**The Church of Scotland**

**Department of Stewardship and finance**

**Covid 19 (Coronavirus) Advice for Churches.**

**Update 21 April 2020 Maintaining Congregational income**

**Generosity in Adversity**

In the midst of the current global and economic crisis our church buildings may be closed but the work of the church goes on. The regular, committed and generous giving of our members is necessary to support and sustain that work. Together we can ensure that the church - that’s all of us - continues to demonstrate God’s generosity, faithfulness and love. If ever the church has been needed in our communities, it is now.

The great hallmarks and characteristics of the Christian church are its inherent love and kindness in the face of adversity. In the eighth chapter of 2 Corinthians we read about the grace that God gave to the early church in the midst of a very severe trial. That grace led to overflowing joy and generosity.

People across our nation are facing life-changing situations; therefore, we must be fully committed, equipped and resourced to be the church for this time and context.

In every parish throughout the country, ministry and mission continues to be delivered even in these times of challenge and restrictions. However, this is only sustainable through the ongoing generosity of those who support the church.

You may be concerned as to how your congregation’s income will be impacted over the next few months while buildings are closed, and gatherings are cancelled. Some churches have already begun to find different ways to maintain congregational giving that enables the continuation of effective mission and ministry, including the following:

**Communicate**

Use every means you can to communicate with your church family at this time. Websites and social media will be crucial tools for this. Highlight what your church is doing and how people can support each other through the use of technology. Encourage folk to continue to play their part through prayer, practical help and regular giving.

**Facebook Fundraiser Page**

The creation of a Facebook Fundraiser page can enable and encourage people to give. Some congregations are already using this quick and easy way to enable remote giving. A [guide to creating Facebook Fundraiser pages](https://churchofscotland.org.uk/resources/covid-19-coronavirus-advice/generosity-in-adversity/setting-up-a-facebook-fundraiser-page) is now available on our website.

**Online donations**

A donate button on the Church’s main website is being developed. This will allow members to donate directly to their congregation via a central donation page. Alternatively, there are several online platforms that can be used to create a donate button on your church’s own website, such as Give.net, JustGiving and PayPal. These can help to attract donations from people within your community and from further afield.

**Standing orders**

Many members already give their offerings by [standing order](https://churchofscotland.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0016/66211/Generic-Standing-Order-form-April-2020.pdf). Encourage those who usually give through envelopes or the open plate to consider setting up a standing order. A [form is available on our site](https://churchofscotland.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0016/66211/Generic-Standing-Order-form-April-2020.pdf) for emailing or posting to interested members. (Please note: the form can be filled out on a computer but you must download it before filling it out, otherwise you will not be able to save your changes.)

Freewill offering envelopes

Encourage those members of your congregation who wish to continue giving through their envelopes to continue to do so and make arrangements for their uplift when it is safe to do so.

**Gift Aid**

Remember to maximise Gift Aid income by making sure claims are up to date. [Gift Aid mandates](https://churchofscotland.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/66063/Gift-Aid-Form-Final.pdf) are now available on our website.

**Reserves**

Some congregations have had the opportunity to create reserves over previous years. Now may well be the time for careful stewardship of these reserves and assessing if they could be used at this time, starting with restricted funds wherever possible.

**Useful contacts**

Stewardship team: [stewardship@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:stewardship@churchofscotland.org.uk)

Stewardship and finance team: [sfadmin@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:sfadmin@churchofscotland.org.uk)