

St Matthew's Church

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Dear All

We wanted to write to you to set out details of the Gift Day which is being held on Sunday 9 May.

(1) Whilst there have been features of the pandemic common to us all, people have had very different experiences practically, emotionally and financially. While many have lost jobs and job security or had their hours reduced and so face real and ongoing hardship others remain relatively unaffected. In fact, some also find that not having incurred the usual expenditure of a 'full life' over the last year - holidays and treats and other purchases they have more in the Bank than usual. Those with pensions have perhaps been removed too from some of the financial insecurities of life (although often wider family responsibilities come into play here).

(2) The basis of giving at St Matthew's has always been as a response to God's generosity to each of us. We give as an expression of our gratitude to God and in recognition that all things ultimately come from him.

(3) Returning to church brings the opportunity to look afresh at our physical surroundings – of how they speak of God present in the world and our stewardship of God's house.

Linking these three things together, a Gift Day seemed to the PCC to be the appropriate response when you are invited to make a contribution over and above your regular giving to the church. Mindful of our responsibilities to our neighbours both near and far, the PCC further have agreed that 10% of whatever is received will be donated to Christian Aid as May 9 is the beginning of Christian Aid Week and another 10% will be given (at the PCC's discretion) to local charities who may well have been hit hard by the pandemic. Christian Aid describes itself as '*a partnership of people, churches and local organisations committed to ending poverty worldwide*' and St Matthew's has historically been a loyal supporter www.christianaid.org.uk

In terms of the use of the money within church, it will fund the installation of new audio-visual screens to increase visibility throughout the church and other technology improvements including a new sound/AV desk already agreed by the PCC (cost approx £8,000). There is also a project (delayed by the PCC awaiting funding) to resurface the area immediately outside the church entrance and, as an eco-church, to introduce bicycle racks to encourage more people to leave their cars at home. Finally no one could doubt the need for a new carpet in church! Whilst this cannot happen immediately it would be good to know that we will have the funds to make this happen as soon as we can. We already have one estimate for the cost of this at about £13,000. So considerable improvements could be made to the fabric of the building if there were funds given for these purposes and any balance remaining would be allocated towards improvements to the fabric of the building in due course.

For the reasons set out above and others, we quite understand that for some this request will go unanswered. but please do take some time to consider prayerfully whether and what you might contribute to the Gift Day. Please be assured of the confidentiality around all giving. Whilst a signatory to this letter we can assure you that Helen does not know information around financial giving to the church.

To make a donation please (in order of preference)

- make a direct donation to the church's Bank Account with the reference 'Gift Day'

Bank: Sort Code: 20-46-73

Account Name: Surbiton St Matthew PCC

Account Number: 50793698

- make a cash or cheque donation in person on Sunday 9 May or in the days surrounding then
- make a donation through our website (we will pay a commission on this so it is the bottom one!)

If you are a tax payer and haven't completed a Gift Aid form and would like us to recover tax on your contribution then please do find it on our website and complete and return to church.

With thanks for being, along with us, the body of Christ at St Matthew's,

Jackie Farris and Mike Taylor, (Churchwardens),
Tim Lucas (Treasurer) and Rev Helen Hancock (Team Rector)