

Benefits of online giving

There are some real advantages to providing the facility for people to give online. No fumbling for loose change, or giving according to what we happen to have with us, but an opportunity to prayerfully consider what we would like to give. There's also no peer pressure, so we can give what we think is right rather than what we feel we should or what others are giving. It is also incredibly easy to give online, and many people feel very comfortable giving in this way. Nearly half of Anglicans give online to other charities, so it is just asking them to do the same as they do elsewhere. Lastly, sometimes our offertory can be a bit lost in the busyness of an onsite service. Online services give a chance for people to focus on giving as an important part of living out our faith. Bearing in mind all these advantages, it's no surprise that the average online gift is ten times that of the average cash gift.

Think and discuss

- Have I given online before? If so, did I find it easy? Did I give more than I would have given in cash?
- How much of a focus is the offertory during our onsite services?

The mechanics

For a church to enable online giving requires some time to set up an online giving account, but it's time very well spent. For further information on this please look at our [Parish Buying website](#). All companies charge a transaction fee (a percentage of the value of the donation, and sometimes a fixed cost too, and some have a regular monthly charge as well) The rates vary considerably, you can see some of the providers' costs [here](#). Parish Buying recommends GiveALittle, for its ease of setup (it should take about an hour to set up your online giving facility with them) and their competitive rates, with their transaction cost of 1.95% being amongst the best we can find. The national church is also funding the premium membership of GiveALittle for churches in 2021 that enables givers to complete a gift aid declaration too. Once you have set up an account, you can then put a 'give' button with a link to your online giving provider on your church page on A Church Near You as well as your church website if you have one.

Think and discuss

- Who could we approach in the church to set up the online giving account for us?
- Which provider would suit us best as a church?

Your flexible friend

Once your account is up and running, it is straightforward for people to give and can be used and promoted in many different ways. The promotion of it is really important. For it to fulfil the potential it has, it must be regularly promoted and encouraged to all those who may wish to use it. There are lots of examples of how to do that [here](#).

A link or QR code can be put in orders of service, newsletters, leaflets, email footers, social media posts, posters in church or at church events and so on. Many people are happy to give, and online giving makes it simpler and easier for them to do so. And this doesn't just apply to regular church members, but also to visitors, people who come to life events at the church, or members of the wider community.

Think and discuss

- What events do we run where we could also use an online giving facility?
- How could we promote online giving to visitors and people in our wider community?

Generosity films

We have produced various short films you can play during online services or post on social media channels that encourage people to give. Some people do feel awkward about encouraging giving, so the film allows that message to be communicated, and then there is space at the end of the film for you to personalise the film with links to your giving page. You can personalise the film through the A Church Near You [Resource Hub](#), accessible to A Church Near You editors.

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Think and discuss

- Check who in the church is an editor on the church's A Church Near You account. If no one is, could you be one? [Learn how to become an editor here](#).
- Which of the films would work best in your context?

QR codes

If you put a QR code on-screen (see this [blog](#) for more information on this) people at home can scan the QR code with their phone and it will take them to the giving page. This means the giver can stay in the service on their PC, laptop or tablet whilst giving during the offertory. It's easier than using a link and you can put the QR code on lots of different things (orders of service, posters, social media posts).

Think and discuss

- How can we use a QR code within our online service?
- How can we use QR codes in our church's life? QR codes can be used to enable people to find out more about church activities, church history, church events.....

It's different, but not that different

Giving is a key part of our lives as Christians, reflecting the generosity of the God we believe in. It is important that everyone is given this opportunity, however, they take part in our services. It is essential for enabling the church's ministry and mission to happen – the overwhelming majority of the costs of the church's ministry and mission are paid by people's generous giving. Online giving is just one of the ways we should provide for people to give, and sits alongside the opportunities to give through regular giving (such as the Parish Giving Scheme), contactless giving and so on.

Think and discuss

- What other ways can people give to our church?
- Are there other ways we should be encouraging people to give?

And finally....

While online giving is a great mechanism to receive donations, it is just that – a mechanism. To build a generous church we need to create the right environment for giving. This includes having the right mechanisms for giving, but we also need to explain why people can give, show the impact giving makes and build trust and confidence with those who give. To build a generous culture we need to inspire and disciple people, and embed generosity within the life of the church and enable people to live a more generous life. You can find out more about the ways we can help to do that by looking at the ['building a generous church'](#) section on the Church of England website.

Think and discuss

- Having watched the short animated film on building a generous church, are there areas you need to focus on as a church?
- There are various tools to help churches develop a generous culture. How could you use the giving review, generosity toolkit, generosity week or generosity fika within your church?

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