



The Church of St George the Martyr

The Church of England Parish Church for Wash Common, Newbury

www.st-george-newbury.org.uk

16th October 2022

Dear Friends,

Today is our annual Renewal of Giving Sunday and part of our celebration of harvest time as we give thanks to God for many blessings.

There are indeed many blessings to be grateful for here at St George's. As Becky outlined in her sermon of two weeks ago we have firm foundations to build on as we look to the future after the effects of the pandemic. Three important outreach opportunities have been identified as priorities by the PCC to help us move forwards serving our community and sharing God's love in this place – a warm welcome café, a paid Families and Children's Worker, and vital renovation work to the exterior of the church.

It is only through the generous giving of time, talents and money from local people over many years that we have firm foundations to build on. Thank you to everyone who supports the work and ministry of St George's in any kind of way.

If you are relatively new to St George's and would like to volunteer, maybe as part of the welcome team, or to be on the readers' rota, or help serve coffee, or support our Wednesday Toddler group, or cut the grass outside, or any of the countless different roles which you might like to help with, do please speak to Becky or one of the churchwardens, or simply sign up on one of the many lists!

Also, if you are new and would like to find out about how to join the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS), the details are below. This scheme was introduced in 2019 and, thanks to the strong up-take, has had a hugely positive effect on our finances and financial administration.

Whether new to St George's or not, we are asking everyone to reflect on what they would like to give to the Church. What does each of us feel we can offer in terms of our time, or sharing our skills or experience; or supporting the church financially?

Everyone's situation is different, and we are fully aware that this letter is being sent at a time of economic hardship with many struggling to cope. So please be assured that there is absolutely no pressure or expectation of a particular response. We are simply offering this annual opportunity as a reminder to think about what we offer in all sorts of different ways.

Like every organisation, family and business, the costs of running the church have increased, we are also not back at the level of income from hiring the hall and annex that we were before the pandemic, nor indeed has our regular giving bounced back fully yet, so we have got work to do on our everyday finances before adding in any new priorities. As you know, churches receive no funding other than what is given or generated locally.

So, on this annual Renewal of Giving Sunday, we are asking everyone on the electoral roll (nearly 200 people) to consider their regular giving to the church. This regular giving is the backbone of the Church's finances. If you can afford to increase your giving please consider doing so.

The Parish Giving Scheme

If you feel that you are able to make regular donations via the Parish Giving Scheme, you can register via telephone (0333 002 1271) or online (<https://www.parishgiving.org.uk/donors/find-your-parish/wash-common-st-george-newbury/>). If you register via the telephone, you will need our code number which is 270627435.

There is an option on the PGS to increase your donation by the Retail Price Index (RPI) annually. Please tick this box if you feel able, it makes a big difference to us. If you already give via the PGS and haven't currently agreed to the RPI increase option, please do. The PGS will write to you annually to tell you what the RPI increase will be before making any changes and give you the option not to proceed with the increase if you don't want to. However, if you do agree to this increase it will mean that your donation isn't diminished by the effects of inflation. Currently 55% of our givers tick this box so if you haven't agreed to this, please do consider this.

If you give by the PGS you can change the amount you give at any time, either by phoning on the number above or by registering on the website and then changing your donation. If you donate by Standing Order you will need to change your standing order with your bank however, please let Simon Pook know on the email address below so that we can amend our records.

The only people who know who makes regular donations to the church are the Planned Giving Officer (Simon Pook) and our Treasurer (Francis Clayton) and both who gives, and how much, are kept strictly confidential. However, if you don't wish to let anyone to know that you donate, or the amount, it is possible to donate anonymously via the PGS and all we are told is that an anonymous donor has made a donation. If you have any questions about the PGS please contact Simon Pook who will be happy to talk you through how the scheme works.

Standing Orders

If you currently give by Standing Order please consider whether you would be willing to move to donate by Direct Debit on the Parish Giving Scheme. You will still have control over the amount which you can change or stop at any time but the administrative work for us is much less on the Parish Giving Scheme than with Standing orders.

Blue Envelopes and cash donations

Of course, for some people these are the preferred method of giving – plus we now have the debit machine on Sundays which helps in an increasingly cash-less society! We are grateful to all who give in this way.

Once again, thank you.

Let us finish by underlining once again that we have many blessings here at St George's and we realise that generous giving to the life of the Church is not restricted to financial giving and we are fortunate that so many people give their time, skills, moral support and prayers so generously to the church. These gifts are equally valid as gifts of money and are equally gratefully received.

And to reiterate - everyone's situation, and ability to give, has changed over the last 18 months and if on reflection, yours has changed such that you need to reduce the amount that you give, please be assured that we understand.

Thank you very much indeed.

Simon Pook, St George's Planned Giving Officer

Francis Clayton, Church Treasurer

Revd Becky Bevan, Vicar

Contact details

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