

Digital fundraising and crowdfunding



Digital fundraising and crowdfunding open up opportunities to grow your churches giving, by making it easier for both the congregation and wider community to support your church. This factsheet offers top tips to help you begin or build your digital fundraising.

There are various ways you can fundraise digitally but for the majority of churches, digital fundraising falls into three main categories:

1. Online giving for your congregation

In recent times many churches have transitioned to deliver their services digitally. The collection and offering part of the service however have often been neglected. To allow your congregation to continue to give online, there are two key steps to take:

- **Firstly, set up an online giving platform to allow you to collect donations.** There are many platforms with varying approaches, a handful are listed below. This list is not exhaustive, but is a helpful place to begin your research:

Site	Link	Costs
JustGiving	www.justgiving.com	Monthly cost and card processing fee
Stewardship fundraising	www.stewardship.org.uk/fundraising	Free but with an % admin fee on donations
Church Suite	www.churchsuite.com	Monthly cost and card processing fee
Parish Giving (Anglican churches)	www.parishgiving.org.uk	Costs met by the Diocese
CAF Donate	www.cafonline.org/charities/caf-donate	Free but with an % admin fee on donations
Give A Little	givealittle.co	% fee on donations
GiveStar	givestar.io	No platform fee, but transaction fees apply

The Church of England's parish resources website has more tips and recommendations for online giving www.parishresources.org.uk/receiving-online-donations/

- **Secondly, promote online giving to the congregation.** It is vital to ensure people are aware that they can give online, and are encouraged to do so. To successfully promote online giving you can:
 - ✓ **Make giving part of your 'digital liturgy'.** If you have an online service have a regular form of words (or several) to remind people to give.
 - ✓ **Make the link to your chosen platform very visible** and prominent from your church website's home page (or on your entry on achurchnearyou.com, if applicable).
 - ✓ **Tell stories about the difference people's giving makes**, for example 'Because our giving went up last year we were able to reach more isolated people in our community'.
 - ✓ **Reduce anxiety around online giving by offering help.** One idea is to give people a phone number if they are having difficulties so someone can talk them through.

We understand not all churches have transitioned to digital services. If your church is looking to hold services or activities online, the following sources of information are a good place to start:

- Other churches who have successfully run digital services and work may be able to offer advice
- Your diocese may be able to offer support
- Research the platforms available for online services. You could use generic video conferencing platforms like Zoom (zoom.us/) or specialist Christian ones such as The Sunday Service of Church Suite (churchsuite.com/).

2. Crowdfunding

Crowdfunding is the concept that, rather than having one major investor, charitable projects can harness the power of the internet to get lots of small gifts. Many of the platforms you can use (e.g. JustGiving) are the same as those you might use for congregational giving. To crowdfund successfully and engage people outside your usual congregation ensure that:

- ✓ You are raising funds for a **specific, tangible project**, such as buying new furniture for the church hall.
- ✓ The project you are raising money for will benefit the **whole community** (for example the new furniture will provide better facilities for everyone!).
- ✓ You are looking to raise a **specific, medium amount of money**.
- ✓ You **already have some of the money raised**, to give confidence that you will achieve your ambitions.
- ✓ **You work hard to promote the crowdfunder for a short period of time** (i.e. two weeks). Crowdfunding is about spreading the word as widely and quickly as possible, instead of drip feeding over longer periods of time.
- ✓ **Use all routes possible to publish your crowdfunder** such as parish newsletters, local press, Facebook, email and, most of all, your network.

3. Social media

Social media can be utilised in several ways for your fundraising. You can either raise money directly on social media or use it to spread the message about your other digital fundraising. To make sure you are getting the most out of social media fundraising, consider the following:

- ✓ **Pick one or two platforms and use them well**, instead of spreading yourself across several.
- ✓ **Think about your audience** and create and share interesting content for them regularly.
- ✓ **Always include 'calls to actions'**, which encourage people to do something to support your church. 'Like our page' or 'donate below' are examples of calls to actions.
- ✓ **Teach church members how to share your content widely.** This is key to spreading your message, and therefore fundraising, further than your congregation.
- ✓ **Keep at it!** As with all successful fundraising, online fundraising is about building strong relationships that take time. So have patience that over time your work and dedication will pay off.
- ✓ **Consider 'affiliate fundraising'** which is where people can support your church through their everyday online shopping purchases, at no extra cost. Examples of affiliate fundraising sites are Amazon Smile or EasyFundraising.
- ✓ **Do your research**, there are lots of resources and support available online to help you get the most out of social media. For example, Benefact Trust have some useful guidance on making the most out of social media on their advice and resources hub. <https://benefacttrust.co.uk/advice-and-resources/make-the-most-of-social-media/>

Want to find out more?

A dedicated helpline has been set up to help support churches with the fundraising hub.

If you or your church would like support with our online resources please request a call back via the church fundraising helpline on **0345 601 9959** or the online form on the fundraising hub and we will be in touch.

And don't forget to keep checking the fundraising hub for more updates.

www.ecclesiastical.com/churchfundraising

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