

# Generous giving towards a shared future



# Thank you

As the Diocese of Coventry begins a second century in its modern form, I am reminded that one of our centenary themes is **generous relationships**.

This theme, together with the other two themes of **reconciliation** and **renewal**, has been a hallmark of our diocese in the past, and I pray will be even more so in the future.



**Generous relationships** was also important to St Paul 2000 years ago. As he wrote in his second letter to the Christians in Corinth:

*“Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. The goal is equality, as it is written: ‘The one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little’.”* 2 Corinthians 8:13-15

With St Paul I give great thanks for the ‘grace of God’ and for the ‘generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ’ who gave up so much that we could gain so much (2 Corinthians 8:1,9); and like Paul I rejoice in the generosity I have witnessed throughout the Diocese. Thank you for the part you are playing in helping to provide the finance for God in our time and our place.

The money, time and talents that you give to your local church are advancing the Kingdom of God in your local community and within the whole diocese.

A significant part of your personal giving contributes towards your ‘parish share’. This in turn helps to fund your local ministers and also supports mission and ministry across the whole diocese.

The stories in this little booklet illustrate the huge difference that your parish share is making. We are **partners together in the message and ministry of reconciliation**, and during the coming year we will be telling many more stories of what this means.

On behalf of everyone whose lives are being touched, I want to say a big thank you.

+ Christopher

Bishop of Coventry

# The intriguing story of 'parish share'

Our story begins in the Middle Ages, when most Christian worship was mainly centered around monasteries and cathedrals. But all this began to change as feudal lords decided to build their own 'local' churches for the convenience of their families and those who worked on their estates.

The local priest received his 'living' from money given by the lord, from parishioners, and from any land (known as 'glebe') donated by the lord. The financial wellbeing of the clergy therefore depended on the wealth and generosity of the lord and parishioners. This meant that some clergy were very wealthy, while others lived in poverty.

The financial gap between rich clergy and poor clergy grew even wider in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as the Industrial Revolution transformed our nation. A huge migration from the countryside to towns and cities led to the building of new churches that had little or no glebe land to support their clergy.

## A move towards equality

This inequality was partially addressed in 1978 when the *Endowments and Glebe Measure* came into effect. Under the measure, all glebe land was transferred from local parishes to a central diocesan fund. This move was deeply unpopular in some rural parishes who felt that the diocese had stolen their glebe land. However, the *Glebe Measure* meant that all vicars and rectors would now receive the same 'stipend', no matter where they lived in the diocese.



*St Bartholomew's Church, Binley, was built by Lord Craven in the 1770s for his family and his workers on the Coombe Abbey estate.*

## Glebe

Today, glebe land is managed by the diocesan Glebe Committee.

The income from glebe investments can only be used as a contribution towards clergy stipends.

Further information can be found on pages 8 and 9.

## Rising costs and falling investment income

Even in 1978, investment income alone was never sufficient to cover the full cost of clergy stipends. The diocese also paid for clergy housing, training and other central costs. This was partially funded by the Church Commissioners, and the shortfall funded by a voluntary contribution called 'parish share'.

Parish share contributions were fairly modest in 1978, but over the coming decades, the Church of England faced a series of financial challenges. On the one hand it faced high inflation in the 1980s followed by a pension crisis. But this was compounded by falling income due to the property crash in the 1990s, the foot and mouth outbreak in 2001, and the global financial crisis in 2008.

These successive crises resulted in a relentless increase in parish share (increases of 10% per year were not untypical). Of course churches were hit by the same financial challenges, and now many were paying more parish share than their other costs added together. This led to increased dissatisfaction amongst church members. The loudest complaints came from churches with growing congregations. A complex parish share formula meant that these churches bore the brunt of the increases. They argued that this was both unfair and unsustainable.

## Supporting one another

In 2010, a fairer and simpler method for calculating parish share was introduced. Each deanery was allocated a share based on its 'cost of ministers', with a payment to or from a central Support Fund. The deanery then chose how best to subdivide and allocate their deanery share to parishes.

The Support Fund meeting is at the heart of the ethos that underpins this fairer method. Deanery representatives listen to each other, pray together and then decide how much they will each give to, or receive from, the Support Fund.

The Support Fund is currently paying for the equivalent of nine clergy posts in the three most deprived deaneries in our diocese: Coventry East, Coventry North and Nuneaton. It is often said that actions speak louder than words, and the Support Fund is a great example of **generous relationships** within our diocese.

### A Christian presence

As the established church, the Church of England still seeks to have a visible Christian presence in every local community.

**This is only possible because we financially support one another.**

The next few stories illustrate the difference that this is making.



# Brunch club feeds hundreds

St John the Divine in Willenhall is one of the most deprived areas of the diocese. Statistics released by the *End Child Poverty* coalition show that 36% of children in Willenhall and neighbouring Binley live in poverty. To help prevent children going hungry over the school holidays, St John the Divine run a Summer Brunch Club.



*Children and carers enjoying brunch*

Aimed at young families, the Summer Brunch Club not only feeds children and their carers but also gives them a holiday at home through a range of fun events and a day out. Over the seven brunch club events, 436 children attended (164 of whom receive free school meals) and 242 adults.

As well as tucking into a delicious food, attendees were able to play games, get their faces painted, have fun on the bouncy castle and splash in the paddling pool. On one day the volunteer team arranged for popcorn, candy floss and slush machines to be brought in which the children loved. On another day a mini farm enabled the children to learn about and pet the animals.

A major highlight of the Summer Brunch Club was a day trip to Dudley Zoo. A group of 60 children and 36 parents and carers were able to visit Dudley Zoo for free. The volunteer team provided everyone with a packed lunch and the day was a great success. Many of these children were not able to go on holiday last summer so the day trip to Dudley Zoo was a really special treat.

## **Generous relationships**

Churches like St John the Divine have a wonderful mission and ministry in the most deprived areas of our diocese.

**This is only possible because of financial support which is offered through the Support Fund.**

# The heart of Coventry



*Christmas Day 2018 – over 100 people from all faiths and backgrounds celebrated Christmas and shared a meal together at St Francis of Assisi*

Working in the centre of a multi-faith, diverse city like Coventry presents particular challenges. The deaneries of Coventry North and Coventry East cover some of the most deprived areas in the West Midlands as well as being some of the most culturally diverse. The majority of the churches working in the city centre are in the top 10%- 20% of the most deprived parishes in the country. The city centre parishes include areas of significant religious diversity; in some

areas Christianity is a minority religion. These parishes also have a younger population than the national average: more under 5's, more school aged children, more students and more young adults.

This combination of poverty, unemployment and diversity means that we must find new and creative ways to address issues of deprivation, to build community cohesion and to promote tolerance as well as living out our faith in an authentic way.

So, what do we do? The churches in the city centre run a winter night shelter to help address homelessness. They work with newly arrived refugees from Syria from the moment they come into the country to support integration. They walk alongside those young people in the city centre who are not working, not in education or training (NEETS). We create social enterprises (Arabian Bites and Proof Bakery) to help newly arrived people find employment, we run English language classes across the city and we have work clubs open every day of the week to help those who are unemployed. We run food banks and our churches—very often open all day—offer support to people with mental health issues. We offer hospitality every day of the week to people from all over the world and with all sorts of needs.

This work is challenging and happens in an environment where incomes are low, and money is tight. We could not do this work without the support of other churches across the diocese, through the Support Fund, and we are ever grateful to God and our brothers and sisters in Christ for their support.

*Liz Jackson, vicar of St Francis of Assisi Church*

# Church links

Living in a rural parish with a population of around 80 we can seem to be living in an idyllic bubble, not always realising the struggles that can face our brothers and sisters in the inner city and urban areas of our diocese.

Here in Sutton-under-Brailes we are very privileged to have had a link with St. Catherine's Stoke Aldermoor since 2000. When telling our Christian story in the form of a Christmas Tree Festival we wanted to show that we were not an inward looking church. All the money raised was to go to another parish in our diocese and so our link with St Catherine's was born.

St. Catherine's congregation visit us about twice a year. Especially wonderful is when they come over for lunch on Rogation Sunday and join the afternoon service which is conducted around the village stopping at an orchard, a stream and a farm where the farmer explains about his animals and crops.



*The two congregations walk down to the lake.*

One of St. Catherine's churchwardens said how wonderful it was for their young people to visit an ancient village church. She loved seeing the joy on their faces as they explored the village and played on the village green.

Two of us from Sutton worship at St. Catherine's once a month and we feel very much part of their church family. The contrast of worship style and circumstances helps to enrich our Christian outlook back here in Sutton.

Another wonderful connection from this link is that we got to know the Revd Cleophas Lunga their former vicar. When he returned to Zimbabwe to be Bishop of Matabeleland, Sutton helped to collect toys for his wife Soneni to run a Toy Library and we still continue to support their work. So our link with St. Catherine's has led us to a link with Zimbabwe. We never know where God is leading us!

*Elisabeth Ashworth, Shipston Deanery*

## Rural Poverty

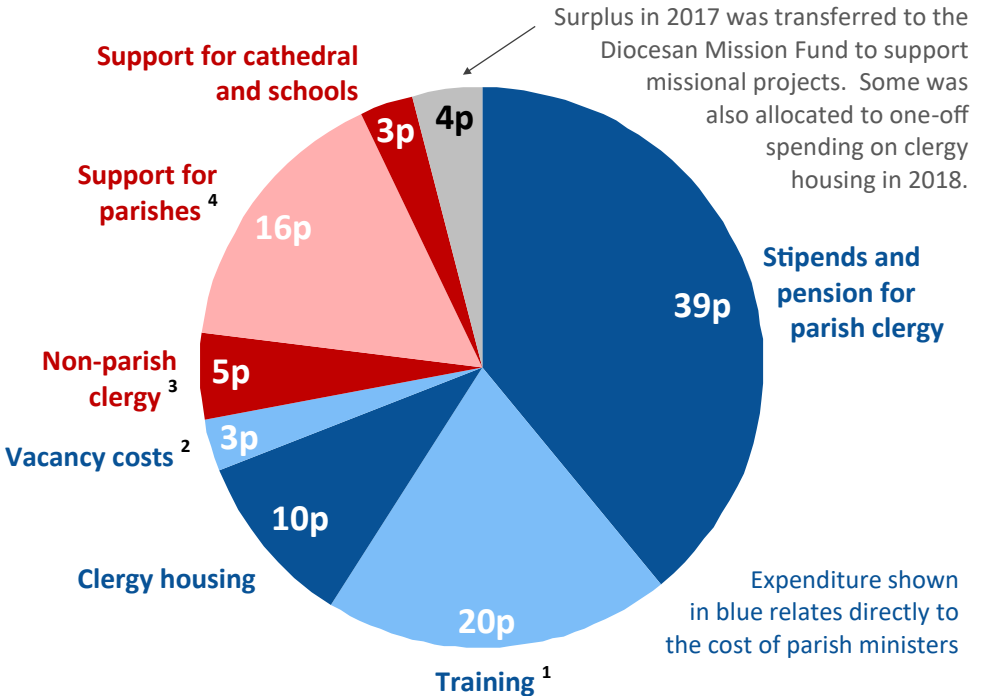
Rural poverty is a real but often misunderstood problem. For example, weekly travel costs for low earners in villages is about twice that of inner-city residents.

Church links are mutually beneficial and enable generous relationships to develop in a variety of different ways.

# Supporting whole-diocese mission

## How was diocesan income spent in 2017?

The chart below shows how £1 of all diocesan income was spent in 2017.



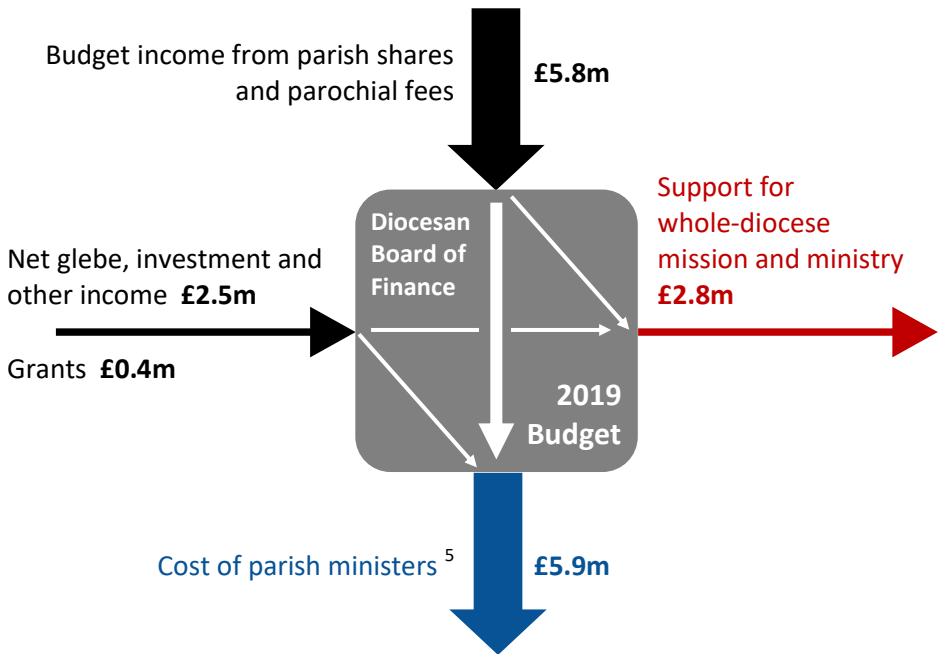
1. **Training** includes the cost of curates, ordinands and the Diocesan Training Partnership.
2. **Vacancy costs** include resettlement costs and fees for interregnum cover.
3. **Non-Parish Clergy** includes archdeacons but not bishops (who are funded nationally).
4. **Support for Parishes** includes that provided by Acceler8 workers and diocesan office staff.

## Budgeted income and expenditure in 2019

As mentioned on page 4, Diocesan Synod approved a new method for calculating parish shares. They agreed that a deanery's share, to support mission and ministry in the diocese, should be based on the **full cost** of its parish ministers.

They recognised that part of the cost of ministers was already funded by glebe and other income; they also acknowledged the saving of a stipend during a clergy vacancy. Nevertheless, Diocesan Synod agreed that the **full cost** of ministers was a simple and fair benchmark for deanery share calculations.





5. **Cost of parish ministers** includes an allowance for estimated savings during vacancies.
6. **Source** — Diocesan Synod paper DS 18/62a

## Partners together

St Paul describes the gospel in this way:

*“All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.”* 2 Corinthians 5:18

Our cathedral is justifiably renowned for its ministry of reconciliation. However, the ministry of reconciliation is so immense and all-encompassing that we can only fulfil this God-given ministry by working generously together.

By speaking about “whole diocese”, it is recognised that this includes our churches, Church of England schools, chaplaincies and cathedral.

The next few stories illustrate some of the ways in which we are **“Partners together in the message and ministry of reconciliation.”**



# Free admission brings more people to Coventry Cathedral



*Archbishop Justin cuts the ribbon to launch free admission*

On Saturday 5th May 2018, at the Diocesan Centenary Festival at Coventry Cathedral, the Archbishop of Canterbury launched Coventry Cathedral's new free admission policy. After eight years of charging for entry due to financial constraints, the Cathedral was able to go back to free admission as a result of the Investors in Hope fundraising campaign and a gift from the Diocese of Coventry.

Coventry Cathedral is at the heart of Coventry and is loved by many. These changes have allowed the Cathedral to be even more accessible to the people of the city, the diocese and beyond. With thousands of visitors every year, the Cathedral has one of the greatest opportunities for mission in the diocese. In the second half of 2018 the Cathedral has seen visitor numbers more than double compared to the same period in 2017. Lead Chaplain Missioner, the Revd Zoe Pimentel meets many of these visitors and explains.

*"The open admission at the Cathedral means people are much more likely to 'pop' in. For example, on Coventry University Open days we always have lots of families with their teenage daughter/son/grandson pop in between tours and talks. This has meant the chaplaincy team could speak to them about their future hopes, and encourage them that God is with them wherever they go."*

Zoe also reports that she has met with many young families coming into the Cathedral looking for free things to do with their children.

*“Needing something interesting and entertaining that is free is obviously appealing to families of all backgrounds, but is also particularly necessary for all the families in poverty in our city. This is why the Cathedral is setting up a free of charge ‘Family Activity Station’ on some Saturdays and during the school holidays.*

*The activity station gives children and families the opportunity to learn more about Christianity, various Christian festivals and special aspects of the Cathedral. It gives mums, dads and grandparents a safe space to bring their children, with an activity that is fun and engaging, helping them to understand that they are welcome in a place of worship and that they don’t have to be silent or bored to enjoy and engage in the space”.*

For Zoe and the other members of the Cathedral chaplaincy team, the free admission policy has made a huge difference to their engagement with visitors. Zoe says “being on the frontline of all these experiences and meeting all these diverse people is a huge privilege and I’d like to extend my personal thanks to all who have helped support the free entry initiative”. She adds, “and if anyone is interested in joining the Cathedral chaplaincy volunteer team, they are very welcome to speak to me more about it. Commitment can be as little as two hours a month but it all helps to ensure someone is available to offer a listening ear and support to all our visitors”.



Please contact [zoe.pimentel@coventrycathedral.org.uk](mailto:zoe.pimentel@coventrycathedral.org.uk) to find out more.

## Investors in Hope

Free admission at Coventry Cathedral is an example of how part of your parish share is supporting mission and ministry across the whole diocese.

It also relies on other generous donations from individuals and churches through their *Investors in Hope* initiative.

# Reconciliation at St Paul's School



St Paul's School in Stockingford sits at the heart of a vibrant community. However, a lack of local diversity combined with areas of educational and financial deprivation means that some pupils have not had the opportunity to engage with religious and cultural difference. This can lead to fear, misunderstanding, and occasional conflict.

Working with their parish church and Cathedral, St Paul's decided to work for International Cross of Nails (ICON) School status. Their aspiration was to use the Christian tradition of reconciliation to equip children (and through them the wider community) to celebrate difference and handle conflict constructively.

St Paul's approached this in a number of ways. It has a programme of visits to different faith centres. This ensures that all children can receive hospitality from representatives of the major world religions during their time at St Paul's. Interfaith Week is a major event – this year, each class followed an Interfaith Trail around the school learning about similarities and differences between faith traditions. St Paul's also designed a Peace Trail for the children to use, which began with them identifying skills and values of peacebuilding (e.g. communication, empathy, justice, compassion) and then visiting activities which helped them explore these skills. Families were invited to come in and experience these trails too.

Supported by the Governing Body, the school redesigned its behaviour policy to encourage reflection and reconciliation, ensuring that the values they speak about are practised every day. Furthermore, the school looks for ways of living their reconciliation values in real situations. So, when some neighbours were upset by disturbance at either end of the school day, in addition to doing what they could to solve the problem, the school also invited the neighbours in for afternoon tea to build relationships. Finally, the school has established an ICON team, which includes the vicar of St Paul's, who review ICON activities and plan how to build on what has already been learned and achieved.

## Whole Community

This is one example of how the whole-diocese approach can engage a whole community in God's work of reconciliation.

*Kate Massey, vicar of St Paul's Stockingford*

# Fresh Start helps people begin anew



*The Saturday morning football project*

Over the last two years, *Fresh Start*, a project by *Together for Change*, has been befriending and providing practical support for refugees, migrants and asylum seekers in Coventry. Led by Cultural Links Worker, Matt Robinson, *Fresh Start* has established a number of exciting initiatives and has seen God work in some amazing ways.

*Fresh Start's* Saturday morning football project kicked off in 2017. Around 40 men - 15 local volunteers from different churches and 25 refugees, migrants and asylum seekers - meet together every Saturday to play football and build relationships. Football is an international language and has proved a great way for the men to get to know each other. The group often goes for coffee or lunch together afterwards to deepen friendships.

The *Fresh Start* Companionship project is also in full swing. The project pairs up volunteers with newly arrived individuals. Volunteers offer a listening ear, assistance with English, and a friend to walk alongside the new arrivals as they take their first steps in building a new life.

Twice a week, Matt and a few volunteers run Conversation Cafés in Coventry city centre. Around 12-15 refugees and asylum seekers attend each session in the Belgrade Theatre Café. The group gathers together in the café and then splits down into smaller groups to chat for a couple of hours. Each session will revolve around a different topic such as Coventry's history and British values.

These sessions not only give participants the opportunity to practice their English in an informal setting but also bring people together. One of the participants, Hafizur, comments that he "really likes coming to the Conversation Cafés. They have a relaxing atmosphere and it is good that they are close to the city centre." Another participant, Abdulla says "practicing conversation is very important. It is great to speak to lots of different people."

## Together for Change

Together For Change is a charitable joint venture between the Diocese and the Church Urban Fund to resource and equip churches to transform their communities and tackle issues of systemic poverty.



# New church community in Rugby



The new development of Houlton offers the Church the opportunity to embed itself at the heart of what will become a major extension to the town of Rugby. Houlton will be home to about 20,000 people. The first residents arrived 12 months ago, and Houlton now has about 200 people calling it home, with new people arriving every week.

We are responding to this missional opportunity by seeking to build different forms of community, with a particular focus on church community, school community and supporting the growth of the wider community.

The core of our approach is based around two co-located church communities. In the last year we have successfully opened a new church primary school, St Gabriel's CofE Academy, and in the same building we have planted a new church community, St Gabriel's Church, which has begun weekly public worship. The church and the school live and breathe together, supporting each other and seeking in their own ways to be the centre around which Houlton's community can grow and flourish.

We are very encouraged by all that has happened so far. However, there are significant challenges. The cost of planting a brand new church community is high, both financially and in terms of people's time and gifts. This cost is being met by the church community of St John the Baptist, Hillmorton, in whose parish Houlton is located. St John's is not a large church, although it is consistently growing and, as part of a plan to pay the 'full' cost of a stipendiary minister, has seen a near-doubling of its parish share in the last 4 years. So, while we are delighted to have the opportunity to lead the response to the amazing opportunity Houlton represents, we also are aware that we will continue to need the prayers and support of the wider church across the diocese.

*Steve Gold, priest-in-charge at Hillmorton*

# Growing the church at universities

These days, nearly a third of eighteen year olds find themselves studying at university. At the University of Warwick we welcome 5,000 of these young adults each year, who join a community of over 26,000 students. They represent some of our future global leaders and for a short number of years we get to build community with them.



*Chaplain and students at Warwick University*

Chaplains can enable students to explore their identity and purpose in the light of the love of God. University chaplains are guests, invited into what can feel like a secular environment. We spot and bless sacred spaces and moments, we pray, we break bread and we are invited into some of the most extraordinary moments of formation for hundreds of student each year.

University chaplaincy is a great example of the Church working generously. By investing in students, we are growing the Church; building it and strengthening it for the future. Sometimes we are fortunate and we get to see the fruits of this work. A lot of the time though, this is real Kingdom stuff, where we work with Christ to scatter the seeds of faith and discipleship generously; others will then see what grows in the lives of those we have ministered to.

For those of us with young people in our families, many of whom will be looking ahead to university and to moving away from home, we look to the generosity of the Church in other dioceses who provide chaplains in higher and further education that will support and pray for those that we love.

Recent research suggests that those who identify as Christian at the start of university, broadly go one of three ways during their time as students. For about a third, this will be a time of growing and flourishing in their faith; another third never quite find a place for personal faith within university, leaving Christianity 'at home' and beginning a parallel existence, and yet another third consciously step away from their faith. As a chaplain, I am enormously grateful to our churches who enable me to minister to those on the edge of faith, the edge of adulthood and sometimes the edge of life.

*Kate Pearson, chaplain at Warwick University*

# Generous giving ...a shared future

During his visit to the diocese in May 2018, Archbishop Justin said:

*“One of the inspiring things this week has been seeing the way that the Diocese of Coventry is drawing together all aspects of God’s ministry. This great strength that comes from unity is so exciting.”*

Your parish share is helping to generously fund the vision of a shared future as it contributes towards:

- The cost of your own parish ministers;
- Support for parish ministers in the most deprived areas;
- Support for whole-diocese mission and ministry.

During 2019 we will be sharing many more stories which illustrate the difference that your generous giving is making. We will also be launching a *Parish Giving Scheme* which has benefits for both donors and parishes.

## Generous relationships

In times of economic uncertainty there is a tendency for people to focus on their own needs rather than those of others. The same can be true of churches, but the Bible reminds us of the promise of blessing to those who put their trust in God.

*“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.” Malachi 3:10*



Please prayerfully  
consider how  
your generous  
giving

can  
further  
support our  
shared future

This booklet is printed on 100% recycled paper for less than £5 per parish.  
Please share this booklet with others.