



# Making good decisions in the PCC

Deciding the amount of your Free Will Offer to the Diocesan Common Fund is one of the biggest decisions your PCC will make this year.

How can you ensure that you come to the right decision for you? Here are a few tried and tested ideas to help you:

1. **Make sure everyone has all the information they need to make a good decision in plenty of time for them to reflect prayerfully and individually on their decision.**

At least a week before the meeting you might want to make sure that everyone has had an opportunity to consider:

- a. **The Archbishop's Free Will Offer 2019 letter** which sets out the background to our Free Will Offer and the task that our incumbents have been set;
- b. The document '**Understanding the Diocese of York's 2018 budget**' which details where the money comes from which pays for parish clergy, vocations and training, and support functions in the diocese
- c. The document '**Our plans for achieving our diocesan goals**' which describes how we are working on our strategy for Reaching those we currently don't, moving to Growth, and achieving Sustainable Giving
- d. If you are able, the content of the **Presentation** that Archdeacon Sam has been sharing with clergy and laity across the diocese

You can download all these documents at [www.dioceseofyork.org.uk/freewilloffer](http://www.dioceseofyork.org.uk/freewilloffer).



A few key facts might be helpful to highlight:

- a. In the 2018 budget, every single penny of Free Will Offering from parishes – plus a little bit more – was spent on providing parochial clergy to parishes. This doesn't include the cost of our training curates which was an additional £1.7m on top of the £8.8m cost of parish clergy.
- b. In 2018, 5% of the income into our Diocesan Common Fund will need to come from our reserves to maintain ministry at current levels. Free Will Offers would have needed to be 8% higher this year to avoid having to spend reserves we would otherwise direct toward our mission goals of 'Reach' and 'Grow'.
- c. The Diocese is committed to investing in mission, especially to 20s-40s and to People in Poverty. We have already received Stage 1 approval of a bid for money from the national church of nearly £3m to invest in 13 new pioneer ministers in the diocese and we will be investing some of our accumulated diocesan reserves in this exciting new mission opportunity.
- d. We are also continuing to invest in helping parishes to do mission more effectively through funding clergy and lay teams to attend the Leading Your Church into Growth (LYCiG) course. Later this year, we will be appointing a new 'Generous Giving and Stewardship Team' who will be available to come to your church to help you improve your regular giving, reducing anxiety and concern at a local level about paying the bills and securing the future of your church.

*Continued overleaf/*



2. **Start by counting your blessings**

How has God blessed your church this year? Maybe you've enjoyed having some new people come to join your congregation? Perhaps you received a small legacy or windfall you weren't expecting? Were your prayers answered in a special way? Start by reflecting on all the good things that have been happening with you over the last year and take time to say thank you to God for them. God is always at work in our communities but sometimes we're too busy focusing on our needs to stop and look at all the good that is happening around us.

3. **What is God calling you to do locally and as part of the wider church?**

What is your vision for your church? Do you have a 'big picture' of yourselves as the hands and feet of Christ in your community or have you allowed your vision to narrow to a 'small picture' of just keeping the roof on and the doors open? Take time to remind yourselves of who you are – the body of Christ – in your place and that Jesus promised always to be with you. Take time to offer yourselves back to God's service, for his glory and in his name.

How do you see yourselves as part of the wider church in the diocese and beyond? How much does the PCC know about the amazing things happening around the diocese, in some of the most deprived communities in the whole country:

- the St Margaret's Centre in Longhill, Hull, opening their doors to provide a community hub in one of the most deprived areas of the diocese.
- Fr Terry Leathley, serving the community of Brambles Farm, Middlesbrough, where there is no church building, by offering coffee and God's love from the back of a van.

We have so much Good News to celebrate in the Diocese of York!

4. **Pray**

Take time to offer your decision to God in prayer as a community of faith.

5. **Listen to each voice**

In some PCCs, the still small voice of God can be crowded out by one or two louder voices with strong opinions. One good way of listening to everyone is to ask each person to write what they think the PCC's offer should be on a piece of paper and then collate the answers so that everyone can hear everyone else's opinion, the average and the range of offers.

**Listen again for the prompting of the Holy Spirit and make your decision in faith that God is waiting and wanting to bless your generosity.**

