**Planned Giving Review**

There is a seeming ‘almost tradition’ in Churches that the matter of giving is only addressed when there is a crisis. Indeed, this was part of the motivation for our planned giving review last year. We could see that there was a looming financial problem. And, many people responded. Things are not totally resolved but they are better than they would have been. The subsequent letter thanking you was heartfelt.

We have also been looking at ways to reduce the sense of problem and to move into a sense of resourcing mission and ministry. One of the ideas is an **annual** giving review. Before you switch off or sigh with resignation, please read – and ponder on our reasoning. You may even agree with it!

We have noted that:-

1 Just because the Church asks people to review giving at a particular time in a particular year, not everyone can – for a variety of reasons, all of which are valid. However, circumstances change and many of us are diffident about talking about money unless someone else raises it. So, an annual review allows us all to ‘do something’ if we are able. And, there will be an opportunity next year – and following years.

2 Circumstances may have changed since your review last year. This is an opportunity to make an adjustment to reflect this year’s circumstances. Low inflation means low income increases, yet deferring a change can cause a jolt when an irregular review takes place. And, if you are in receipt of lower income this year, perhaps there could be a slight downwards review. For this is what ‘review’ means – and it resonates with the Biblical teaching of proportionate giving.

3 It is always difficult when new, or returning to after a gap, to Church to know what to do about giving. If are all reviewing at the same time, those who are new are neither ignored or ‘picked upon’. It is something that we do.

4 Some of us do need a prod to get on and do something that we may prefer not to do. We are only looking at our use of money – what was Jesus looking at as He approached the cross?

So, this ‘prod for God’ could be good for us as well as the parish. But, what to do? Review is such a broad word. Again, a few thoughts on which to pray and act. We can:-

* Review **What** we are giving. Many Christians, across the world, give a proportion of their income back to God. As mentioned earlier, if we are to do this, it does mean that we need to regularly review our giving.
* Review **How** we are giving. In our congregation, as with many elsewhere, there are an increasing number of people abandoning weekly planned giving envelopes and, instead, giving by monthly bank standing order. It is a practical way of putting God first in our budgets.
* Review **Why** we are giving. People give for a variety of reasons. We have included a ‘Six Steps in Christian Giving’ leaflet for you to consider.

With this letter is a response form and a response envelope. Please use them. No one is going to call; no one is going to phone. Rather, we ask that you bring it to Church some time over the coming weeks. When the offertory occurs, please place it on the plate and it will form part of your offering – not just on that Sunday but for the coming year.

We do hope that this is a helpful process and that the parish journey to a resourced mission Church can continue. It is an exciting journey and we are delighted that you are part of it.