

A Message for Stewardship Sunday - Woodbridge

As it has for centuries, St Mary's remains at the heart of the community in Woodbridge but in order for it to continue to fulfil its mission it needs to be appropriately funded. On behalf of the rector and the ministry team the PCC would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who contributes financially and in kind to the upkeep of the church and the running of its activities.

Church expenses are rising. Just as for households, utility bills are going up and this has further to run. In addition, the amount that St Mary's pays to the Diocese, the so-called 'Parish Share', will likely rise by 5% (around £3,000) in the coming year, adding significantly to church expenses. On the revenue side, St Mary's has been blessed in recent years to benefit from a number of legacies and these funds have been designated by the PCC to help finance the plan to better integrate the church building with St Mary's House, improving disabled access and generally upgrading the facilities, including installing toilets at ground level and better equipping the church for its expanding mission in the community.

Various ways to give

On this Stewardship Sunday, it is again time to emphasise the benefits of regular giving and, in addition to church collections which have resumed post-Covid, we currently have around 80 donors who are part of the various regular giving schemes. Regular giving allows the church to budget more effectively for the running of the church building and St Mary's House.

There are various forms of regular automated giving including the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) that is run by a Church based charity and by standing orders/faster payments, which come directly from the contributor's bank account, and also the traditional envelope scheme. The PGS has an option for automatic annual adjustments for inflation which simplifies the administration of the scheme from the perspective of the contributor and allows contributions to increase in line with church expenses which of course are always on the rise!

The PGS scheme, which allows donations to be made monthly, quarterly or annually, also automatically claims Gift Aid each month which accelerates the receipt of this additional benefit. For these and other reasons, the PGS scheme is the PCC's preferred way of giving to St Mary's. It maximises the impact of regular contributions and, on this Stewardship Sunday we would like to encourage all those who feel able to join or transfer to this scheme.

As we move towards the end of another year, the PCC would like to give a big thank you to everyone who contributes both in kind and financially in any way to St Mary's for the upkeep of the church and the running of its activities for the congregation and the broader community. Your contributions are always appreciated!

Please contact Phil Poole (PCC Treasurer) treasurer@stmaryswoodbridge.org or

Michael Holland (Planned Giving Secretary) givingsteward@stmaryswoodbridge.org if you have any questions.

From the Rector

Dear Friends,

I do commend to you the [link](#) on our Diocesan website “Generosity Week 2022” where you will see a host of resources to encourage us to channel and review our regular giving. Please do contact our respective PCC Treasurers if you need a confidential word how best to do this, or if you need any practical help at all.

Before you even do that, please do spend some quiet time to look more closely at today’s readings from Scripture, or just home in on a particular verse or two, for your prayers and reflection. Here’s a few to ponder:

- Proverbs 3. 5-12
- 2 Corinthians 9. 6-15
- Matthew 6. 19-24
- Mark 12. 41-44
- Luke 12. 32-37

These texts help us all to see how much our understanding of Stewardship can be seen more as a regular part of life than a burden or inconvenience. That’s how our Christian communities do grow, and will flourish, more joyfully.

One writer put it like this: “Christian giving is a spiritual discipline that reminds us who we are and whose we are.”

Bishop Martin has written a special prayer for all of us as ‘pilgrims together’, marked out, to explore and celebrate generous, sacrificial living:

Loving God,
you are always with us,
and give us all we need to be your church in Suffolk.
In these challenging times, as we respond in loving
action to those in great need,
help us, we pray, to give as we have received:
abundantly, generously, and joyfully,
that our worship and our service
may bear witness to your Kingdom of unfailing love.
In the name of your Son who gave himself for us,
Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.



With every blessing,

Fr Nigel

16th October 2022