

St Paul's Church



**Stewardship Sunday
October 20th 2024**



Thank
You!

'Stewardship Sunday' is our annual opportunity to prayerfully reflect on our financial support for St Paul's.


The first thing to say is ***thank you***. I am very grateful for the faithful, regular and sacrificial financial support of the church family for the mission and ministry God has given us. I cannot overstate how much we value your support and how important it is to our church.

It is not our intention to pressure you to give more than you can afford. Money will be tight for many of us, and we do not want you to overstretch yourself. Nevertheless the Church and its various ministries depends on the financial support of its members. In the longer term we would love to be able to do more to serve the local community and help all people, young and older, to come to know Jesus for themselves and grow in the faith. We will only be able to do that if our income grows.

Therefore, to help us get our priorities right, this booklet focuses firstly on the Bible's teaching about giving. It is only in Scripture that we find the right foundations for our actions, attitudes, beliefs & behaviour. This includes our giving. Secondly, there is information about the current state of our finances & the challenges we face.

Finally, there is guidance as to how you can respond.

Thanks again for all your support. Yours in
Christ,


Matt

Giving to Help Build God's Church (Exodus 35:4-29)

I wonder how many people will actually read this article about giving? Because there are plenty of reasons not to read it! It isn't exactly the most enticing of subjects for a start! And it could literally cost you money! And you have probably got other things you could be doing right now, instead of reading this, haven't you?!

But it is important we think about giving because it is an important part of our Christian discipleship. We are called to honour God and put him first in every area of our lives, including how we spend our money.

I am going to share with you some lessons on giving from Exodus chapter 35. What we read in this chapter comes a short time after God gave the law, including The 10 Commandments, to Moses on Mount Sinai. After Moses came down the mountain, he passed on to the people God's instructions regarding the building of the tabernacle. The tabernacle was a movable tent which would be the place of worship, and the place where God would dwell among his people. But first of all they needed the materials to make it, and those materials would be received as offerings from the people. What happens next is very informative. We see the following:

Giving is commanded by God and is therefore an act of obedience

"Moses said to the whole Israelite community, 'This is what the LORD has commanded...'" (Ex. 35:4). What follows is a mandatory collection. Not everyone would be able to give to this particular cause, and not everyone would be able to give the same amount, but God commanded that a collection of donations be taken because donations are required for God's work to be done.

Our giving is to be according to the resources we have available to us.

God is good. He doesn't ask or command us to give what we don't have, only what we do have. We are to give according to our means. So Moses says, "From what you have, take an offering..." (Ex. 35:5). So we shouldn't feel bad if we genuinely can't give more than we do.

Our Giving is to God

Moses continues, "take an offering for the LORD." (Ex. 35:4-5). This is important! We need to understand that our giving is to God and to advance his purposes in the world. Now as then there are things God wants us to do in the world, and to achieve his purposes we need those who love God to contribute from their resources.

We are to give voluntarily

Next Moses says, "Everyone who is willing is to bring to the LORD...". Notice that Moses doesn't strong arm people into giving. Their donations to the construction of the tabernacle were to come from a 'willing heart'. We should give because we love God and want to serve and honour him with our money.

We are to give generously

What comes next is a list of the building materials required to construct the tabernacle. The list includes:

- precious metals ("gold, silver and bronze" - Ex. 35:5). Just think how much more valuable these metals must have been thousands of years ago!
- costly fabrics ("blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen; goat hair; ram skins dyed red and another type of durable leather" – vv. 6-7)
- High-quality timber suitable for woodwork ("acacia wood" – v7).

- “olive oil for the light” (v8)
- “spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense” (v8)
- Precious gemstones (“onyx stones and other gems to be mounted on the ephod and breastpiece.” - vv9)

Where were they to get all this from in the desert? The answer is that they got it from the Egyptians when they left Egypt (Exodus 11:2). God had already provided the items for them to give.

The list sounds a bit like a list that might be publicised in church: *“The following items are needed for the craft activities in Sunday Club. If you can help, please see Jill.”* God had a major craft project in mind, but he wasn’t just going to use old cereal packets or egg boxes, as useful as those might be for Sunday Club. The items he required were of high quality and costly. The people were to give God the very best of what they had, not their leftovers. That generosity would be a display of their love for him, and an expression of his worth in their eyes.

We are also to give our time and skills

Moses continues, “All who are skilled among you are to come and make everything the LORD has commanded...” (Ex. 35:10). Then Moses lists all the items that were to be made including the tabernacle itself, the Ark of the Covenant, the table for the bread of the Presence, the lampstand, the altar of burnt offering, the priests clothing, and more.

It is really interesting how people were expected to take the gifts and skills they already had and use them to the glory of God. What skills do we have that could be used to advance God’s purposes in the world?

Giving needs to be put into practice

Do you ever think, “I know I should give” or “I should give more” but never get round to it for whatever reason? If verses 4 to 19 are about the donations and skills required to build God’s tabernacle, then verses 20 to 29 are about the people getting busy and actually doing what was required of them. For example, v21 says “everyone who was willing and whose heart moved them came and brought an offering to the LORD for the work on the tent of meeting.” Then we are told about the donations people actually gave, and some of the skills they actually used. The section concludes with these words, “All the Israelite men and women who were willing brought to the LORD freewill offerings for all the work the LORD through Moses had commanded them to do.” (Ex. 35:29)

It is so easy to think about giving (and giving more if we can) but do we actually do it like they did? Do we take the practical steps required to put our giving into practice? For example, filling in and returning the ‘My Financial Promise’ giving form? But why does all of this matter?

Our giving is to build God’s Church

Earlier, in Exodus 25, there is a similar but shorter passage. At the end of the list of building materials God says, “Then have them make a sanctuary [i.e. a ‘holy place’] for me, and I will dwell among them.” (Exodus 25:8). This was a huge privilege and blessing for the Old Testament Jews. They literally had God living among them in a tent, leading and looking after them! It sounds amazing - and it was - but we have something even better! The New Testament equivalent is... THE CHURCH! By which I mean the people of God, not the building(s) we meet in. We see this in Ephesus 2:22 where the apostle Paul writes, “And in him [Christ Jesus] you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.” (Ephesians 2:22). In the previous

verse he calls us “a holy temple in the Lord.” (Eph. 2:21). Elsewhere Paul says, “Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in your midst?” (1 Cor. 3:16). It is a remarkable blessing, and we have the privilege of being able to contribute to this building project. Every believer has a responsibility to do what they can to “build up the church” (1 Cor. 14:12). We can do this is by giving our money, time, and skills, to help people come to faith in Christ so the church grows in size, and then by helping those people grow as Christians in faith and personal holiness so the church grows in maturity.

So the question is a simple one. Will you give obediently, according to your means, to God, voluntarily, generously, of your money, time, and skills, with the aim of building God’s Church here in Canford Heath, so that God’s Church grows in number, faith, and holiness, to the glory of God? Please take the time to carefully and prayerfully reflect on this important question.

Your brother in Christ,

Matt

ST PAUL'S FINANCIAL POSITION 2023

INCOME	Actual 2023	Forecast 2024	Difference	%	Notes
Standing Orders, Cash & Donations	£44,075	£49,300	£5,225	12	1
Gift Aid Claimed	£10,042	£10,400	£358	0	
Church & Hall Income	£23,885	£26,300	£2,415	10	2
PCC Fees Collected - Weddings etc less fees	£858	£700	-£158	0	3
Fund Raising Including Restricted	£6,875	£6,500	-£375	-5	4
Miscellaneous	£130	£98	-£32	0	
TOTAL	£85,865	£93,298	£7,433	8.7	
EXPENSES					
Parish share	£49,722	£53,700	£3,978	8.0	5
Clergy expenses	£900	£900	£0	0	
Salaries inc. cleaner	£11,546	£12,520	£974	8.4	6
Church & Hall Expenses	£26,683	£28,090	£1,407	5.2	7
Mission Giving	£1,250	£450	£300	-24	
TOTAL	£90,101	£95,660	£5,559	6.1	
Surplus / Deficit	-£4,236	-£2,362			

A letter from David Pawling, on behalf of the PCC

Notes:

1) Standing Orders, Donations and Cash collections have increased by an amazing 12% from 2023 which is due to new people donating and many members of our church increasing their regular contributions. The two Prayer & Reflection days held this year have raised contributions and we are very grateful to all those who contribute.

We would ask that if you are able to give more either by standing order or one off donations and if you haven't already completed a gift aid declaration to do so. This allows us to claim the tax you have paid, back from HMRC which increases your gift by 25%. If you're not sure if you pay enough tax your annual tax statement should provide you with that information. All contributions where we know the person who has given the gift (ie Standing Order or Envelope) need to have a signed Gift Aid Declaration to be completed. Any gifts under £30 made using a Card reader or in cash allow us to claim 'Small Gift Aid' tax back.

2) Hall & Church income has increased by 10%. We are very fortunate to have a number of organisations who use our Hall & Church regularly. This provides us with the income to cover the cost of running these buildings for the use of all. We increased our rents by 5% for all groups in Sept 2023, we have had some new groups start to use our facilities and this year we saw the hall being used twice for voting, which is paid for.

The Hall & Church buildings are used by Jumping Jelly Beans preschool, Rainbows, Brownies & Guides as well as availability for private parties at the weekend. We have a Lunch Club, Heath Social Group, Arts Group, two Dance Groups, the Poole Arts

Centre Rehearsal Orchestra, U3A, Toddler group, Saturday Coffee Morning & Tuesday Church Worship Group.

3) The Church continues to be used for Weddings, Baptisms and funerals. The figures recorded are after Salisbury's contributions have been made.

4) Fundraising - We have been fortunate to have received the following donations: £1,875 to advance Church outreach, £1,000 for new Hall chairs, £1,000 to put towards ongoing projects, £690 raised from the Art Week, £600 from the summer Children's Challenge, and £1,300 forecasted for the Panto & Christmas Market.

5) Parish Share - We, like all Church of England Churches, make a contribution towards the cost of the Mission & Ministry of our Diocese. The Diocese pays for our minister (Salary, Pension & housing), investing in the Church of the future (vocations, discipleship & ministry training), as well as a range of Diocesan wide parish & school resources and support services.

Our requested share of this cost has increased by 8% to £53,700.

6) Salary inc. cleaner - costs were increased to take into account the minimum wage increase from April 2024 of 9.8%.

7) Church & Hall Expenses - Full year effect of the new electricity charges which means our bill will be nearly £12,000 or 43% of the total. We have spent £2,300 on replacement of two fire doors, £2,145 on the Hall Sound Absorption project and £1,000 on new Hall chairs. Some of this capital expenditure came from restricted donations.

We will continue to look at ways to reduce our costs and increase our income, for example I have managed to renegotiate our Photocopier contract in 2023 and by using an ecotank printer this year we can cut our photocopying ongoing costs again.

The forecast for this year had indicated our income to be short by £10,000, but as a church have managed to cut this deficit to around £2,300 through increased giving and fundraising. Our provisional budget for 2025 indicates we will be short by approximately £9,000 driven by an increase in our requested Parish Share by nearly 10% to £59,035 - a huge challenge for us to try and achieve.

David Pawling
(Treasurer)

RSVP NOW

- ***If you're an occasional attender*** please do not feel compelled to give. Enjoy your visit without obligation. If you would like to donate you may put your gift in the offering or use the card reader. One off donations may be made by online bank transfer: **Sort Code: 52-10-20**, for the credit of St Paul's Church. **Account Number: 43512895**. If you do this please notify the office or Treasurer so that we know where the money came from. Email: treasurer@stpaulscanfordheath.org.uk
- ***If you're a regular attender but don't give regularly*** can I encourage you to begin giving regularly? We support the causes close to our hearts.
- ***If you give by cash in the Sunday offering*** would you consider giving via a planned giving scheme (standing order or regular giving envelopes)? If you are a taxpayer, we can increase the value of your gift by reclaiming the tax you have already paid on it.
- ***If you give by the regular giving envelopes*** would you consider giving by regular standing order? You can give regularly whether you are able to attend church or not. Standing orders are at your discretion and can be changed, or cancelled, at any time.
- ***However you give to St. Paul's*** would you prayerfully consider increasing your giving? The ultimate responsibility for funding the mission and ministry of St Paul's is ours. So we all need to respond in a way that honours God and expresses our commitment to St Paul's.

To help you do this please read the 'My Financial Promise' Leaflet that accompanies this booklet.

Could you remember St Paul's Church Canford Heath in your will?

When it comes to your Will, it is only right that your family and friends come first in your thoughts.

But that doesn't mean you can't also leave a gift to a cause close to your heart. Gifts left in people's wills can make a significant difference to St. Paul's. They can give us financial stability in a time of uncertainty and enable us to continue effectively engaging in mission and ministry to our local community. Legacies can make a tremendous difference and they often enable new and exciting projects that would otherwise be impossible!



DID YOU KNOW?

- Typically, over 80% of church members give regularly to support the ministry of their local church
- Fewer than 20% of church members leave a gift to their church family in their will.

Legacies...

- are a logical conclusion of a lifetime's planned giving.
- make a real difference to the Church.
- don't happen without specific planning.

*It's easy to include charities in a new will, or add a codicil to an existing one. **Speak to your solicitor, or visit <https://www.churchofengland.org/our-faith/church-legacy> for more information.** You may also tick the appropriate box on the response sheet.*