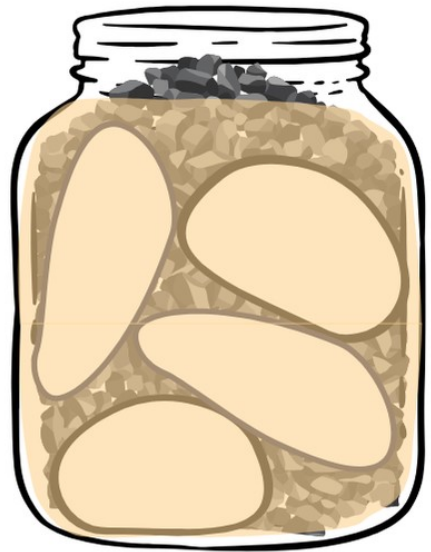




Stoke Poges Church
St Giles' and St Andrew's

Time, Talents & Treasure



Giving to God
generously
and with
joy



What does the Bible say about giving?

"Keep this in mind: if you plant sparingly you will reap sparingly, and if you plant bountifully, you will reap bountifully. You must give according to what you have inwardly decided— not sadly, not reluctantly, for God loves a giver who gives cheerfully."

2 Corinthians 9:6-7

The New Testament doesn't give exact directions as to how much Christians are to give to the Lord's work; what we are told is that we are to give GENEROUSLY and with JOY. However, the Old Testament standard is to give a tithe (10%) to God and the New Testament appears to assume this standard of giving and encourages people to give even more if they can. But finances are not the only offerings we can make to God – our Time and Talent are just as valuable.



Treasures

I want to suggest two essentials for everyone to pray about and act upon as they seek to honour God and support the work of the church financially:

1. Give to God first: as an act of honouring and obeying Him, and trusting Him to supply your needs (if not all your wants!). However much or little we give, it should be the first call on our net income. Whenever we get paid in the month, our giving to God should be debited from our account in the next day or so. We do not honour God by giving Him our leftovers.

2. Give to God in proportion to your income (that is, a percentage of your income).

Some people, because of their present financial circumstances cannot give 10%. So the question is *"What can I give?"*

If you honestly think that you can only give 2%, then give it with a joyful and generous heart, promising both yourself and God that you will review the situation next year to see if you can increase your giving to 4%, having experienced God's provision, and go on moving towards a tithe as your goal over a few years.

What will it be spent on?

Living out our Christian Mission through worship, growing, seeking, blessing, providing places of meeting, community and contemplation means in 2026 providing ...

- A NEW Family focused service - unashamedly Christian 30 minute active service for children and their families
- A Community Worker - a paid worker to support Pat's evangelistic ministry and build a team to follow opportunities opening in our village e.g. Bolds Court, School, Eco Garden.
- Update the audio system in St Andrew's, which is failing.

Can we still give to the open plate each week?

Obviously, if you feel strongly about giving in this way, we are happy to receive your offering, but if we know what our regular weekly/monthly income is going to be, we are more able to plan our budget and expenditure. The temptation may be to shrug our shoulders and give from what happens to be in our pocket or purse on a Sunday or give from what is left over at the end of the month but there are extra benefits to the church if you can plan your gift.

Why is a Standing Order helpful?

Paying by Standing Order will help you to give regularly and from the first of your income. It will also help our treasurer to manage the church's cash flow and claim back Gift Aid from the government (if you pay tax). Most importantly, it ensures that the church still receives your offering even when you can't attend. Regular gifts mean that the church will still exist in an hour of need, for the whole community and for generations to come.

How do I set up or change a Standing Order?

If you don't use electronic or phone banking, Standing Order forms are available in both churches and the office. You may contact your bank and ask them to make the necessary changes to an existing one, or you can fill in a new Standing Order form and write on it, "This form replaces my original instructions." For Standing Order forms or electronic transfer, the bank details are: Stoke Poges PCC, CAF Bank, Sort Code 40-52-40 A/C 00030354

Do I have to tell anyone how much I am giving?

No, your contribution should be made prayerfully, between you, God and your bank, and the details are treated in the strictest of confidence and are only recorded by the Treasurer for tax purposes. We will never phone you and ask for your bank or financial details.

Time

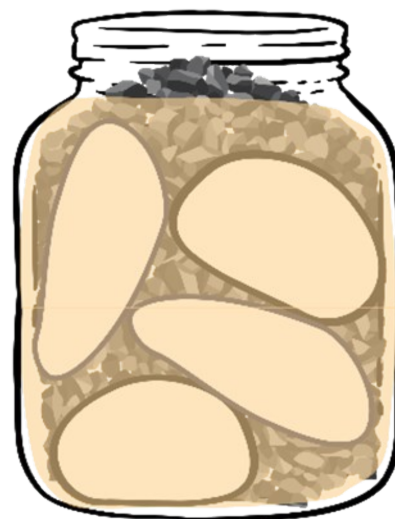
Time is a precious gift. Blessing others with our time, as God has called us to do, is a form of worship and of sacrifice. As we serve our church family wholeheartedly, it makes others want to join in; everyone feels welcome and it gives our church a family atmosphere. Jesus says 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'
Matthew 25:40 NRSV

Perhaps Sunday is the only time you have to focus on God, learning and recharging for the week ahead, so you'd prefer to offer your precious time to God's kingdom at another time of the week, if not every week then perhaps once a month or a longer stretch now and then? Here are some examples:

- A few emails (at a time to suit you) to organise a rota.
- An hour on the way home from work, once a month for a practical job at one of our buildings.
- Arrive at a Sunday service 20 minutes early once a month.
- A few hours once a quarter for a working party.

Don't have time?

Lots of us struggle to find time in our week but here's a thought... If we take a jar and fill it with sand or gravel first, we will struggle to fit any big rocks in. However, if we put the rocks in first, we'll be able to fit in the gravel and still have room for some sand.



Like the rocks, gravel and sand, if we work out the main priorities for our time, we can fit smaller jobs around this and surprisingly squeeze in a bit more if it is broken down small enough.

In your prayers, consider whether you could find even a small chunk of time around your main priorities:

How much time do I give to God's glory now?

Could I increase this by a few minutes here and there / half an hour / one hour / two hours?

Could I offer to help on a rota on a Sunday or during the week - daytime / evening / weekend?

Could I offer a longer stretch now and then?

Talents

'Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.'
1 Peter 4.10 NIVUK



Thank you!

Each year we give thanks at various points in the year for the wonderful talent we have amongst our church family. In each of our church seasons, you find us thanking and praising God for what He has blessed us with to meet our physical, spiritual and community needs. Without all of you, none of the weekly, monthly or seasonal

activities would happen inside our buildings or beyond and our buildings would have turned to dust a long time ago.

Do I have a talent?

YOU DO! A talent can be any ability God has given us – being a good listener, making a cup of tea, reading aloud, driving, organising a lunch, gardening, sharing the gospel. Many of you contribute in a variety of ways. What we do as a church is a combination of our natural gifts and God's guidance. Is there something you enjoy doing that would bless others but you don't know how this could help?

This last year has seen a bubbling up of new faith, new people, new opportunities that is seeing our **Vision to Love God & Love People** coming to fruition. This is both exciting and needs us to take note and prayerfully think - 'how can we keep this going?' Here are some examples:

By bringing good news - through our interactions with our neighbours. *Through binding up the broken hearted* - over a cup of tea, a meal shared, or moments spent outside the Co Op etc.

By proclaiming liberty - giving a voice to the voiceless speaking out wherever we see injustice or find individuals struggling for support in daily life. We can point them to help or just walk with them in times of trial or sorrow, either for a moment or a lifetime.

Praying constantly for God's grace to come - bringing '*release*' for those things that hold people or this world captive *in darkness*, knowing '*the year of the Lord's favour*' is now.

Inspired by Isaiah 61.1-3

Growing our talents

Jill, Sydney and Natasha have been prayerfully thinking and talking about this and they have discerned that it is time to invite everyone to grow their talent, with the help of the CCX Grow Course .



About the Grow Course

The Grow course enables congregations to grow in numbers and faith, helping us bring in God's kingdom, according to His plan, as we learn to listen to God, each other and those who have done this stuff before.

What will we learn?

- Vision and how to make it stick
- How to help others follow Jesus
- Inviting others to join in
- Branching out and growing bigger

Please take a moment or several to reflect, pray and then decide if you would be willing to participate in the Grow course activities to learn as a whole church how to grow our talent in this way.

These will be once per month during normal Sunday services between November 2025 and June 2026. Our hope is that over these 9 months, we will become equipped to have a greater impact on our community.

**" I planted, Apollos watered,
but God gave the growth. "**

1 Corinthians 3:6

What happens next ?

I hope you will take this booklet away and read it. We would appreciate you returning the slip to help us plan for 2026 and 'cut our cloth' according to what we have. It is valuable information for us even if you don't intend to make any changes just yet.

Think, pray and get your bible, diary, and calculator out, then fill in the slip that came with it, as you feel led by God. Remember all giving is a gift to the body of Christ – joyous, cheerful giving is what we are looking for in time, talent and financially. Whatever God places on your heart is right. You may also support other charities, youth organisations or spend time caring for others - only you can say what balance is right for you and honours God in this season of life. Remember also, Jesus said the only way to God is through believing and trusting in Him, not by our actions, how much we give or how "good" we are.

The wonderful thing about generosity is that you do not have to be rich to be generous. As you read this, remember that it is easy to pray about all these things (time, talent & finances) and then let fear stop you from responding to the answers. Spend a little time reflecting on all of it, because it is important that what you give comes from God's call. God knows we can only give from what we have in our hands ... so He will never compel you to give from what you have not already received.

Thank You!

My Pledge

Name

☐ Yes, I will pray for our giving needs.



Treasures

My planned giving for 2025-6 will be £..... per week/month

My one-off gift for 2025-6 will be £.....



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Time

I already help with
which takes me hours a week/month.



I can offer another half / one / two hours
per week / month / quarter
on a Mon/Tue/Wed/Thu/Fri/Sat/Sun

I can help with Practical jobs / Helping at services / Prayer time

I'd like to help with and would like to discuss
when I can fit this in.

☐ Sorry I can't spare any more time at the moment. My jar really is full.

Talents

☐ Yes, I'll join in discussions and activities about the
Grow course once a month on a Sunday .

If it would be useful, I'd like to offer to

.....

