scheme which will still be offered to all churches across the diocese free of charge.



How can my church join PGS?

Your PCC needs to pass a motion agreeing to join PGS. Afterwards please contact Paul Bailey, Diocesan Giving Advisor; Rob Chilton, Parish Support Officer; or Carolyn McGloughlin, Parish Support Officer who will provide assistance to ensure your church is registered with PGS as a single church/parish or a multiple church/parish. Resources are provided by PGS to assist your church to promote this new giving method to your donors, including how to complete the sign up process.

Alternatively, you can use the Cornerstone online learning platform. This provides step-by-step pathway guides on how to register your church with PGS and promote it to your donors. If you attend one of the Cornerstone training days on Tuesday 13th May (see page 3 for further details) you will get two fantastic resources for the price of one.

Reasons to join and offer PGS

- Maximising planned giving and number of planned givers.
- Increasing and improving cash flow, especially through Gift Aid recovery.
- Combating static giving as the majority of donors choose to index-link their gift.
- Future proofing and protecting against an ever-increasing digital society.
- Opportunities to talk about giving and launch a stewardship campaign.
- Ability to use professional, tried and tested materials.
- Lightening your administration burden.
- Statistically produces higher average gift levels.

Want to find out more?

The diocese is running two online sessions where you will be able to watch a short online presentation about PGS and ask questions about it.

Please click on the links below to attend one of these events:

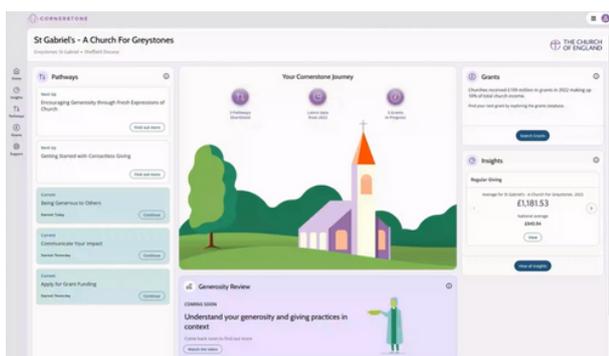
- Monday 8th May at 2 p.m.
- Tuesday 20th May at 6 p.m.

Cornerstone - what is it?

Cornerstone is an online learning platform focusing on the development of giving, generosity, and thankfulness in churches. It is being developed by the Church of England's National Giving Team and an external partner called The Kindness of Strangers.

The [Cornerstone website](#) provides guidance to churches to help them to understand and improve their finances and identify levels of giving and why people give. It provides this information via a series of different giving insights and graphs to help clergy and lay leaders understand this data for their church and identify areas for development and improvement. To help churches tackle the issues they have identified, a series of step-by-guides called pathways have been created (around 40 so far) to enable churches to focus their resources on the areas most relevant to them. For example, improving giving levels via a stewardship campaign/giving review, launching new donation methods, and developing the theology of giving and generosity. There are dedicated pathways on signing up to use the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) ([see page 2](#)) and how to launch it at your church.

To watch a short video outlining the latest version of the Cornerstone platform, please click on the image shown below.



How can my church join the Cornerstone pilot?

Two training sessions are taking place on Tuesday 13th May - 1 p.m. at St John's House, Bury, and 7 p.m. at St Bride's, Old Trafford. If your church is interested in taking part, please contact [Paul Bailey, Diocesan Giving Advisor](#); [Rob Chilton, Parish Support Officer](#); or [Carolyn McGloughlin, Parish Support Officer](#).

Pathway examples - and more are being added

- Apply for grant funding.
- Being generous to others.
- Building a case for support.
- Celebrating a generous Christmas/ Easter.
- Communicate your impact.
- Create an impact of giving leaflet.
- Embed generosity into your weekly practices.
- Encourage generosity in young people.
- Encouraging generosity through fresh expressions of church.
- Encouraging gifts in wills to your church.
- Encouraging giving from new congregation members.
- Exploring generosity through Lent.
- Find and engage new regular givers.
- Generosity in small groups.
- Getting started with contactless giving.
- Getting started with online giving.
- Giving at life events: baptisms/weddings/funerals.
- Grow discipleship using the 'Living Generously' video resource.
- Hold a 'Gifts in wills' event.
- Hold a Generosity or Gratitude Service.
- Identify opportunities for income generation.
- Launch or relaunch the Parish Giving Scheme.
- Make giving visible.
- Organising a successful fundraising event.
- Preaching and teaching on generosity.
- Running a 'Generosity Week'.
- Running a giving campaign.
- Thanking your givers.
- Writing an engaging annual report.

Upcoming training dates

Key:

Manchester diocese training
External training

Cornerstone training

Tuesday 13th May 2025

1 p.m. at St John's House, 155-163 The Rock, Bury, BL9 0ND.

or

7 p.m. at St Bride's Church, St Bride's Way, Old Trafford, Manchester, M16 9NW.

Further details about the Cornerstone online learning platform, and its links to PGS, including how to register, are shown on pages 2 and 3.

Funding your project and applying to the National Lottery

Tuesday 13th May 2025.

2 p.m. online, please register [here](#).

This session from National Churches Trust is designed to help churches who are planning a major project at their church that could involve an application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Parish Giving Scheme (PGS)

The diocese is running two online sessions where you will be able to watch a short online presentation about PGS and ask questions about it. Please click on the links below to attend one of these events:

- [Monday 8th May at 2 p.m.](#)
- [Tuesday 20th May at 6 p.m.](#)

Applying for National Churches Trust grants

Wednesday 4th June 2025.

12 p.m. online, please register [here](#).

Where to start with an application for funding from National Churches Trust? This online workshop is ideal for anyone involved with a church who wants to learn more about their grants.

How to write a successful application for external funding

Tuesday 1st July 2025

7 p.m. via Zoom, please register [here](#).

and

Thursday 30th October 2025

7 p.m. via Zoom, please register [here](#).

This webinar will outline how your church can write applications for consideration by external funders, including organisations such as charitable trusts and foundations. It will include the preparatory work required to gather the necessary information before the writing process can start. Hints and tips will also be shared to enable your church to draft and submit funding proposals that the recipient organisations will be interested in supporting.

The training will be delivered by:

- Revd Paul Monk, Vicar of Ashton under Lyne
- Heather Ford, Church Support Manager, Ecclesiastical
- Paul Bailey, Diocesan Giving Advisor, Diocese of Manchester

How to register and effectively use the Open4Community grant search portal

Tuesday 22nd July 2025

7 p.m. via Zoom, please register [here](#).

and

Thursday 23rd October 2025

7 p.m. via Zoom, please register [here](#).

Open4Community, provided by Idox, is an external funding search facility which is free for parishes, church schools, and church hall users in the dioceses of Manchester, Chester, Leeds, and Blackburn to use free of charge. It is an excellent tool and all potential users are encouraged to register and use it on a regular basis to gain the maximum benefit.

This webinar will explain how to: register to use Open4Community; search for potential funders and find out more about them; utilise the other tools provided; and set up regular email updates on potential funding sources.

Attendees will also have the opportunity to arrange a one-to-one consultation with Matt Godfrey from Idox. During an online meeting he will provide guidance on how to use the site's search function to identify potential sources of funding to support your church's mission and ministry in its local community.

Getting planning permission

Wednesday 23rd July 2025.
12 p.m. online, please register [here](#).

This National Churches Trust workshop outlines the planning permission process for churches. Ecclesiastical Exemption exempts some churches from Listed Building Consent, but this does not remove the need for Planning Permission for external changes or work to tombs, lychgates and walls.

If you're looking after a church, chapel or meeting house, this session from National Churches Trust could be what you need to allay fears and plan ahead with confidence. You might want to encourage anyone with particular concerns to attend.

The format of the workshop will be a 30-45 minute presentation, with 15 minutes for discussion and questions at the end.

Enterprise: earning your own income

Tuesday 19th August 2025.
2 p.m. online, please register [here](#).

This National Churches Trust workshop will explore ways of diversifying income sources whilst supporting the needs of communities. How can we make the most of the opportunities that could be there and do we see them? In a highly competitive funding environment, churches cannot always solely rely on grants and donations.

If you're thinking about ways to earn income, this session could be what you need. It is open to anyone, from any church, chapel or meeting house across the UK.

The format of the workshop will be a 30-45 minute presentation, with 15 minutes for discussion and questions at the end.

Having faith in good maintenance

Thursday 14th October 2025.
12 p.m. online, please register [here](#).

This National Churches Trust workshop will explain why the importance of undertaking regular maintenance cannot be stressed enough. Proper and regular maintenance of your church building will help you preserve heritage, save money, be more sustainable, and promote guardianship and community involvement.

If you're struggling get on top of maintenance, or you are creating or developing your maintenance plan, this session could be what you need.

The format of the workshop will be a 30-45 minute presentation, with 15 minutes for discussion and questions at the end.

National Giving Team webinars and training

Various dates and times.
Visit the [Church of England's 'Building a generous church' website](#) for details.

The Church of England's National Giving Team organise webinars and training sessions throughout the year to improve giving and generosity in churches.

They are suitable for all churches and include opportunities to ask questions and expand on your knowledge. If you can't make it to any of the webinar dates but would like to receive the recording, please get in touch at digitalgiving@churchofengland.org.



Clergy training on Thursday 3rd July: save the date



WHAT IS GRANT FUNDING AND HOW TO APPLY FOR IT

A Diocese of Manchester clergy training day



St John's House
9.45 a.m. to 3.45 p.m. on Thursday 3rd July

ecclesiastical



AGENDA		
TIME	TOPIC	NAME OF SPEAKER
9.15	Refreshments on arrival	
9.45	Welcome and opening prayer	Paul Bailey, Diocesan Giving Advisor, The Diocese of Manchester Rev'd Paul Monk, Vicar of Ashton under Lyne
10.00	How do I get my church ready to apply for grant funding?	Rev'd Alan Simpson, DAC and DMPC Secretary, The Diocese of Manchester Rev'd Paul Monk
11.00	Tea and coffee break	
11.15	How to write a successful application for external funding?	Heather Ford, Church Support Manager, Ecclesiastical Rev'd Paul Monk Paul Bailey
13.15	Lunch	
13.45	Love your neighbour as yourself - the importance of funding our church's mission in your local communities	Bishop Matthew Porter, Bishop of Bolton, The Diocese of Manchester
14.00	What grants are available and how do I find them?	Matt Godfrey, Account Manager, Idox Paul Bailey Rob Chilton, Parish Support Officer, The Diocese of Manchester
15.00	Tea and coffee break	
15.15	Meet the funder - National Churches Trust	Matthew Maries, Cherish Project Support Officer (North West), National Churches Trust
15.30	Meet the funder - Benefact Trust	Andrew Bass, Senior Grants Officer, Benefact Trust
15.45	Closing remarks	Paul Bailey

This [Google Maps link](#) will allow you to create directions to St John's House, 155-163 The Rock, Bury, BL9 0ND. You can plan your public transport journey via this [Bee Network link](#).

Annual thank you letters: a reminder

The [Anglican Giving Survey](#) highlighted that less than a third of church goers say they are regularly thanked for their giving. People who donate to support our churches (funding their buildings, mission and ministry, and running costs) should be regularly thanked for their giving and generosity, and for what God has provided to enable it to take place.

A thank you letter enables you to highlight a person's financial giving and any Gift Aid or Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme (GASDS) claimed from His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) during the last tax year. It is also an opportunity to ask if a donor is still paying tax so that Gift Aid can continue to be claimed. Some donors will need the information in a thank you letter for their own tax returns.

The letters are also an opportunity to include an attachment to your letters or emails in the form of a small leaflet or a flyer. It should highlight a summary of your church's achievements during the last twelve months. It is also an opportunity to highlight what has happened inside your church building, your church hall, and your work to support your congregation and local community.

The Anglican Giving Survey highlighted that half of Anglicans would donate more if they understood the impact of their giving.

A template thank you letter is available on request from the Giving, Generosity, and Thankfulness Team, [see page 10](#) for contact details.

easyfundraising update

We are pleased to announce that 72 churches in our Diocese have now benefitted from £43,794 in funding from our partner easyfundraising.

We partner with easyfundraising to help our churches access extra funding simply and effectively. Churches simply register as a 'good cause' on the [easyfundraising website](#). Then, whenever members of their congregation shop online with 8,000 well known retailers, the retailer they shop with donates a proportion of the spend back to the church – at no additional cost to the shopper.

So it simply turns online shopping into free money for your church. Every 3 months easyfundraising send your church the money raised by your congregation shopping online. The next payments will be made to churches in May.

All Saints, Newton Heath, have raised £1,063 with easyfundraising so far. Spokesperson Rose says: "easyfundraising has given us the opportunity to make up some of the money we lost during the lockdowns. We advertised it at church and to our friends and family and explained how to go through the easyfundraising site to select the retailer they want to shop with, which would then give us a donation without it costing them a penny.

"It's free for supporters to use and they raise donations for our church when shopping at over 8,000 online shops, including when buying groceries, holidays, insurance, and even through everyday shopping with Amazon, eBay and Argos.



 easyfundraising

£43,794

donated to our churches!

Is your church missing out?

"It really is worth joining easyfundraising to help with extra funding for your church at no cost to your supporters. We've used the money to pay for hymns to be downloaded onto our electric organ and any surplus is being put towards the repairs to our grade 2 listed building."

Make sure your church is signed up in time for the next easyfundraising payout in May. Register your church here: www.easyfundraising.org.uk/diocese-of-manchester

Month or quarter end claiming dates

A reminder to all churches in the diocese to use either month end or quarter end dates when sending off your Gift Aid and GASDS claims to HMRC or the Gift Aid Lite scheme for processing.

This helps to ensure you are claiming on all eligible donations up to and including a specific date. It also helps to ensure your claim balances exactly to the eligible amount of donations received by your church in its giving records. It is vitally important this matches to the penny before you claim.

The quarter end dates are up to and including:

- 5th April
- 30th June
- 30th September
- 31st December



Congregations are signing up to Faith Will to create lasting change in their communities and beyond

International development agency Christian Aid is working with the Church of Scotland, Church of England, the Quakers and the United Reformed Church on Faith Will – a scheme which encourages people to talk about leaving gifts in their Wills to the charity, and to their church or Quaker meeting.

Congregations up and down the country are invited to sign up for free resources which they can use to create a Faith Will moment, making it easier to talk about the power of gifts in Wills and how people's generosity can help create change in their communities and around the world.

Faith Will spokesperson Kerry McMenamin explained the 'moment' can be anything from watching the Faith Will video over coffee, to hosting a speaker at a service or meeting.

She added: "It couldn't be easier; we have various resources which church leaders can tailor to suit them. The important thing is to start having these conversations. Wills can tell a powerful story of someone's faith - and the choices we make can ensure our values live on for generations to come."

The work of churches is vital in their communities – whether that's helping with foodbanks or working with young people.

Christian Aid works alongside local organisations in some of the most vulnerable communities, providing urgent, practical help in times of crisis and beyond. It seeks to eradicate extreme poverty by tackling its root causes, and sharing and distributing power. The charity also campaigns in the UK on global issues including poverty and the climate crisis.

Kerry added: "Gifts in Wills are already transforming communities, near and far. Last year more than 200 churches signed up to receive our free resources to help them have these conversations and this year we aim to double this; there's so much opportunity to raise awareness about this powerful way of giving."

The range of free resources, including a short film and leaflets for congregations, is available at: www.christianaid.org.uk - Faith Will. Please click on the image below to find out more:



Consultation on digital Gift Aid declarations



Your church's digital Gift Aid declarations, whether they are linked to online or device donations, must be downloaded from the platform used to process these donations (e.g. Give A Little, Just Giving). These documents form a vital part of the Gift Aid audit trail that HMRC expects every charity to have in place. They need to be stored for six years plus the current tax year alongside your paper declarations and one-off envelopes (stored in paper form or as PDF or image files).

Gift Aid Lite member churches can set up a link to auto import donations into My Giving Online from Give A Little. For Gift Aid eligible donations, a new donor record is created containing the donor's name and address, Gift Aid declaration date, and the donation date and amount.

Currently these donations are automatically verified as being Gift Aid eligible if a declaration has been completed in Give A Little. Unlike paper declarations or one-off envelopes, the Gift Aid Lite team does not need to receive a copy of the declaration before it is verified and the dates appear in the donor's record.

This means that many churches are not downloading and storing copies of digital declarations outside of the online giving site they are using, and additionally it means the diocese is not storing a second copy of your church's digital declarations as a back up.

The donations will continue to be auto-imported and donor records created if the donations are Gift Aid eligible, but we'd like your views on a number of options before the Gift Aid Lite scheme makes a decision on what to do next to tackle the specific issues raised by with the link between Give A Little and My Giving Online.

The options under consideration are:

- 1.Churches are required to send in PDF copies of Give A Little declarations, but the auto verification process is still turned on.
- 2.Turn off the auto verification of Gift Aid donations from Give A Little. Declarations will be validated once a copy of the declaration has been emailed or posted to giftaid@manchester.anglican.org

Option 2 will ensure that all Gift Aid declarations are dealt with in the same way regardless of the donation method used, and is our preferred option.

We'd welcome the views of Gift Aid Lite members before a final decision is made. Please email or speak to us using the contact details on [page 10](#) to let us know your thoughts.

The process to download declarations from the Give A Little website is outlined below.

Downloading Gift Aid declarations from Give A Little

You will need administrator access to the Give A Little website. You can be invited to set this up via email by your church's current administrator, as shown below:



Users

Within the reports menu, click on the Gift Aid option (see the screenshot, right). You can enter a date range of your choosing. If you haven't previously downloaded any declarations you will need to choose the date when you first started using Give A Little as the earliest option.

Gift Aid

This report summarises all donations that may be eligible for an HMRC Gift Aid claim within the date period you define. You can view and export the donor declaration details for audit purposes.

This report includes eligible donations that are declared retrospectively. Please be aware you may have previously claimed these under the Gift Aid Small Donations scheme, if so you will need to exclude them from your Gift Aid claim.

25 February, 2025 to 28 March, 2025

Click on the 'details' hyperlink at the end of the row containing the donor's name, see below. On the next screen, you will be provided with an option to download a copy of the declaration as a PDF file to print or save.

Latest donation date	Full name	First line of address	Postcode	Total
3/23/25	Paul Bailey	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	£50.00 Details

Bits and bobs

Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme (LPWGS)

The rules and regulations of LPWGS have been changed by the UK government as part of a one-year extension to the scheme, but with revised rules including a new annual cap of £25,000 per listed place of worship. Full details of these changes and how to apply can be found on the [LPWGS website](#).

Bats in Churches: small grants

The Bat Conservation Trust, the Church of England, Natural England, Churches Conservation Trust, and Historic England have come together to offer places of worship in England the opportunity to apply for the new [Living Alongside Bats in Churches Grant Fund](#).

This is a small grant aimed at supporting places of worship who need help with their bat roost; for example, the roost might be causing an increased cleaning burden and purchasing some new cleaning equipment would help manage the issue. The current round of applications closes on 28 April.

Heritage Open Days: open for registration

There is still time to register your church on the [Heritage Open Days website](#) to take part in this year's celebrations .

Could your church host a farmers' market?

Support is available from [Better Food Traders](#) to help churches to host sustainable farmers' markets, cafes, food hubs, plus growing and cooking projects. They are interested in supporting churches to use their buildings and churchyards to host farmers' markets and similar events. To find out more, please email julia@bettertraders.org.

Society of Antiquaries of London

The Society has established the Linda Parry Textile Research and Conservation Fund. It will make grant awards of £500-£5,000 to churches, chapels, and other places of worship in the UK for the research and conservation of textiles, including those from the 20th century. Further details can be found at www.sal.org.uk/what-we-do/grants/our-grant-programmes/



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**GIVING, GENEROSITY,
& THANKFULNESS**

 THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND
Diocese of Manchester

CHURCH FOR A DIFFERENT WORLD



Please don't forget to follow us on social media and join our Facebook group:



[@manchesterdiocesegiftaidlite](#)



[@giftaidlite](#)



[@mancdiocese_giftaidlite](#)



www.youtube.com/@GivingGenerosityThankfulness