

Financial Giving During COVID-19

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How can you pass the plate when people aren't there to pass it? With in-person church services, events and other church related gatherings cancelled the bills of the church still must be paid. Depending on how long we must work together to flatten the curve the budget of our churches is being stretched. Rather than wringing our hands let's do the following:

1. Pray

I know you don't need to be reminded to pray. But what I do want is for you to specifically pray for the finances of your parish. Here is a prayer provided by the Episcopal Diocese of Washington (slightly modified):

Creator of all we enjoy, we give you thanks for the countless people who have gone before us in the leadership of this church. We know that the Holy Spirit inspired some as they longed for this church, others as they built this church and still others as they lovingly and boldly led this church through times of abundance and times of scarcity. Help us to be bold as we model giving of time and money to this parish. Make our bold and generous financial offering a symbol of both our integrity and our gratitude. Help us to encourage giving, just as you did while physically teaching among your disciples. Amen.

2. Clarify Why Your Church is Raising Money *Right Now*

While regular offering is what's needed, having a compelling case to encourage people to *act now* is key. Write out your parish's mini [case for support](#). Be clear with a specific call to action at the start and end. Invite people to also consider an additional gift or to double their regular offering. You may want to address one or all the following in your case for support (but keep it to a page):

- A gap in this year's operating budget because of cancelled in-person gatherings or postponed events.
- Additional support for parishioners and church staff most vulnerable to health and economic impacts due to COVID-19.
- Reserve funds for this year (or next) to cushion the budget due to impact the stock market may have on investments.



3. Share a Heart-Warming Story and a Virtual Coffee

It's easy to get caught up in the deluge of information and news regarding COVID-19. To change it up send out a weekly e-mail or even try a [robocall](#) to share a good news story. Perhaps it could be on why you're grateful for your church or a recent story about love in action that you personally witnessed. You might encourage parishioners to write a short response to why they're grateful for their church community. You may even collect some of these gratitude reflections and send some out through the parish e-news (with their permission of course).

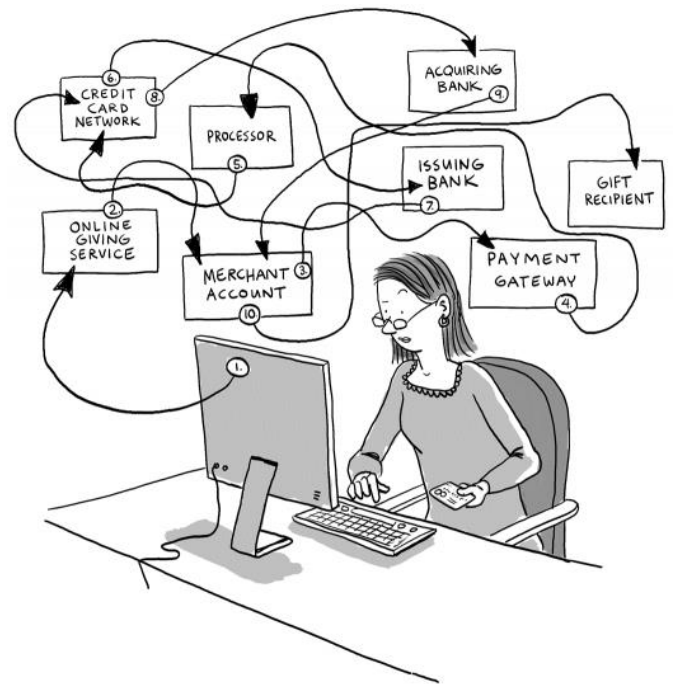
Invite your community to virtually come together through [Zoom](#) or another platform for a Bible-Study, evensong or after a virtual Sunday service. Maybe host a virtual coffee time after service with Bishop Susan Bell, another parish, or your own service. You could have some pre-arranged questions for folks to respond to so the conversation can easily get started. One questions might be, "How are you giving of your time, talent and treasure during this extraordinary time?"

4. Online Giving and Snail Mail

All our parishes can accept online donations through the secure [Diocesan Online Giving Page](#). You can make a one-time gift or become set up for on-going giving (pre-authorized) using your credit card.

Detailed, [step-by-step instructions](#) on how to make a gift on-line through the Niagara Diocese's Online Giving Page have been provided on the [Diocesan COVID-19 Resource Hub](#). These instructions can help those who have not yet tried donating on-line or who may need additional support.

Folks are welcomed to mail in their Sunday offering to their parish. Please encourage hands to be sanitized before writing the cheque and touching the envelope. Please also ask people to not lick the envelope, rather use a cloth or sponge to dampen it. If the mailing address to the parish is needed encourage people to call your parish office or another member of the church – then they can have a chat and check-in with a friend. On the church's voicemail please add the mailing address.



Nancy thought online giving was so simple.



Be sure to share this information via email and social media with parishioners. Also let people who are not technologically inclined they are still welcomed to mail in their offering as they may not be aware that this is still an option.

5. Get Creative

Overdo it on the warm fuzzies and connecting with your community. This is one of the main reasons people are connected to a church.

There are many suggestions online on how to stay connected. For instance, today my 9-year-old wrote a card, photographed it, and emailed it to an elderly parishioner. You can do the same and more. Get creative.

6. Celebrate

Plan a celebration! When the date is set for the first church service back together, **CELEBRATE!** Make it a big deal – have a banner and give extra time for chatting together.

When life together is back to normal have a post-COVID-19 celebration. It could be as simple as a special coffee hour with treats galore, a potluck, a spaghetti dinner, or a wine & cheese. Set out a donation basket and advertise that there will be an opportunity to donate to support your parish or perhaps another Anglican ministry such as the [Migrant Farmworkers Project](#), [PWRDF](#) or the [Anglican Foundation of Canada](#).

A central tenet of our Christian faith is love of God and love of neighbor. While we may not be able to give of our time and talent as we once did, we can continue to practice our faith through giving – it simply looks different “for such a time as this”.

