

# St Mary the Virgin Downe



St Mary the Virgin has been here, in the centre of our village for over 700 years. It has watched as the village has been through plague, civil war and two World Wars. It has been a constant presence in times of trouble and sadness, times of celebration and gladness and for funerals, christenings and weddings.

Yet it is more than a historic building. We are here as a Church which lives in the present and looks to the future. As the Bible tells us, our Church is primarily not a building but a body of people - people who relate together as the Body of Christ. The Church is a living organism, and lives to reflect that we believe in and serve a living God who is concerned about our lives today.

The upkeep of our church – both the fabric and the ministry – is entirely the responsibility of our small congregation. We receive no funding whatsoever from either the central Church of England or government, and if we want our church to be there for future generations we have to continue to bear that responsibility.

## Why should we give money to the Church?

Our giving of both money and time supports the mission of God in the world – both here in Downe and further afield.

We give to the church because we see God's abundant generosity in the world around us.

As disciples of Christ we want to put God first in our lives. In our giving that generous abundance from God flows through us to enable that church to flourish.

## This year's budget

When we think about our giving to God through his church it is helpful to understand that every church has to fund itself, and to know how much we receive, and what we spend it on each month.

Expenditure		Income	
Common Fund	£1,488	Planned giving	£1,588
Clergy expenses	£281	Cash collections	£0
Church running costs	£592	Other donations	£352
Outward giving	£238	Gift Aid	£398
Other	£144	Church Activities	£212
<b>Total</b>	<b>£2,743</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>£2,550</b>

## What about the money we pay to the Diocese?

The Common Fund is a pot of money paid into by congregations across the Diocese. It is used to provide and support ministers, and to further the work of the Church in every parish across the Diocese of Rochester.

The Diocese is a wonderfully diverse and vibrant community of faith, with each parish facing different challenges and needs. Our Diocesan vision expresses our ambition to meet these challenges as a family of faith, supporting each other as we seek to grow disciples, enrich communities and resource our mission and ministry.

The Common Fund helps us realise this ambition. It means every contribution matters.

## How much money should we give?

The New Testament teaches us to be generous in giving to God. Many Christians follow the Old Testament norm of 10% when considering their giving across the spectrum of their local church and other Christian causes. Not everyone, of course, can manage that amount. So we simply ask you please to consider prayerfully how much you are able to give to St Mary the Virgin.

## Thank you

We may have different amounts of money and have different abilities and talents. These talents and gifts, like our possessions and wealth, are generous gifts from a generous God, and we offer them back to God to use within St Mary the Virgin and our wider community.

## Think about planned giving

Many of our church family give a set amount to the church each week, month or year, usually by standing order.

As a parish we have joined the Parish Giving Scheme, which enables us to give by Direct Debit. If you sign up to this you will make a big difference to your church's finances. Your gift will benefit your church even when you are away, and we will have a much better idea of how much the church will have and how we can support our vision and plans for the future.



## What we give

Our gift to God is something between ourselves and God. We are not here to tell anyone what they should be giving.

What we ask you to do is pray, think, and decide what is the right level for you.

## The next step

Thank you for all you do for St Mary the Virgin. Using the form provided please think and pray about what you give now.

Can you

- Increase the percentage of your income which you give to God through his church?
- Set up a Direct Debit by joining the Parish Giving Scheme?
- Alternatively, give a lump sum (and Gift Aid it)?
- Could you leave a gift in your will to your church?



Please make your response using the form provided and put in the box at the back of church before 10 July or return to John Isbell.

**THANK YOU!**