

Thanksgiving (Gift) Day

Sunday 29th September'24

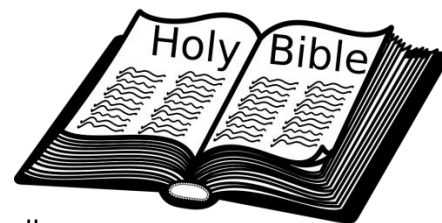


Our vision is to see our church making a difference to the lives of the people in Hollingworth, Tintwistle and the surrounding area through the power of the Holy Spirit, our commitment to God's word and our worship of our Lord Jesus Christ. Through the power of prayer, inspiring worship and the gifts God gives us we want to see lives changed, disciples growing, people healed, needs met and God's Kingdom extended.

The Aims of Gift Day:

- 1) **To Worship God with our finance**, as well as with our hearts, voices, and actions.
- 2) **For everyone to review their giving**, and pledge on that day what they will commit to give for the next year (& how they will do it).
- 3) **To give a one off gift** towards our predicted shortfall (Target £5-10,000)
- 4) **To celebrate God's goodness to us.**
- 5) **To encourage people to ask for support for themselves if they need it!**

Four Key Bible Verses on Giving:



1) **All things come from God**

We are reminded by King David *"But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to make this freewill-offering? For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you."* (1Chron 29:14), that all we have as individuals or a Church, comes from God, and belongs to him. We are stewards of God's money, gifts and talents.

2) **Invest in things of Eternal Value**

Jesus said *'Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also'.* (Matt 6:19-21). Invest in things that are ultimately reliable & cannot be destroyed.

3) **Giving is part of our worship**

Paul said *'give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful (Hilarious) giver'* (2 Cor9:7b). We are responding to God's outrageous love and generosity to us, it cost Him everything. God wants us to be like Him, to be joyful and generous givers, of our time, homes, money and talents.

4) **Plan your giving with God**

Paul also said *"Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion"* (2 Cor9:7a). We are to decide with God what we plan to give, and then do so, freely. Part of the planning is planning how to give i.e. Direct from bank account, or using weekly envelopes. Can we gift aid?

Gift Day – Sunday 29th September 2024

A process for reviewing your giving:

1. **Pray**
 2. **Who are you giving to?** - We are giving the money/time/talents that God has entrusted us with, back to Jesus as an act of worship. We are giving back to the one that we owe everything to!
 3. **What to give?** - Prayerfully consider and decide how much God is asking you to give. 10% is a good starting point for regular giving, but for some this is too much, and some this is too little!
 - Can you give a one off gift as well?
 4. **Your way to give?**
 - Regular Direct Debits (or standing orders) make it easy for you and the church to plan your giving. However we need to review these every year or two.
 - The envelope Scheme means that you can put cash aside every week, and if you miss a week you can bring two the next week. (But please don't put several weeks worth in one envelope as this can reduce the tax that we can reclaim!)
 - Are you a tax payer, can you gift aid the Money?
 - 5) **How are we to give?** - We are to give generously and joyfully, with an attitude of thankfulness
 - 6) **If Money's too tight to mention?**
 - If you are struggling and things are very tight, please don't struggle alone; let someone you can trust know. St Mary's has ways of helping people who need a hand, and talking it through with someone can really help, please do get in touch, you are not alone😊
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Dear Sisters and Brothers,

I'm writing on behalf of the PCC to highlight St Mary's current financial situation. We are not a rich church, but we have always had a generous heart towards God, his church and towards others.

We have been really blessed with St Mary's finances during both the covid pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis that followed it. Along with peoples generous regular giving we received several charity grants to help pay the bills, and reach out and serve our community. Many of these grants have now ended. Over the past 4 years we have sold £20,000 of shares, to help bridge the gaps in our finances. Whilst we still hold a few more shares, at the current rate they will run out in the next couple of years.

Our current situation –

COSTS: Whilst the rate of inflation has fallen, costs for everything (at home and for the church) have risen substantially and continue to rise. At St Mary's our core costs (utilities, insurance, vicarage council tax, our giving to charities & the contribution we make to Chester Diocese) have risen from £38,000 in 2016 to £48,000 for 2024. This does not include any maintenance work on the building, or everyday bits and pieces (palm crosses, or coffee etc). Over the years we have always kept our costs down as far as possible, so there are no easy savings to be made.

We are predicting a total cost of £54,000 to run St Mary's in 2024 (that is £1,040 per week)

INCOME: Our church family have always been generous, but a combination of a few people moving away, a few 'promoted to glory', and at the same time some people understandably reducing their giving so that they can pay their own bills, has meant that our regular income (including tax reclaimed) has not kept up with rising costs. Giving was £34,000 in 2016 and is now £37,000 in 2024. This left us with increasing costs and reduced income. As a result of this, **we have a predicted shortfall of over £5-10,000 each year, and limited money/shares to cover this.**

In view of this we are going to hold a Thanksgiving (Gift) Day on Sunday 29th September 2024 for St Mary's

As we have in the past, we would like to encourage everyone to review their giving. As some people will not be able to afford to give as much, are you able to give more? And if you are really struggling is it time to give a little less for a while?

I have attached some information about why we give, and some suggestions about how you could review your giving. I encourage you to be generous with your money, but also your time and your talents over the coming months. God loves a cheerful giver (2Cor9:7), but remember it was the widows' mite that received Jesus' praise (Mark 12:41-44), it is our attitude of heart that delights him!

So, could I encourage you to take some time in the coming weeks to read through the information and prayerfully consider your giving (Money, time & Talents) and bring your response on Sunday 29th Sept?

Every Blessing

Bruce

PS – It costs approximately £1,040 per week to keep St Mary’s open, some key facts are given below, if you want further information, please ask Dorothy Turton or myself for more information

PPS - If things are very tight, please don’t struggle alone; let someone you can trust know. St Mary’s has ways of helping people who need a hand, please ask. Talking things through with someone can really help, please do get in touch, you are not alone.

Some Key facts (not including ridge tile project)

Giving – Total regular giving including tax reclaim in 2023 was £36,364 (that’s £556 per week)

Other income (in 2023) – Use of building £2,600. Fees £440. Grants £3,500. One off gifts £1650

Bank Balances – We have a few thousand pounds in our bank account, and £20,000 of shares. (We have sold £25,000 of shares since 2019 to balance the books, £15,000 in 2023-24 alone)

Costs for 2024 – Expected total costs are £54,000 (that’s £1,050 per week)

- We have been asked to contribute £34,084 to Chester diocese (Vicar’s stipend, vicarage maintenance, and all the other support from diocese)
- Utilities & Insurance are approx. £8,000
- We give £3,000 to other Christian charities (10% of our regular income)
- We typically spend £3-5,000 per year on maintaining the building
- All costs for warm spaces (Families, Little fishes & Open house) have been paid for out of grants or users contributions for the past 3 years, not from church funds.