

From the Bishop

The God of abundance!

Arriving new into Coventry Diocese, I have been deeply aware of the generosity of His people in this place. Psalm 65 speaks of the God who enriches the land 'abundantly', who 'drenches its furrows and 'crowns the year with bounty'. As people made in His image we are to reflect the generosity of our creator God, who in his love continues to give 'good gifts' to his children. Built on the foundation of generations who have worshipped here through times of joy and sorrow, I am delighted to join with you in praying for an increase in generosity towards one another and the world that he so loves.

Thank you for praying with me in the month ahead.

Every blessing

+Sophie

National View: Generosity

The Rt Revd Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani, Bishop of Chelmsford, spoke recently at the recent National Generosity Conference (4-6 June 2025).

"Generosity is a subject that fascinates a lot of people and indeed there is a whole department in the University of Notre Dame devoted to the study and the science of generosity. They define the word generosity as, the virtue of giving good things to others freely and abundantly, it is a learned character trait that it involves attitude as well as action. In other words, it entails our inclination and motivation as well as practical outworking. We need a spirit of generosity which for completeness must find practical expression.

According to those who have done research and conducted experiments in the field, there

are three other traits required for a holistic embracing of generosity.

1. Generosity isn't just a moral good, but it requires us consciously to reject certain vices, Generosity can only be embraced and lived if we overcome those human instincts towards selfishness, greed, fear and so on.

2. Generosity requires us not just to give abundantly but to give those things that are good for others. Question, do we give to foodbanks and charity shops to ease our conscience or to clear our cupboards? Or do we give from the best of what we have with thoughts of what people need or what might bring them joy?

3. Generosity is about more than money and material possessions. Research has shown that generosity is associated with empathy – the ability to put ourselves in the shoes of others, try to understand the world from the perspective of the other, and, crucially, to not start from a position of being judgmental.

Luke 24 13:50 - Generosity is not just what and how but how we receive it – strength of generosity is the ability to be both, guest as well as host.

Diocese: Digital Giving Initiatives

As we approach the end of the year for many churches embracing contactless giving anew.



"we are pleasantly surprised that donations have increased with the new machine, it is so much more user friendly than our previous one, big, bold & we can customise it" St Oswalds, Rugby (Payaz GivingStation)

Look out for future initiatives in contactless and digital giving.



PODCAST

Generosity at the Heart of our Faith:

Episode 6: Generosity at the heart of our faith with Jonathan de Bernhardt Wood

The latest episode of Active Generosity, Stewardship is joined by Jonathan de Bernhardt Wood, Director of Giving for the Church of England and author of The Porcupine Principle (and other fundraising secrets).

From porcupines to a 'MINT IDEA', in this wide-ranging discussion Jonathan outlines the principles that he believes are essential for both enabling giving and growing a culture of generosity in the Church of England. He also discusses his own experience of faith, generosity and the joy that comes with giving.

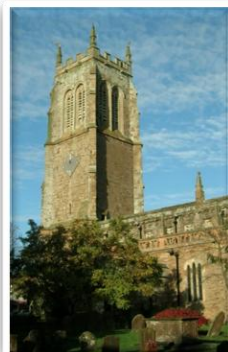
"And this is love, that we walk according to his commandments; this is the commandment just as you have heard it from the beginning – you must walk in it... How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?" (NRSV) 2 John 1:6; 1 John 3:17

We are very grateful to Simon Jones, our Diocesan Stewardship Advisor (DSA), for supplying much of the core content this month.

AD = Area Dean; C = Clergy; IR = Interregnum; H headteacher; EH Executive Head; HoS Head of School. Schools included are all Church of England schools. Other schools may be mentioned.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
GENEROUS GIVING MINT & IDEA – PRAYER ACROSS THE MONTH		1 SHIPSTON DEANERY AD Sarah Edmonds Maguire	2 Ilmington Downs and Stour Valley Churches I Ilmington, Stretton-on-Fosse, Preston-on-Stour & Whitchurch Benefice	3 Ilmington Downs and Stour Valley Churches II Tredington & Darlingscott Benefice C – Richard Cooke	4 M Mechanisms for People to be able to give	5 I For people to be Inspired to live generous lives
3RD AFTER TRINITY 6 Ilmington CofE Primary H – Paul Crouch	7 South Warwickshire Seven Group C – Ben Dyson	8 <u>DIOCESAN SYNOD</u>	9 Shipston-on-Stour, Tidmington, Honington & Idlicote C – Sarah Edmonds Maguire	10 <u>FINANCE, RESOURCES & RISK COMMITTEE</u>	11 I Clear explanations of the Impact of people's giving	12 D Discipleship opportunities to learn about God's generosity to us
4TH AFTER TRINITY 13 Stourdene Group C – Nicki Chatterton	14 <u>DBF & TFC STAFF AWAY DAY</u>	15 Newbold & Tredington CofE Primary H - Sam Welsby	16 Ettington CofE Primary H – Michelle Crowe	17 <u>BISHOP'S SENIOR STAFF TEAM</u>	18 N For the Need for giving to be well understood	19 E Embed generosity in everything we do
5TH AFTER TRINITY 20 Brailes, Tysoe and nearby parishes Group C - George Heighton	21 Tysoe CofE Primary H – Paige Neale	22 Brailes CofE Primary HoS – Heather Childs	23 <u>DIOCESAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (BUILDINGS)</u>	24 For the fledgling Diocesan <i>Generous Giving</i> enabling team	25 T For Trust to be built within churches and communities	26 A For ways to be provided for people to Activate their generosity
6TH AFTER TRINITY 27 With continuing thanks for the arrival of +Sophie.	28 For the many ways +Sophie will connect with people in the Diocese.	29 Thanks for the people who will support +Sophie on a day-to-day basis.	30 Praying for +Sophie to enjoy times of quiet reflection within her busy schedule.	31 <i>We pray for "an increase in generosity towards one another and the world God so loves" +Sophie.</i>	Thanks be to God that we have risen this day – To the rising of this life itself. Be the purpose of God between us and each purpose. The hand of God between us and each hand. The pain of Christ between us and each pain. The love of Christ between us and each love. The St Hilda Community 'The New Women Included' (1996)	

PRAYER DIARY



St George's, Brailes

BEING HEALTHY CHURCH

Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents....

... Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth, but she, out of her poverty, put in everything – all she had to live on."

Mark 12.41-44

SPECIFIC DAYS IN JULY 2025

1 – Shipston Deanery Area Dean, Sarah Edmonds; Lay Chair, David Rake - We pray for the deanery as it reshapes lay and ordained ministry, especially as it reimagines the place of associate ministers. We pray for the variety of expressions of church emerging, and our outreach to the communities in which we live as we seek to provide for the needs of long-time worshippers alongside our newer services and events.

2,3 –The Ilmington Downs and Stour Valley churches: Ilmington, Stretton-on-Fosse, Preston-on-Stour and Whitchurch benefice; Tredington & Darlingscott benefice R(PTO) Ros Wakefield, C (PTO) Tim Seller Give thanks for the greater generosity that has led to a brighter financial situation, and for the delight of the wedding season with its opportunities to demonstrate the joy of the Christian faith. Pray for the next phase of ministry across our villages, including a major building project at St Mary's, Whitchurch.

6 - Ilmington CofE Primary School

7 – South Warwickshire Seven Group – Barcheston, Barton-on-the-Heath, Burmington, Cherington with Stourton, Long Compton, Whichford and Wolford R (PTO) - Clare Wells The SW7 Benefice are still recruiting to a House for Duty position – prayer appreciated.

9 – Shipston-on-Stour, Honington and Idlicote – R - Alison Tomkinson Thanks for the strong ecumenical links and our mission as the Joint Shipston Churches grows.. Please pray for the appointment of our ecumenical children and families worker and our work together in the primary and secondary schools.

13 – Stourdene Group – C -Nicki Chatterton, rector; David Jessett, associate. We give thanks for our flourishing relationship with our schools and communities. With special thanks for the amazing response to the church Lego Cafe and the new weekly community Prayer Walk which rotates around the parishes weekly. These are bringing people of all ages into church and prayer that would have never done so before. We pray for generous giving to support the tower refurbishment at Alderminster and the church reordering at Butlers Marston.

15 – Newbold & Tredington CofE Primary School

16 – Ettington CofE Primary School

20 – Brailes, Tysoe and nearby parishes Group – Brailes, Sutton-under-Brailes, Tysoe, Oxhill and Whatcote C (Associate) Heather Parbury; C (PTO) Jill Tucker; R – Jennie Rake At this time, we pray for those moving on from our church schools at their Leavers' Services. We give thanks for those being baptised into the family of the church and we look forward to celebrating our communities in the village events over the summer.

21 – Tysoe CofE Primary School

22 – Brailles CofE Primary School

C = Clergy R = Reader H = Headteacher

SCHOOLS School Groupings within Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) & the Shipston Deanery Newbold & Tredington CofE and Tysoe CofE Primary are both members of the **Fosse Multi Academy Trust (MAT)**. Brailes CofE Primary joins other schools in the **Stour Federation MAT**, including Acorns Primary and Shipston on Stour Primary. Schools from Fosse Deanery are also members of these two groups – from Moreton Morrell and Wellesbourne CofE Primary, Kineton CofE Primary and Wilmcote CofE Primary. Ettington CofE Primary and Ilmington CofE Primary are currently not in one of the MATs. At the end of another school year please pray this month for these wider clusters of schools, their children, teachers, staff and governors.

National: Triennium Funding

[£1.6bn three-year national spending plans unveiled](#) (link)

Simon Jones writes, I was really encouraged by the reference to the importance of giving in the press release on the triennium funding announced recently.

“The majority of the work of the Church of England across the country is paid-for through the generosity and sacrificial giving of those in local congregations – a critical partnership with so many faithful people, which is the bedrock of the Church’s finances and for which we are so thankful”.

Archbishop Stephen said:

“We are the church of and for the people of England and our work is funded through a living partnership between the Church Commissioners and the thousands of individuals and communities who give so generously and sacrificially. So I would like to thank all of those who support the mission and ministry of the Church in this way”.

I hope this will help reaffirm that giving is central to parish ministry, whilst also encouraging generosity by showing the funding that is being made available to support parish ministry through the national church’s investments.

Through the Triennium Funding the National Giving strategy seeks to build on creating the right environment and culture of generosity within our church; to enable giving we need to provide the **Mechanisms** for people to give, to explain the **Impact** of people’s giving, to demonstrate the **Need** for giving and to build **Trust** with those who give.

To encourage generosity, we need to **Inspire** people to live generous lives, to provide **Discipleship** opportunities to learn about God’s generosity to us, to **Embed** generosity in everything we do and to provide ways for people to **Activate** their generosity.

from 'The Practicing of the Way course: companion guide' John Mark Comer and Practicing the Way (Form – SPCK, 2024), pages 22-23

Developing a daily prayer rhythm

One of the best ways to begin to "be with Jesus" is by developing a daily prayer rhythm.

Develop a time and place to commune with God through the practices of silence, solitude, and prayer.

01 Find a quiet place that is distraction free

- This could be a corner in your home or a nearby park. Find somewhere that you can focus and be at peace.

02 Find a quiet time

- For many people, first thing upon waking is the best possible time to do this: but for you, it may be before bed, or while your baby is napping mid-morning, or on a lunch break.
- The general rule is: Give God your best time of the day.

03 Come to quiet

- If at all possible (unless you're using an app such as Lectio 365 or Pray as You Go to guide your prayer time), put your phone away in another room. Start with a few deep breaths ... in and out of your nose, and let your mind and body calm down.
- This may take a few minutes. You're not in a hurry. And then ...

04 Open your heart to God in prayer

- Again, there's no "right" way to pray. But you don't have to start from scratch.
- For thousands of years, followers of Jesus have used the Psalms for daily prayer. The Psalms are a collection of poetic prayers found in the middle of the Bible, and they were designed to be prayed, not just read.
- You can pray one psalm or pray a few; it's up to you. You can start in Psalm 1 and keep going to pray a selection. If you want to pray one psalm, here are some we suggest you start with: Psalms 1, 23, 37, 40, 42-43, 63, 84, 86, 103, and 139.

The whole exercise can be done in five minutes, or it can easily take up to an hour – again, that's up to you. The key is: Start where you are, not where you feel you "should" be. If two or three minutes is all you can make happen, start there and take the next step.

[The Prayer Practice — Practicing the Way](#)

The LORD bless you and keep you;
the LORD make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you
the LORD lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace

The Aaronic Blessing - Numbers 6.24-26

Ever-generous God, St Paul says you will always make us rich enough to be generous, and we remember the poignant example of the widow and the small coins she gave in the Temple. Enable us to experience the truth that if we give first there's always enough, but if we give last there's never enough. In our living and giving remind us that:
All things come from you, **and of your own do we give you.**

Ever-generous God, you know the needs of the church and the hope you have for us here. So often we think in terms of the scarcity of our resources when actually the problem is our abundance of resources – the people, the plant, the ideas, the goodwill, our own wealth, the gospel itself – none of which we fully use. Teach us the joy of giving – cheerful, positive, liberating giving as we seek to echo your endless giving to us. Because:
All things come from you, **and of your own do we give you.**

from John Pritchard "The Intercessions Resource Book" (2018, SPCK)

Reflection: A week to fuel our faith

Spring Harvest (Minehead), 2025

From Diocesan Stewardship Advisor, Simon Jones, "Quality time spent with the family in worship, teaching, spiritual refreshment and of course, beach and ice cream. 631 children and young people gave their lives to Jesus at this year's Spring Harvest. Proverbs 11:24 **"The world of the generous gets larger and larger"** – through the generosity of many over 700 people attended Spring Harvest through bursaries, many from vulnerable or low-income background. Partnering with UK Prison Chaplaincy Team the fund enables live streaming of the event directly into 50,000 prison cells across the UK".

- **Coming up** – the **Themes** will be Parish Support – Diocesan functions (August), Healthy Communities & TfC (September), and Loving One Another/Racial Justice (October). Do consider sending me your prayer suggestions, and any other jottings.
- Each month **we focus on a different Deanery; this month it is Shipston Deanery**. In August it will be Warwick & Leamington; September we will be praying for Coventry East Deanery, and in October, Coventry North. I look forward to receiving updates from area deans and clergy, and anyone else with specific prayer requests.

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