

A Stewardship 'self-assessment' process for parishes

The aim of the following statements¹ is to provide a broad 'snapshot' of the progressive stages of a parish stewardship journey. The statements are grouped under five headings: giving mechanisms, demonstrating impact, explaining need, discipleship and embedding generosity.

Choose one under each category which you believe best reflects your parish today.

1. Giving Mechanisms

- A. Our church takes a retiring collection at Sunday services and has a cash collection box at the back of the church.
- B. Our church always takes either a collection during a service, or a retiring collection and has a cash collection box at the back of the church. Some members use giving envelopes.
- C. Some members give through standing order. Our church has regular collections and a collection box, and some members use giving envelopes. We claim Gift Aid on some or all regular donations.
- D. Some members give through standing order, and we have signed up to the Parish Giving Scheme. We are starting to raise funds through Digital Giving (contactless and/or online). We have regular collections and a collection box, and some members use giving envelopes. We claim Gift Aid on the majority or all of our donations.
- E. Our church has signed up to the Parish Giving Scheme which we actively promote. We receive some regular donations through Digital Giving (contactless and/or online) and we continue to ensure those who want to give cash donations can do so. We are very efficient in the processing of our Gift Aid claims, making the most from this.
- F. We are keen to consider any new mechanism that might enable more people to give. Legacy Giving is part and parcel of what we talk about in giving and generosity. We are part of the Parish Giving Scheme and raise funds through contactless and online giving. Some members give through standing order, and we still provide opportunities for those who want to give cash donations. Our Gift Aid processes are thorough.

¹ Statements are based on material shared by the Church of England 'Cornerstone' stewardship project.

2. Demonstrating Impact

- A. We rarely talk about the missional things we have done as a church. We don't currently have a clear understanding of the impact of people's giving and generosity on the mission and ministry of our church.
- B. We sometimes talk to the congregation about the impact of giving. But we lack clarity as to what it is we do and contribute as a church. We are able to identify key areas of our mission and ministry that have been impacted by people's generous giving.
- C. We do talk about what we do as a church, but sometimes this is hard as it's not always clear what difference we make. We are able to identify key areas of our mission and ministry that have been impacted by people's generous giving. We sometimes share these stories in our written communications.
- D. We have a clear understanding about the impact of people's giving and generosity on the mission and ministry of our church. We are not always confident in communicating this in relation to people's giving but make efforts to share news through a range of media.
- E. We are clear about the difference we make as a church, and we talk well to the congregation about this. We have a confident and clear understanding about the impact of people's giving and generosity on the mission and ministry of our church. We communicate this when opportunities arise in more than one format and are intentional in sharing stories with the congregation.
- F. We are clear about the difference we make as a church, and we talk well to the congregation and wider community about this. We have found good channels to do this (e.g. social media). We have a confident and clear understanding about the impact of people's giving and generosity on the mission and ministry of our church. We have planned, regular communication, delivered through a variety of media to the congregation and wider community. The leadership of the church is keen to identify the ways we make an impact.

3. Explaining Need

- A. Only a small number of people understand our church finances. Also, only a small number understand the Common Mission Fund and its value. There is no space where need is communicated to the congregation or wider community.
- B. Some of the PCC understand the Common Mission Fund and what it does. Some of the PCC understands the income and expenditure streams of the church. We have very few materials explaining why people's support is needed. We have very few materials for the wider community to show how the church meets their needs.
- C. The majority of the PCC understand the Common Mission Fund and what it does. The majority of the PCC understand the income and expenditure streams of the church. We have communicated why people's support is needed from time to time, but we do not do this on a regular basis. In all likelihood, we think few people in the congregation understand.
- D. Perhaps half of the worshipping community understand how the Common Mission Fund works and what it does. Some understand the income and expenditure streams of the church. We have a few materials explaining why people's support is needed. We have a few materials for the wider community, showing how the church meets their needs.
- E. Many in the worshipping community understand the importance of the Common Mission Fund and what it does. The majority understand the income and expenditure streams of the church. Our materials explain why people's support is needed. We do have some materials for the wider community showing how the church meets their needs.
- F. The worshipping community understands the importance of the Common Mission Fund, what it does. The majority understands the income and expenditure streams of the church. All our materials explain why people's support is needed. Materials for the wider community show how the church meets their needs.

4. Discipleship

- A. Overall, it's not clear to us how generosity, giving and discipleship are linked.
- B. We do talk about the place of giving in discipleship, but it's not clear how this is built upon in the daily life of our church.
- C. We talk about generosity and giving, we frame it as part of our discipleship. A part of this we talk about specific ways in which we can live generous lives.
- D. Generosity and giving is a subject we have covered in small groups and small discipleship groups, when we have done them. We talk about generosity and giving, we frame it as part of our discipleship.
- E. Church members and leadership have access to ways of growing in their understanding of God's generosity towards us (e.g. through quality teaching and preaching, individual study materials and group resources). Together we explore ways we can live out generous lives.
- F. Church members and leadership have regular access to ways of growing in their understanding of God's generosity towards us (e.g. through quality teaching and preaching, individual study materials and group resources). As a result, they actively explore ways they can live out generous lives. We encourage new members to explore generosity as part of their discipleship.

5. Embedding Generosity

- A. We currently have no plan to encourage generosity, and have spent little, if any, time considering how we might become a more generous church.
- B. We recognise the need for a plan to encourage generosity and have begun to spend time considering how we might become a more generous church.
- C. We recognise the need for a plan to encourage generosity and have begun the process of developing this. We have spent time considering how we might become a more generous church but need to turn this into actionable plans.
- D. We have outline plans on how we will encourage generosity in the life of our worshipping community. We have spent time considering the response we will make to our generous God, and what things we need to do to become a more generous church.
- E. We have formulated plans on how we will encourage generosity in the life of our worshipping community. We have spent time considering the response we will make to our generous God, and what things we need to do to become a more generous church. We have yet to implement our plans to make this happen.
- F. We have detailed and robust plans on how we will encourage generosity in the life of our worshipping community. We spend time considering the response we will make to our generous God, and what things we need to do to become a more generous church. We have an ongoing programme in place to make this happen.