

Using the Giving Personas in Church

Putting ourselves in their shoes

If we want to understand why members of our church community give or don't give, then we need to put ourselves in their shoes. Using these personas allows us to reflect on different Anglicans' experience of giving.

One size doesn't fit all

The five different personas help us remember that our church communities are not a monolith. Different people give (or don't give) for different reasons and we need to respond with different messaging and campaigns for different people.

Treat the personas with love and care

It is important that we don't view these personas as either good givers or bad non-givers, nor should we judge them for their motivations around giving. All of the personas are committed members of your church, it's just that they have different understandings of their role in helping your church deliver its ministry and mission.

Opportunity to engage

With all the personas there are challenges around giving but there are also opportunities to engage all the personas with giving. If we follow the recommendations outlined in the report, we will see fewer non-giving members and a greater number of engaged givers.



Faithful Givers

Graham and Val

AGES 58 AND 54



“We give to the church as the Bible tells us to give time, gifts and money freely for the glory of God and the Kingdom.”

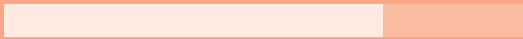
Who are they?

They are affluent professionals; Graham is a doctor and Val is an accountant. They live in suburban Haslemere in leafy Surrey and have three children who all attend secondary school. Graham and Val represent 21% of Anglicans.

Church attendance



Size of gift



Understands the need



Church going habits

They attend a large evangelical church once a week. They strongly value what the Bible says with sharing the Good News and supporting mission work is an important part of their faith.



Giving habits and motivations

- They perceive a clear need for regular giving to church and charity.
- They agree with and practice tithing via a standing order.
- They trust that their giving is well spent and feel they can see the impact.
- They are motivated by a feeling of responsibility, but also a deep spiritual conviction around church teaching, biblical understanding, and church mission in the UK and overseas.
- They feel that the church inspires them to be generous.



Challenges

They hear about giving at church, usually a sermon at least once every six months, but they are not challenged on their own personal generosity. We need to make them aware of generosity in general and encourage them to review their tithed giving on a regular basis.



Opportunities to engage

They are a good audience to ask for support with specific projects as they are very likely to give, especially if the project enables mission or youth work. They would consider a legacy to their church if the need was clearly communicated. They would be open to giving through the Parish Giving Scheme if it was available in their church. Churches should communicate with Graham and Val through regular sermons on generosity, via church social media channels, sessions at church weekends away, or retreats and festivals.

Heritage Givers

Janet and Phillip

AGES 62 AND 64

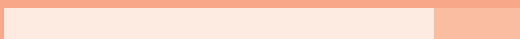


“It’s important to support these pillars of our community and tradition. If we don’t support them, then who will?”

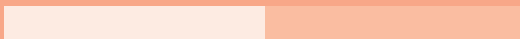
Who are they?

Janet and Phillip are affluent professionals approaching retirement. They live in historic Beverley in Yorkshire and have two adult children. When they’re not working they keep themselves busy by volunteering in the local community and Janet sings in her local choral society. Janet and Phillip represent 31% of Anglicans.

Church attendance



Size of gift



Understands the need



Church going habits

Janet and Phillip grew up with the Church of England and have been attending church most of their lives. They like the Book of Common Prayer and the sound of a church choir. They see the church as an important institution in the community and it’s their responsibility to ensure the church building remains intact for future generations to come.



Giving habits and motivations

- Janet and Phillip give regularly to charity and gave £130 to their church over a period of three months.
- They give to keep the fabric of the building maintained, pay the bills and enable the church’s activities.
- They feel a sense of responsibility to give but their motivations are mainly about the local parish.
- They traditionally give by cash but are gradually moving online as and when they are prompted to.



Challenges

Janet and Phillip feel they already give all they can to the church and do not believe in the practice of tithing. They are not especially motivated by biblical understanding. Whilst a sermon might have impact at the time of delivery, they are more likely to respond to the vicar directly asking for their support for a project. As Janet and Phillip are used to giving by cash envelope, they need to be guided towards using more sustainable giving mechanisms.



Opportunities to engage

It’s important to let Janet and Phillip know where their giving makes an impact and to get the messaging right. They care about the future of their local church and that it’s there for when their children get married. They haven’t considered leaving a gift in their will to their church but they might if it was easy to change their will and they were told of the impact it would make.

Occasional Givers

Paula

AGE 57



“I do give what I can when the collection plate is passed around but I don't really know where it's going and what difference it makes.”

Who are they?

Paula is an HR Manager who lives in Maidstone in Kent. She is divorced and has a teenage daughter. Paula represents 11% of Anglicans.

Church attendance



Size of gift



Understands the need



Church going habits

Paula attends her local parish church on average once a month, but doesn't attend church meetings or volunteer. She was brought up as a Christian and went to her local Church of England school. She stopped attending church when she went to university and started going again when she got married. Whilst Paula doesn't attend church every week, she considers herself to be a regular member of the church community.



Giving habits and motivations

- In the last three months she gave £90 to charity and £85 to her church.
- Despite giving to both charity and church, she isn't convinced that her giving is having an impact.
- She thinks churches and charities are already well off and is worried that the money she gives would be wasted on high staff costs or spent unwisely.
- She is motivated to give because of social pressure; she sees others giving during the offertory and does not want to look mean.



Challenges

Whilst Paula supports the church regularly, it is clear she is at risk of stopping this giving as she is not convinced of the need to give. Trust is low for Paula, so in addition to communicating the need to give, she should be reassured that the money will be well spent. Paula gives using cash via the collection plate and it will be hard to encourage her to adopt more sustainable giving mechanisms until the above is addressed.



Opportunities to engage

Share regular updates about the work of the church; how it supports the vulnerable and its work in the community. Talk about how the church building enables impactful work and be open about the cost of running the church. As Paula doesn't attend church every week she may not be aware of the wonderful work the church does. Make sure to include updates in a weekly e-newsletter and on social media so that she feels involved.

Non-giving Members

Gill

AGE 70



“I go to church but it’s only a small part of village life.”

Who are they?

Gill is a retired community nurse who lives in a small village in Devon with her husband John. She has one son who is 43 and lives in Southampton. Gill represents 6% of Anglicans.

Church attendance



Size of gift



Understands the need



Church going habits

Gill attends her local village church. There is mostly a communion service once a month and an occasional Book of Common Prayer evening prayer which Gill goes to if she can – it’s just part of village life. During lockdown, she has watched the morning service from Exeter Cathedral a few times on Facebook.



Giving habits and motivations

- Gill gives £15 a month to charity which she set up years ago.
- She doesn’t give to her church on a regular basis as her church has never asked her and does not inspire her to be generous.
- She sometimes puts cash in an envelope for Christian Aid Week or at Christmas.



Challenges

Gill has been an Anglican for a long time and her understanding of church funding may be rooted in historic models that are no longer accurate – it will be difficult to change that opinion. Gill represents the smallest segment (6%) therefore the potential impact on giving will be limited.



Opportunities to engage

Gill is more likely to give irregularly at big services such as Christmas so ensure that you make it possible for her to give at those services. It’s also important to let Gill know where her giving will make an impact and to get this message right.

Non-giving Members

David

AGE 66



“I think the church does great work but I don’t have enough to give that will make a difference.”

Who are they?

David was formerly a shipbuilding engineer in Blyth, now retired where he spends a lot of time gardening in his allotment. He now lives in Morpeth, a small town in Northumberland. He has no children. David represents 30% of Anglicans.

Church attendance



Size of gift



Understands the need



Church going habits

David’s attendance is occasional and inconsistent, slightly more frequently than once a month. He has been attending the virtual morning prayer service on Facebook more regularly though. David’s parish church is Anglo-Catholic and he has typically attended a high church for most of his life. His faith is a private one and he likes the spirituality of traditional high church worship.



Giving habits and motivations

- David doesn’t believe that there is a need for regular giving to church or charity, but he does make one-off donations to charity.
- He prefers to give in cash which might give him the flexibility to give whenever he can afford it due to his financial situation.
- He does not feel that his church inspires him to be generous and does not give to the church on a regular basis.



Challenges

It will be difficult to shift David’s attitudes on giving as while he is motivated by more spiritual matters, he is unlikely to be attending church regularly and it will be harder to communicate with him directly.



Opportunities to engage

David might be encouraged to give if his church leader preached about it, if his giving was more appreciated or if it would help fund evangelism or outreach work. Start off by encouraging small one-off donations for specific projects which will gradually build David’s trust, relationship and sense of belonging to the church.

As David doesn’t attend church weekly it’s important to keep him involved through social media and parish newsletters.

Giving Personas: Definitions

	Definition	Survey Questions
Who Are They?	A snapshot of who the personas are.	What is your age?; What is the occupation of the chief social earner in your household?; Which UK region do you live in?
Persona Quote	This is not a direct quote from the survey findings but summarises the general attitude of the persona about giving.	Please specify each of the factors that encourage you to give to your church.
Church Going Habits	This outlines the churchgoing tradition of the persona, as well as their journey of faith as a Christian.	What is your personal / your church's tradition?; What would you estimate is the usual Sunday size of your congregation?; How long have you been a Christian?; In normal times, outside of lockdown, how often do you engage in the following activities at your church?
Giving Habits & Motivations	This section characterises the giving habits of a persona, including the way in which they give, the frequency and their reasons why.	Have you ever been asked to give to your church in any of the following ways?; In normal times, outside of lockdown, do you give regularly (weekly/monthly) to your church?; In normal times, outside of lockdown, how do you / would you like to give regularly to your church?; I Tithe My Giving (Agree);
Challenges	What are the barriers to this persona giving and what might demotivate them?	Which of the factors below discourage you from giving more to your church? / Why do you not give to your church?
Opportunities to Engage	What opportunities are there to motivate this persona to give more or start giving?	I would like to give regularly by; Please specify for each of the factors below if they encourage you to give to your church.
Church Attendance	On a sliding scale from occasionally to very regularly, how frequently does the persona attend church?	In normal times, outside of lockdown, how often do you attend church (service or other activity)?
Size of Gift	Compared to other personas, how much does this persona give regularly to their church?	In normal times, outside of lockdown, how much do you give to your church in a period of 3 months?
Understands the Need	How much does this persona understand why giving to their church is necessary?	How high would you rate the need for regular giving to your church?