**Regular Giving Request – Letter Template**

In this document you will find a suggested layout, and an example, for a letter requesting regular giving. Pages 2-3 provide a structure split into four headings, each with explanatory notes to help you consider what you might say. On page 4 there is a fictional example letter from the churchwarden at St Mary’s, Steeple Rothes who is writing to the wider community.

Remember that each church is unique and so each request is unique but some suggestions for a strong letter would include:

* Always tailor your message to the current circumstances
* Write in the 1st person
* Send the letter from someone specific; usually this is the incumbent but in rural churches and multi-parish benefices is should come from the leader of the local church (e.g. a churchwarden).
* Stick to talking about your own church’s/parish’s situation, rather than being generic about giving to “the church”.
* This is an opportunity to communicate with a wide audience so include other information about your church such as service times, regular activities and community events.
* Your letter should be no longer than 1 side of A4 otherwise you risk the reader not getting through it.
* Remember to distribute a method of joining your regular giving scheme with the letter. The easier it is for people to sign up the more likely they are to do so.

This document focuses on structuring a letter rather than looking at Biblical and theological reasons for giving. These, however, are very important and requests for giving should always be grounded in faith. For some ideas and examples about Biblical giving messages take a look at some of the regular giving campaign examples [on our website](https://www.oxford.anglican.org/support-services/parish-support/generous-giving/regular-giving-resources/).

If you have any questions about regular giving you can contact the Generous Giving Adviser, Joshua Townson, at joshua.townson@oxford.anglican.org or on 01865 208757.

**Part 1 – Structure Notes**

**Paragraph 1: Who you are**

The first section is for introducing yourself. Remember to be personal and to bring in information about the church community. Try not to just name the church but to give a little bit of information on what your church is all about. You may have some form of mission statement – for example: ‘St Margaret’s Church, seeking to manifest the presence of Christ in our community.’ Try using this as a basis to expand a little more, e.g. by adding ‘which means we…’ This paragraph should be relatively short; it is about starting your letter with a reminder of why your church is important.

**Paragraph 2: What you do**

This is your chance to set out the reasons the reader should support you (note that the actual request comes later). See [our webpage on regular giving](https://www.oxford.anglican.org/support-services/parish-support/generous-giving/regular-giving/) for an introduction into the reasons people give.

This paragraph is all about tailoring; think about whom you are writing to and what might motivate them to financially support your church. To help visualise this we can talk about “expanding circles” of connection to the church, grouping people under three headings:

1. Regular congregants

**1: Congregants**

1. Irregular congregants & electoral roll

**2: Existing relationship**

1. People who come to regular non-worship groups/events
2. People who come for Christmas (and maybe Easter)
3. Those who know the church through weddings & christenings

**3: No relationship**

1. Locals without a relationship with the church

Generally, the motivations to give for each of these groups exist on a scale like the one below:

Worship Life

Community-focused charity/building

Of course, charitable activity cannot actually be separated from the worship life of the church but tailoring is all about discerning the primary motivation to give of the group to which you are writing. So we can, in general terms say that:

* People in group 1 are more likely to be motivated to give based on their faith and on being part of the worshipping community. This means that letters to this group should focus on giving as an important part of a lived faith, alongside an explanation of the church’s mission (including worship and charitable activities).
* Group 2 are interested in your worship life and know it to be key to your mission but perhaps interact with the church in a more non-worshipping context therefore a message that balances the two is needed. This should remind them of all the non-worship activity that the church does to support the community, as well as the importance of your Christian foundation.
* Group 3 will likely be unfamiliar with the worshipping life of the church and may also be unaware of the work you do in the community. You shouldn’t avoid talking about Christianity as the basis of your mission but when it comes to finances this group will generally be most interested in how, through supporting you, they can support their local community. So try to provide some concrete examples such as:
	+ Being a community building and working with other local agencies
	+ Running support groups and services (inc. food parcels during coronavirus)
	+ Providing a space for religious reflection and/or spiritual support
	+ Leading and coordinating community events

Two more notes:

* Try not to just talk about what you do right now but also what you want to be able to do. i.e. ‘we are doing x and we also want to expand to do y because…’ This shows you are not a static entity and sets the scene for asking for financial support.
* I must emphasise that a non-religious focus for group 3 does not preclude discussing faith, nor does a faith focus for group 1 preclude mentioning your non-religious activities. Those in group 3 already know that churches are Christian organisations and, unless they are totally unwilling to fund religion, they will be open to hearing about the Christian foundation for your non-religious activities. At the same time group 1 are particularly interested in your worship life but the Gospel calls them to care about the wider community and so they will be interested in your non-religious activities too.

**Paragraph 3: The request**

This is where you ask for the financial support. Remember to tie what you have just said into why you are asking. If you are experiencing financial difficulties be honest about that and say so, otherwise focus on a message of helping the church achieve its goals.

* Be as clear as possible on how you would like people to give but also provide them with an alternative e.g. have the Parish Giving Scheme as your main method of giving but provide directions to your online donation page if they would like to give a one-off donation.
* Include information about Gift Aid and a blank [Gift Aid declaration](https://www.oxford.anglican.org/support-services/parish-support/generous-giving/gift-aid/#toggle-id-1) (especially if you don’t use PGS)
* Make it easy and quick to give.

**Paragraph 4: Thanks**

It’s really important to thank people for anything they can do to help. You may not get the opportunity to thank new givers in person so this is a great opportunity to express your gratitude to them for helping to keep the church going. Even if people are not able (or willing) to give it doesn’t mean they don’t care about the church and thanking them for all their support ensures a good ongoing relationship.

Make sure to include the contact details of someone they can contact if they have questions or want to know more about the church.

**Joshua Townson, Churchwarden**

Church picture or logo

**St Margaret’s Church, Steeple Rothes**

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Friday 25th September 2020

Dear Sir,

At St Margaret’s Church, Steeple Rothes we seek to be a centre of faith and action in our community which means we’re always working as hard as we can for everyone who lives here. As Christians we believe we are called to share God’s love and we work to do this through prayer and action.

In normal times we run a number of support groups; we have an active children’s night for kids from St Margaret’s Primary and a mum and baby music group on a Wednesday. During the coronavirus pandemic we have missed being able to run these in church but we have met regularly online to help combat loneliness. We have also helped with the community response by collecting food and medication for some of our most vulnerable residents. Alongside this we have continued to meet online on a Sunday and to pray for our community. Now that we are starting to re-open we have enjoyed being able to start inviting people back to church. We are only allowed a certain number of people but if you would like to join us for Sunday worship you can register for a place on our website. We’re very blessed to have such a beautiful building which has been at the heart of our community for hundreds of years and has been home to the weddings and Christenings of many people born and living here. This year, though, as we begin to look ahead to Christmas we are thinking about the events we can run for the community which can still take place outside so that, even though the world around us changes, we can still be a loving and caring presence at the centre of our community.

I’m writing this letter to you today to ask for your help. Over the last few months, alongside many people and other charities, we’ve struggled financially and we’re now coming to a place where we’re having to really consider if we can afford to keep running all our different services and groups. We are extremely keen to continue our support for the children and the young mums, and we also want to keep finding new ways to care for after our community. For example, we are currently trying to find a way to bring together older residents who may be experiencing a period of increased loneliness. We’d also love to provide a place for older kids to safely gather with their friends. To do all this we need to ask for help from everyone in the community. If you would be willing to support us in caring for everyone who lives in Steeple Rothes we would be so grateful for your help. You can support us through a direct debit (a form for which [the PGS] I have enclosed). If you could spare £10 per month that would help us continue to serve the community to the very best of our ability. If you aren’t able to commit to a direct debit at the moment though, you can still help us with a one-off donation through our website and anything you can spare would be most appreciated.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter. I am grateful for all the support we receive from everyone in the community and I promise we will keep praying and working for you. I understand that this is a difficult time financially and emotionally for all of us and if you would like a confidential conversation about either finances or about faith please do get in touch; you can find my contact details at the top of this letter.

With my prayers and love,

Joshua Townson