

FOUNDATIONS

SUPPORTING
KINGDOM
BUILDING



FUNDING THE FUTURE

Helping churches turn vision into reality
through effective fundraising

Also in this issue:

Faith filled
fundraising

Moving
mountains
with a mustard
seed

Growing a
culture of
generosity in
your church

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SUPPORTING
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Welcome



Some churches and ministries do not like talking about money. There is often a reluctance to teach on tithing and almost a sense of embarrassment

when asking for additional offerings to fund building projects and other major activities that require funding. There are some like George Muller of old who prefer not to ask people directly for money, choosing instead to lay their requests before the Lord.

Although I have a huge admiration for the faith of men such as Muller, I do believe that there is a place within our churches and other ministries for teaching on tithing and generous giving, setting out the vision and requirements for ministry and major projects and going out to grant-funders to ask for their support.

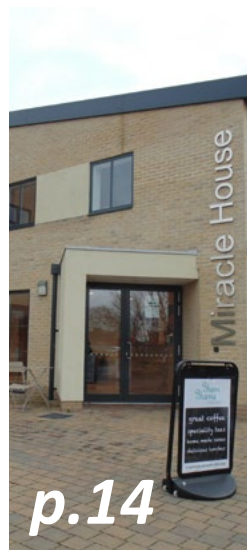
Much of Jesus' teaching was on money and Paul often raised the subject in his letters. Money is important for life and necessary for major projects. That is why this edition of Foundations focusses on grant funding. We have brought together a mix of inspiring stories, biblical insight and practical advice. Our prayer is that this will encourage more Kingdom work and help churches step out in faith – to see building projects, aligned with their vision for the church and ministry, become a reality.

If you need help in any of the areas that we have covered or would like advice on other matters, please do not hesitate to contact us. May the Lord continue to bless you in your ministry.

Giles Arnold

Chief Executive of Church Growth Trust

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QR codes

We include 'QR codes' in Foundations to make it easier to access more information online. Just open your mobile phone camera, point the camera at the QR code image, tap the link that appears on your mobile screen and follow any instructions that will take you to the relevant website.



What's New?

Our latest news in brief

Welcoming new trustee Kevin Russell

We are delighted to welcome Kevin Russell to the Church Growth Trust board of trustees.

Kevin brings a wealth of experience from both the commercial and charity sectors. He spent 27 years as Technical Director at the Christian charity Stewardship, where he played a key role in areas such as charity tax policy, governance, and managing a significant loan book for church and charity lending. His expertise spans accountancy, tax, charity law and finance.

Kevin's church background is equally broad. He grew up in the Baptist Church and, with his wife, helped plant a church within the New Frontiers network. Over the years, he

has worshipped in Brethren, independent and denominational contexts, and is currently active in both an Anglican church and an FIEC church in London and Canterbury.



Kevin Russell

Giles Arnold, CGT's Chief Executive, says *"Kevin brings a rare combination of deep financial knowledge, experience in charity governance and a strong heart for the Church. We are thrilled to have him on board and look forward to the valuable insight he will bring to our work."*

We are thankful for Kevin's appointment and excited about all that lies ahead.

Share your good news with us

Church Growth Trust is always looking for good news to share. If you have an encouraging story about the ministry in your area or a building project you are working on, please contact our Communications Manager.



Sharon Short

Communications Manager

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Helping churches fund their mission

Church Growth Trust recently hosted a successful fundraising webinar for churches occupying CGT buildings, in partnership with Wootton George Consulting and Church Grants. The session was designed to give churches practical tools and greater confidence in applying for funding.

Ben Ansell from Wootton George shared expert advice on building a compelling case for support and finding the right funders, while Andrew Clarke gave a live demonstration of the Church Grants microsite.

Feedback from delegates was extremely positive, with many saying they left feeling better equipped to take the next steps in their fundraising journey. A repeat session is planned for October 2025 to support even more churches looking to fund building improvements, outreach activities or community work.

To access Church Grants, visit <https://cgt.churchgrants.co.uk/>. You will need your organisation ID and church name. If you do not know your ID, please email enquiries@churchgrowth.org.uk.

We are thrilled to offer this new opportunity and believe it will be a valuable tool for churches seeking funding to support their ministry.



Visit....

cgt.churchgrants.co.uk



Free Stewardship Consultancy Helpline

This is a reminder that churches occupying Church Growth Trust buildings continue to receive free access to Stewardship's Consultancy Helpline. The helpline provides confidential and trusted support on a wide range of topics, including governance, charity law, financial matters and trustee responsibilities. It is available to all trustees of eligible churches and can be a vital source of help when navigating complex or unfamiliar issues.

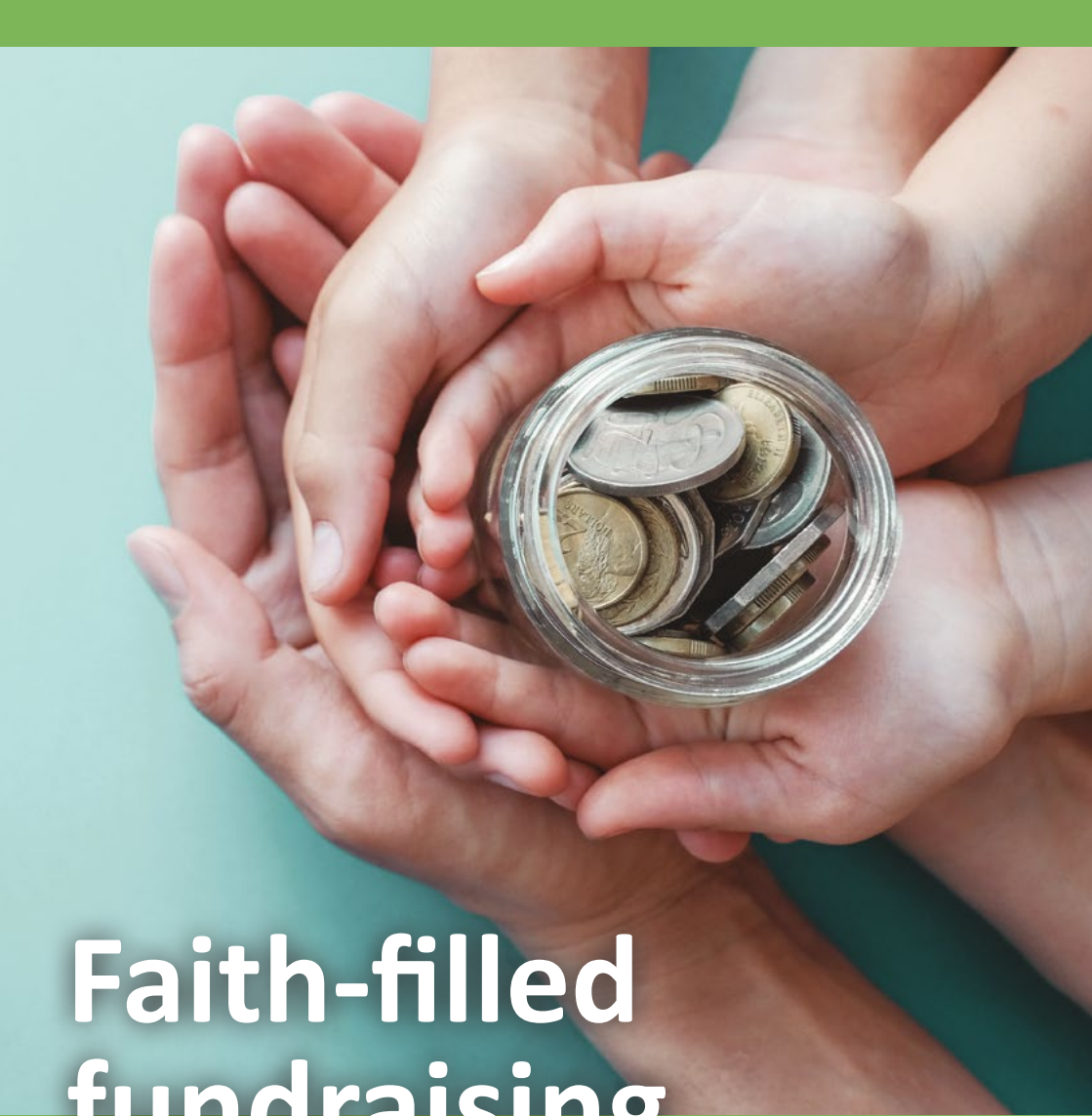
To make an enquiry, you can email consultancy@stewardship.org.uk or telephone 020 8502 8590, and include:

- The name of your organisation
- Your own name
- A brief summary of your question or concern
- Whether you prefer a reply by email or telephone and your preferred contact details

If a full response is not possible immediately, Stewardship aims to respond within two working days. For further information, including frequently asked questions, please visit www.stewardship.org.uk/consultancy-helpline. We encourage you to make full use of this valuable support service.

Stewardship





Faith-filled fundraising

Stepping into building projects with courage, vision and practical wisdom

A building project is more than bricks and budgets, it is a step of faith. This article offers spiritual encouragement and practical wisdom to help you move forward with clarity, unity and trust in God's provision.

Be strong and courageous!

Even the boldest among us can feel overwhelmed when facing a major building project. Joshua, a fearless spy who spent much time in God's presence, still needed repeated reminders to be strong and courageous. Let the Lord's encouragement strengthen you and step out in faith. A fundraising project takes both trust in God and practical wisdom - you need to plan wisely while depending on His provision.

Vision is vital

As a leader, you—and your church—need to be clear about what God has called you to do in your community and how the building project supports that calling. Stick to the vision and keep sharing it regularly; it is key to keeping everyone united and motivated. A successful project depends on the whole church being fully behind it, especially as it may require real sacrifice. When a building project flows from a God-given vision, it becomes more than a financial challenge—it becomes a journey of faith and growth.

Get started early

Do not wait until plans are drawn up and permissions are granted. Begin thinking about funding as soon as you have a rough idea of how much the project might cost. Even the best plans are of no use if the money is not available to support them.

Learn from others

Speak with churches that have already been involved in building projects. There is much to learn, from what went well to what did not. Be encouraged by success stories and allow them to build your faith, but also take note of common pitfalls so you can avoid them.

Use the tools available

To understand what is involved in a major fundraising campaign and how to prepare effectively, we recommend reading Church Growth Trust's practical guide, ***Fundraising for Major Building Projects***. You can access this by scanning the QR code at the bottom of the page.

Where is the funding coming from?

It is helpful from the outset to have a clear idea of where the funding for your project will come from. This often includes a building fund accumulated over several years, perhaps boosted by a legacy from a former member of the church—sometimes even sparking the initial vision for the project. Sacrificial giving (or loans) from the congregation should form a significant part, as it demonstrates the commitment of the church and meets the expectations of many funding bodies.

You can then explore options such as mortgages and unsecured loans before considering how much grant funding will be needed. It is also important to be clear from the beginning about which sources of funding are acceptable to your church (for example, whether you would accept funding from the National Lottery). While fundraising events such as sponsored activities and table-top sales can help church members feel a sense of ownership, they usually raise only a small portion of the funds required.

Feasibility study

Once you have an initial idea of how much grant funding you may need, it is wise to carry out a funding feasibility study. This helps you assess whether your financial targets are realistic and how achievable your plans are. You can do this yourself using resources such



as www.churchgrants.co.uk, particularly if your project is relatively modest. For larger or more complex projects, it may be beneficial to engage a fundraising consultant. As this will incur a cost, it is important to include this in your budget from the start. This will help make your plans more realistic, as sometimes churches are expecting God to do a miracle, when they are acting in presumption rather than faith!

Leadership and fundraising capacity

Successful appeals need clear vision, commitment and strong leadership. While church leaders must support the project, another trusted person may be better placed to lead. Someone with time, energy and the ability to inspire others. Choose someone who shares the church's vision and has the trust of the congregation.

Think early on about who will carry out key

tasks, from researching funders to running events. Volunteers can do much of this, but leaders should avoid taking on too much themselves. Match tasks with willing people in the church family.

If there are gaps in skills or time, consider bringing in professional help. This can be valuable, especially for funding applications. However, outside help cannot replace the involvement of church members, particularly where personal connections and local knowledge are needed. The right support can strengthen your appeal and help you avoid common mistakes.

Clarity and communication

Keeping your congregation informed and engaged is key throughout the appeal. Set clear goals and timelines and communicate your expectations. This helps everyone stay on board, united around the vision and aware of how they can contribute.

FINAL TOP TIPS

Prepare well

Take time to plan carefully rather than rushing into an appeal. A clear strategy and funding feasibility study, even with time and cost involved, will save effort and bring clarity later.

Clarify and share the vision

A compelling, shared vision is the foundation of success. Make sure the whole church understands what is being done and why. Bring any doubters on board, especially those who influence others.

Engage the community

Use the appeal to connect with new people and organisations locally. Building wider support can open doors for future ministry and funding.

Keep the long term in view

Think beyond the current appeal. If you follow through well and communicate impact, today's supporters may become long term partners.

Build momentum

People are more likely to give when they believe the appeal is moving forward. Celebrate progress and avoid discouraging visuals like an empty fundraising thermometer!

Encourage your team

Fundraising can be challenging. Support those involved, pray for them, and take time to celebrate wins along the way.

Remember,

“Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain”

Psalm 127:1

So, take time to pray through your plans and seek God's will for every step of the way.

Want to learn more?

Church Growth Trust's **Practical Guide to Fundraising for Major Building Projects** is full of wisdom, tools and real-life insights to help you on the journey. Download your free copy by scanning the QR code below.



By Giles Arnold

Chief Executive

Giles has been managing Church Growth Trust since its inception in 2010 and before that worked for Stewardship.

He leads the expanding team and is regularly meeting trustees and elders of independent churches, who are considering how CGT can help them with their properties.

He works with other sister organisations on a national basis, including with church planting work and revitalisation of churches. He also specialises in advice on church and charity buildings, such as unravelling Trust Deeds.



Helping hands: How independent churches can secure support



An interview with Helen Gray, Trust Director, Benefact Trust

In this edition, we are focusing on fundraising projects with the aim of helping churches and charities who want to apply for grants and raise funds to avoid pitfalls and learn some new strategies. The grant-making body Benefact Trust was formed in 1972 and has awarded over £310 million since then, to churches and Christian organisations which benefit people of all faiths and none. Church Growth Trust's Communications Manager Sharon Short caught up with Helen Gray, Benefact Trust Director, to find out more.

Sharon: "Tell me a bit about what you do at Benefact Trust."

Helen: "We fund over a huge breadth, supporting food banks, mental health charities, debt advice, victims of human trafficking and just about every social need you can think of. We try to be a little different to everyone else with our vision. So, if we receive an application from an area of extreme deprivation, we will always add an uplift behind the scenes since their need is greater than many of our applicants. When it comes to independent churches, we often see applications to help with buildings which need modification or restoration. We make quite a few donations to this kind of work as the church buildings weren't originally built to be accessible. And I know that Church Growth Trust is working with lots of independent churches who are looking at changing their buildings to meet the needs of their congregation and community."

Navigating the funding landscape

Sharon: “That’s right. We have an Architect and a Property Manager on the team who are able to visit churches and offer great advice and practical help. There is no need to spend lots of money on expensive legal advice as CGT is set up to signpost them along the way. We don’t want any of the churches we work with to spend out when they don’t have to. However, many of them report that the current funding landscape is quite difficult to negotiate.”

Helen: “That’s true. There is increasing competition for funding now. We’re seeing rising demand, fewer funders in some cases and higher operating costs for churches - from utilities to repairs to salaries. Despite these challenges there are still funders passionate about the Church’s role in society. And independent churches are often doing some of the most agile and responsive work on the ground. My advice would be to take a look at the Christian Funders Forum <https://christianfundersforum.org> and look for the most appropriate Christian grant making trusts. Also, I’d always emphasise the importance of focusing on alignment with the funds you’re applying for. Applying for a small, focused number of grants in the year bears more fruit than sending out lots of applications all at once. Churches need to avoid the scattergun approach.”

Stand out applications

Sharon: “So what separates a successful grant application from a rejected one?”

Helen: It is so important to do the research. For us, the most successful applications are those where there is a really clear alignment between our mission and vision and the project. One of the main reasons we reject an application is that it doesn’t meet our criteria.

Take the time to check it out before applying. Clarity is also key. You should be able to explain your project to someone in a queue at the supermarket - What do you want to do? Why is it needed? What difference will your project make? If churches can answer those questions clearly, they’re on the right path. Budgets are another common pitfall. They’re often poorly presented or don’t add up. We’ve recently improved our system to help applicants with this, but it’s still vital to check and recheck your figures.”

Proving the impact

Sharon: “Would you advise applicants to talk about the work they’re already doing and its impact on their community?”

Helen: “Definitely. We want to see evidence of local need. You don’t need to do major research, but if a church is able to articulate this by referencing existing data or surveys, it can really strengthen their case. Tell us what difference your work is making. Are you reducing loneliness, providing food or mental health support, creating a safe space for young people? That narrative matters.”

Sharon: “Have you seen any trends in applications since lockdown?”

Helen: “We see a lot of applications around homelessness and human trafficking, but the range is broad. What we did notice was a huge increase in grant applications between 2022-2023. Of late, there has been more around net zero. And churches are so well placed to address their local community’s needs.”

Sharon: “Are you focusing on any particular projects at the moment?”

Helen: “Last year we started a strategic partnership programme. It was a chance for the Trust to step back and identify two or three social needs that we wanted our

grant making to impact on. Homelessness is something we're seeing more of and it's impacted by so many other social issues such as relationship breakdown, poverty, mental health issues and drug and alcohol dependency.

This year, we expect to award one or two significant grants to tackle homelessness. Last year, we supported the Church of England in helping sixty churches to become net zero, with the idea that they would be a blueprint for other churches on the same journey, including the independent ones."

Don't be discouraged

Sharon: "Have you got any words of encouragement for independent churches who haven't been successful in their applications?"

Helen: "Always ask for feedback. Don't give up. Re-read your application in the cold light of day and be objective. Have you been clear about why you need funding and did your application align perfectly with the fund you

applied to? Don't try to crowbar stuff in that doesn't fit. When you get your first, 'yes', you'll be so delighted and it will encourage you to keep going."

Top tips for small churches

Sharon: "Have you got any tips for independent churches who might not have many people or resources to help with their application?"

Helen: "I'd find the people who share your passion and pull together a team. Don't do it on your own - it's far more fun in a group and you can support each other. Focus on what the project could look like, how much it's going to cost and what you need. Do your research and look for local funding as well as national grant making trusts."

Sharon: "Finally, is there something you'd love people to know before they start on the journey?"

Helen: "Nothing is impossible, although it might seem unlikely. You can make a difference in your local community and that might be your legacy. Isn't that amazing?"

Useful resources for churches

Benefact Trust

Find funding criteria, application guidance and downloadable forms.



Christian Funders Forum

A directory of 40+ funders supporting Christian projects.



Ecclesiastical's Funding for Churches page

Regularly updated list of available grants.





Real stories

Kingsgrove Community Hub

Wantage Community Church is an independent congregation without a building of its own. For many years, the church has dreamed of having a dedicated space to call its own and to use as a base for serving the wider community.

That dream began to take shape with the announcement of a major new development of 1,500 homes to the northeast of Wantage. As part of this plan, the church has been entrusted with the management and development of a new community hub, having been granted a 125-year lease on a parcel of land within the development.

Thanks to support from multiple funders, including Benefact Trust, the hub will serve dual purposes: providing a permanent home for the church and acting as a vibrant centre for community life. The facility will include a café and flexible meeting spaces, designed to host a wide range of activities and services.



Conversations are already underway with various organisations eager to deliver services through the hub. These include mental health support, employment advice, special educational needs assistance and activities for both older adults and children.

To find out more about the Kingsgrove Community Hub, visit www.thehub.org.uk



Helen Gray

Trust Director,
Benefact Trust

Helen has over 15 years' experience in the charity sector, including roles at St Albans

Cathedral and Hertfordshire Community Foundation. Her earlier career included positions at CMS Cameron McKenna and Baker Tilly. A Lay Member of St Albans Cathedral's Chapter, she volunteers regularly and is passionate about tackling inequality and driving positive social change through grant funding.



Pressed down and running over

A fundraising success story

It is easy to believe that God can perform miracles and make paths where once there were none. Allowing that knowledge to drop from head to heart, however, is a bit harder. Many churches, understandably, are daunted by the many obstacles and challenges which invariably arise during fundraising projects. However, this is the story of one church which looked beyond the obvious, trusted God completely and are now seeing His kingdom increasing in their town.

Ruth Leigh caught up with Rob Purnell, co-leader of New Life Church Crouch Valley in Wickford, Essex to find out more.



Rob Purnell, co-leader, New Life Church Crouch Valley, Wickford

Ruth: Rob, take me right back to the beginning.

Rob: We had outgrown our church building and bid on a piece of land on the Wick Estate. We approached Giles Arnold of Church Growth Trust and to our delight, he explained

that they could construct buildings as well as renting out existing ones. At the time, we only had around 70 people in our congregation. We had a meeting with our trustees and Giles. I'll never forget what he said. "You are going to have to raise £300,000."

Ruth: That is an enormous amount! What did you do next?

Rob: We prayed non-stop. We hired a professional fund bidder who brought in several grants which started us off. Our congregation gave sacrificially, made monthly donations in addition to tithing and we received some very generous one-off gifts. One of my fellow governors at a local school was the fund holder for a recycling company who gave grants to local community projects. He said to me, "Why don't you put in a bid? Go for the maximum of £50,000. You never know." When we got the whole amount, we could not believe it. Near the end of the project, I saw him again and he said, "Lots of projects never get off the ground, but yours has become a reality. Why don't you put in another bid for the chairs and the lift?" At that point we needed a lift and chairs. We got the money! In fact (and this proves that God has a sense of humour), we had to give £7,500 of it back, as we had already bought the chairs and you have to use the money granted for the purpose in the bid."

Ruth: I love that local grant making organisations supported you. Are there any giving stories you particularly remember?

Rob: Yes. The highlight gift for me was the sum of £7.20. A seven-year-old girl in the congregation did a little dance show for her grandparents and they wanted to give her some money. She told them to give it to the fund for building Miracle House, which was the name of our new church building. For such a young person to catch the vision and model sacrificial generosity was amazing. We thought creatively about our fundraising. Yes,

we did receive some significant grants, but we also tried lots of other ways to engage with our community while fundraising. We hired an Elvis impersonator and he donated his fee to the fund and also brought in loads of people. Cake sales, auctions (people were paying £30 for a jar of Tiptree jam) and lots of little events really helped. A local church gave us a cheque for £1,000. Our strategy was little and often, and to remember that we needed to involve our community in the project.

Ruth: So how much did you raise in the end?

Rob: At the end of the build project, NLCCV raised £570,000. That, along with the mortgage raised by Church Growth Trust, was enough to build Miracle House and fit it out for our purposes. Obviously, CGT, who had bought the land, made a significant contribution towards the build costs and they remain the owners of Miracle House.

Ruth: That's incredible. Tell me another story of God's amazing generosity.

Rob: We needed quite a lot of money for sound boarding, for the acoustics in the building. God spoke directly to me. He said, "I want you to ask for the cost of the sound boarding." It was £10,000 and everyone had already given everything they possibly could. I kept it light. During the Sunday morning service, I said, "If anyone has £10,000 spare, please let me know!" That evening, a lady came up to me and handed me a cheque for that exact sum. A few weeks later, a visitor attended our evening service and gave us £9,000. It taught us to trust God for everything, even if it seemed impossible.

Ruth: You must have faced some challenges along the way.

Rob: We did. I had a lot of sleepless nights because of course not everyone in the congregation agreed with everything we were doing. CGT were going to own the building when it was completed and we would be

paying the mortgage (through the rent). We had peace about that, but not everyone else did. There were difficult conversations. At one point, I realised that every time someone flushed the loo, it cost us 22p. But God provided. I was worried we would let Giles down if we couldn't raise all the funds, but he had faith in us.

Ruth: What have you learned from this?

Rob: If God has ordained a project, you can trust Him implicitly to provide. Also, it is important to honour people from the past. Not everyone who was involved with the project is still with us, but we have such respect for their faith and trust from the outset.

Ruth: What advice would you give other church leaders looking at a fundraising project?

Rob: Don't listen to the sceptics! We have now outgrown our building and along the way, we have brought community transformation to the Wick Estate. The Basildon Police gave us a plaque thanking us for the community transformation work we have done. We trusted Him and He is doing wonderful things in our town. God is big enough to lean on. If you're the senior leader, get ready to be misunderstood. Dream big. Thank people for their generosity. Keep telling your story, to everyone. Yield to the Holy Spirit. You are not there to please people. Go and see the experts – in this case, CGT. We can never thank them enough for their advice and support.

Ruth: And finally, what have you been able to do with your new building that you couldn't do before?





Rob: One of the biggest things is our coffee shop, Yum Yums. It now opens seven days a week and we have got thirteen employees. We open at 11.30 on a Sunday just as our service is coming to an end. The final songs are accompanied by the sound of beans being ground and milk being steamed – it makes church accessible to those who are scared to come in. Customers often say, “I didn’t realise there was a church involved in this.” It is one of the most popular venues in Wickford. We also run Sunflowers, a parent and toddler group, especially aimed at SEND children. Anyone who needs a space for an activity impacting the community can use Miracle House, often without charge.

Ruth: Great advice, Rob, and thank you for sharing your story of faith in God and the incredible generosity of our Father.

Want to learn more?

To learn more about New Life Church Crouch Valley, explore their community initiatives or join a Sunday gathering, visit www.newlife-church.org.uk



By Ruth Leigh

Ruth is a freelance writer who works with a number of Christian charities.

each trust funds, where they work and how to apply. Do not rely on trusts as your only source, but they can be significant supporters when matched with other efforts.

SIX

Major donors: Personal, prayerful and polite

There may be individuals in your congregation or wider network who can make larger gifts. A personal approach is best, ideally through someone they know. Be clear about why the project matters and how their gift will make a difference. Thank them well and keep them updated.

SEVEN

National Lottery and statutory grants

Although Church Growth Trust does not support Lottery funding applications, your church may be comfortable with this. Examples such as Heritage Fund and Awards for All can provide a major boost to your funding. These grants require detailed applications and evidence of community benefit, but professional advice is available if needed. Local authority grants, though harder to access these days, may also be possible, especially for projects that improve facilities for public use.

EIGHT

Landfill community funds

If you are within 10 miles of a landfill site, you may be eligible for funding through the Landfill Communities Fund. These schemes often support environmental improvements and community spaces, so if your church is improving accessibility, heating or toilets for community use, you may qualify.

NINE

Community fundraising: Events that build more than income

From sponsored walks to quiz nights, bake sales to online giving pages—community fundraising is a visible, relational way to raise support. It brings in new people, creates energy and offers ways for everyone to get involved. Whilst they will not raise the bulk

of your total, they will create local buzz and involve your wider network.

TEN

Loans: A viable back-up

Some churches complete their fundraising target with a short-term loan, from a bank, a Christian lender, or even from members. If you have a steady income stream, this can be a practical option. In some cases, members later convert their loan into a gift, allowing the church to claim Gift Aid.

ELEVEN

Company giving and gifts in kind

Many businesses prefer giving to causes with a strong community benefit. Approach local employers (especially where members work) and ask about sponsorships, donations or in-kind gifts like materials or labour. Some companies may donate items for raffles or auctions, while others might help promote your campaign.

TWELVE

Be open to the unexpected

Every fundraising story is different. Some churches are gifted a legacy they did not know was coming. Others receive help from a stranger who read about the project online. The key is to plan well, communicate clearly and trust God for the provision, through both expected and surprising means.

Find out more...

For more information and resources on fundraising, download the CGT Practical Guide to Fundraising



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Laying the foundation

How to craft a compelling case for support for a capital appeal

Launching a capital appeal is a defining moment for any church. Whether building new facilities or restoring old ones, it takes more than plans, budgets and enthusiasm—it calls for a shared commitment to a clear vision.

A case for support

At the core of every successful appeal is a compelling case for support: a clear, faith-filled story that explains the need, shares the vision and invites others to give. It should answer three key questions: Why give? Why now? Why this church?

In a church setting, the case for support must be rooted in God's mission. Remind your team and congregation that this is not just about buildings—it is about growing God's Kingdom. Below are some key steps that will help your

church build a compelling case for support.

1. Start with mission and vision

Your capital appeal must be grounded in your church's core mission and vision. Begin by clearly stating who you are, what you do and why it matters. This introduction should make donors feel connected to your purpose and show that the capital project is a natural extension of your long-term plans.

2. Describe the need with clarity and urgency

Do not assume people know why you need this project. Explain the current limitations or challenges your church is facing and why a capital solution is necessary now. Urgency does not mean panic - it means making a compelling case that this project is timely, strategic and essential to your mission.

3. Share a bold, inspiring vision

This is your opportunity to show what is possible. Paint a picture of the future once

the project is complete. Help your audience see not just what you are building, but why it matters. Vision drives giving. Donors are not just about giving to solve problems; they give to create impact.

4. Share stories of transformation

Stories are one of the most powerful tools in a capital appeal. Share examples of how your church is already making a difference and how the capital project will enable you to have an even bigger impact. Emotion connects people to your cause. Let real voices illustrate the heart and Kingdom impact behind the bricks and mortar.

5. Break down the numbers transparently

Clearly communicate the financial target, what it includes and how contributions will be used. Clarity and transparency will help build trust with donors and helps them understand the scale and structure of the project.

If your project has distinct phases, explain them clearly and help potential donors understand how each phase will be broken down with its own unique target. It is also important to help donors understand how you will report on the progress of your appeal and the project.

6. Connect the project to long term sustainability

Help donors see that your project is not just about a building, it is about the lasting impact. Explain how the project will strengthen your church's sustainability, effectiveness or reach. This will reassure donors that their donation (large or small) will have an impact well beyond the construction phase of the project.

7. Make the ask personal and purposeful

End your case for support with a clear and heartfelt invitation to give. Encourage potential donors to reflect on their faith, personal values, connection to your church's

mission and the legacy they want to leave.

Offer clear next steps as to how organisations and individuals can give, pledge and gift, or get involved and remember to share your thanks in advance for their consideration.

8. Know your audience

You will engage both faith-based and community-focused supporters. Understanding what motivates each is key. Shape your message to reflect their values, whether that is sharing the Gospel or meeting local needs. A strong case for support connects your project to what matters most to them.

Final thoughts

Constructing a compelling case for support is both an art and a strategy. It should blend storytelling, data, vision and faith in your mission. A great case is not just about informing the reader; it inspires them. As you embark on your capital appeal, remember you are not just asking people to support a project. You are inviting them to be part of something greater, something that will improve the social fabric of your town and advance God's Kingdom.



By Ben Ansell

Ben is the director of Wootton George Consulting. A fundraising consultancy that for the last 27 years has provided fundraising support to UK charities and churches. Helping them plan and execute their fundraising activities and appeals.

Ben and his family live on the south coast and are members of Arun Church, a thriving multi-generational church with a strong community focus.



Moving mountains with a mustard seed

A church leader shares his fundraising journey

Mersea Island in Essex looks out over the estuary of the River Blackwater. One of its claims to fame is that it is the UK's most easterly inhabited island. Connected to the mainland via a causeway, it is unique, beautiful and much loved by its residents and the many visitors who come to enjoy it.

In the heart of West Mersea, nestled among a network of narrow lanes and tiny cottages, a remarkable story that began nearly a century ago continues to unfold. A local fellowship, rooted in prayer, is still seeking God's guidance for the path ahead. The Old City Hall, located on The Lane near the waterfront, was established in 1931 by two devout Christian women as a gathering place for a women's fellowship. In 1940, stewardship of the hall and its growing congregation was

entrusted to the French family. Today, Andrew French, leader of Old City Hall Christian Fellowship, shares the continuing story.



View of narrow lane that church sits on

“My grandfather started a Sunday night Gospel meeting and a children’s meeting on Friday night. Sunday nights prospered, with regular outside speakers, whilst my grandmother ran the ladies meeting. When I was in my early twenties, my grandfather announced that I was to take over organising the speakers. He also asked me to be in charge of finances, hardly an onerous task as we didn’t have much!”

Some years ago, Andrew started a monthly men’s breakfast, meeting one month at the hall, the other at a local restaurant. “After a while, we started a monthly ladies’ coffee morning. However, the hall was built nearly a hundred years ago and was in desperate need of improvement.”

Prayerfully, in 2018, the notion of building a small extension and modernising the kitchen, while adding an accessible toilet, was mooted.

Andrew and Old City Hall Christian Fellowship started a building fund in faith, acquired planning permission and began fundraising. One of the main needs was a new roof. “Seven years on, with a few successful grant applications under our belts, we have raised £83,000. We need another £47,000.”

The fellowship are very grateful to Giles Arnold at Church Growth Trust. “He put us on the track we are now on with advice, support and help with the initial costing. We certainly would not have been able to do that ourselves. We are still applying for grants, but we would not have known about many of them if CGT had not been involved.”

The Mersea community has been extremely supportive of the fundraising initiative.

“We had a Gift Day and the Mersea Island Society and the Strood Charity gave us donations. They see us as an integral part of the Island and once our building works are complete, our premises will be another venue

that can be hired out.”

Fundraising in such a small place and with such a tiny congregation (up to 25 people each Sunday) would be daunting to many, but the faithful at Old City Hall are realistic about their resources. “We had two or three bring and buy sales. The breakfasts and coffee mornings have become fundraising opportunities. Our local magazine advertised the Gift Day which brought in several thousand pounds. It is slowly mounting up.” To have raised this amount is all the more remarkable as Old City Hall, unlike most churches and chapels, have worshippers drawn from other congregations on the Island, since many do not have evening services. There are only three who make the fellowship their sole place of worship.

Practically, the fellowship has faced challenges that will not be unfamiliar to anyone who has embarked on a renovation project. “We nearly ran out of planning permission three years ago. That was a bit worrying! We managed to get hold of the planning department, which was a miracle in itself, and they agreed that if we made a start on the pipework for the new



Andrew French, church leader and church members

accessible toilet, they would class the project as having commenced.

We rang the electricity board about rerouting the power supply underground. They quoted us for the work, and it was expensive, but we had enough money and it is now done. The next challenge was the wall and fence to the rear of our building.

There was an ownership dispute. Then Church Growth Trust's surveyor discovered that the wall was unsafe. It was eight feet high and wobbled if pushed! Then, as we are in a Conservation Area, we learned that we needed planning permission to change the wall to a fence. We applied, not with much hope, and to our surprise, the Council granted it and we got a good quote from a local firm. Every time we hit a snag, it is overcome, thanks to God's goodness."

To any other churches finding themselves in a similar situation, Andrew has this advice.

"Start out in faith. Don't wait until you've got the plans drawn up. Launch your building fund and pray regularly over it. Get in touch with Church Growth Trust. Without their expertise, we would not be as far along as we are."

For readers who are interested in the project, he says: "We would love you to pray for us and to visit us. If you have any spare money and feel God nudging you, we will not say no to that!"

This tiny hall and congregation have such faith that God is blessing their project with favour and growth.

"The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches." (Matthew 13: 31-32)



Support the Old City Hall project

If you have been inspired by the story of Old City Hall and would like to support their vision through prayer or giving, they would love to hear from you. To donate or find out more, please contact their Treasurer, John Fensom, at john.fensom1@tiscali.co.uk.

Your support will help continue nearly a century of faithful witness in the heart of West Mersea.

Watch our latest video all about Old City Hall here:

youtu.be/apw36v5EX4w



By Ruth Leigh

Ruth is a freelance writer who works with a number of Christian charities.



GENEROSITY

Stewardship 

Growing a culture of generosity in your church

Inspiring joyful giving rooted in God's Word

Good stewardship lies at the heart of the command given to Adam and Eve in Genesis to be fruitful, subdue the earth and rule over everything. As God's image bearers, they were to reflect God's heart to the world with care and wisdom (Genesis 1:26-28). Stewardship requires us to manage well everything God entrusts to us: our money, time, abilities, relationships and even creation itself.

God is the ultimate giver. He gave us life, salvation and the promise of eternity through Jesus Christ. When we are generous, we therefore mirror God's own nature. The Bible contains over 2,300 verses on money, wealth and possessions and 11 out of 39 of Jesus' parables are about money. From these, we can extract three key points:

Generosity is a heart matter

"Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7).

True generosity is not about the amount, but the attitude. Giving with reluctance or out of guilt robs us of the joy God wants us to experience. The Bible encourages us to give cheerfully, motivated by love and a desire to bless others.

Generosity builds faith

“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the Lord Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it” (Malachi 3:10).

God’s challenge in Malachi is one of the few times Scripture invites us to test Him. Generosity can require faith, but God’s promise is clear: He will provide. When we give, we declare our dependence on God rather than our possessions. This step of faith strengthens our relationship with Him and reminds us that all we have belongs to Him.

Generosity has an eternal reward

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven” (Matthew 6:19-20).

Earthly treasures fade, but acts of generosity

have eternal significance. Jesus teaches that when we give, we invest in God’s Kingdom. Every act of love, kindness and support contributes to His work on earth and brings glory to His name.

Teach on faith and finance

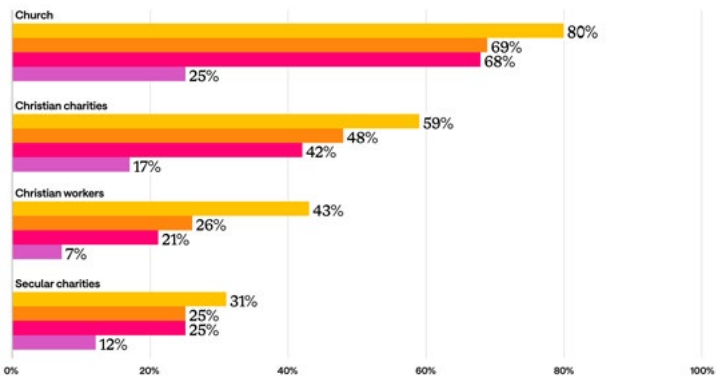
Generosity is an integral part of discipleship, so we need to teach on it regularly if we are to embed it in our church culture. In Stewardship’s Generosity Report 2025, 20% of those surveyed reported that they were first prompted to give by ‘understanding God’s generosity to me’. The data also demonstrated an appetite for teaching on generosity across the church community, with 24% of those who regularly attend church saying they would like to receive this quarterly.

Be transparent and enthusiastic

The report data also reflects a high level of loyalty to the church, with it being top of the list of causes people support. Intrinsic to that loyalty is a deep sense of trust that their church will steward their gifts well. Church leaders can honour that trust by communicating clearly the purpose and impact of giving. Always report back on the impact that your congregation’s giving is making and share the joy by remembering to thank them!

Which of the following do you trust ‘a lot’ to spend donations given to them well?

- Committed Christians
- Practising Christians
- Church-going Christians
- Secular Christians



n = 6,011 September 2024

Take a financial health check

If your congregation is going to trust your church to wisely manage their financial support, then you need solid finance and governance processes in place. They will enable your church to operate effectively and efficiently and to demonstrate sound stewardship of its resources.

Identify which areas of your finances and governance are healthy and which may need further attention. Review and encourage constructive conversations between your leaders, trustees and finance team, and use good independent advisers, examiners and auditors as required.

Nurturing major donors

Long-term relationships are key to engaging with potential large donors. Communicate your vision for your church clearly and bring them on the journey with you so they can see the very real difference their support makes along the way. Make it easy for them to give too by suggesting they partner with a Donor Advised Fund (DAF) like Stewardship, which can take the admin off their hands while also ensuring they are giving tax-effectively.

Giving over the long-term

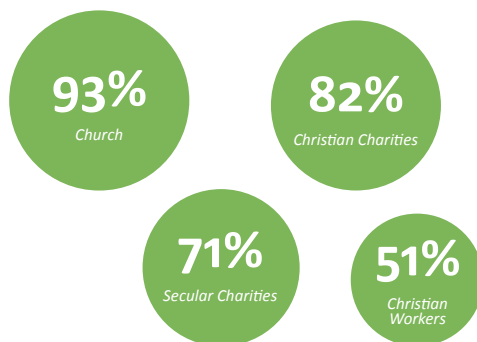
A DAF can also facilitate longer term support in two ways: with legacy giving, whether that is leaving a gift in their will to their church or passing their fund onto a family member to continue their legacy on their behalf; and with social impact investing. This involves using funds from a DAF to provide a loan or other form of support—such as helping to renovate or extend your church building. It is a smart way to stretch a donor's generosity, as any returns can be reinvested into future social impact projects or grants.

A call to be generous stewards

From the very beginning, God has called his people to live as wise, faithful and generous stewards. Churches have a special role to play

in helping their congregations understand and live out this call and are uniquely positioned to do so. Let us therefore follow Jesus' very good example in making sure we are teaching faithfully, boldly and often on these fundamental topics of stewardship and generosity.

What do Christians who regularly attend church give to?



Want to find out more?

The Stewardship Generosity Report 2025

reveals the latest perspective on the generosity of UK Christians, uncovering encouraging trends in financial giving and the growing impact of faith on stewardship. To read the full report scan the QR code above.



Ruth Jackson

Head of PR and Communications,
Stewardship

Ruth leads PR and Communications at Stewardship, bringing over 25 years' experience across sectors including education, tech and the arts. She lives in Cambridge with her family, worships at C3 Church and enjoys rowing, ballet and walking. She is passionate about tackling poverty and supporting vulnerable children globally.

Are you **refreshed** in ministry?

A life of service entails being poured out again and again for the sake of others, but, if we don't keep replenished in God's grace, we can find ourselves dry and parched.

Living Leadership is here to help!

- **One-to-one** tailored mentoring and pastoral support
- **Online groups** for leaders and spouses
- **Refreshment Days** across the UK and Ireland
- **Pastoral Refreshment Conferences**

www.livingleadership.org

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We are Church Growth Trust

...your experts in church properties. We aim to help independent churches grow by providing a professional and complete church property management service - from trusteeship to architectural support and everything in between. We also directly support church planting and revitalisation through our links with Counties and GLO Europe.

We do this because we want to help independent churches thrive in their mission within the heart of their community by helping to keep church buildings for their original use and fit for purpose. We are passionate about offering our skills, experience and practical support in a way that serves the Church and sees God's Kingdom grow.

Church Growth Trust

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