

Post Thanksgiving Sunday FAQ's

Q1. If our first Thanksgiving Sunday is not near to our end-of-year financial period, how should we deal with this situation?

A1. For the first year, you will need to schedule another Thanksgiving Sunday no later than two weeks before your financial year-end, but thereafter this will be an annual event when the dates are in sync. It is important for budgeting purposes that these dates are coordinated.

Q2. What should we do after this first Thanksgiving Sunday, and in what order?

A2. This is the sequence of actions the Treasurer should take:

- **Calculate the total pledges received and compare them with the existing income and expenditure.**
- **Prepare a budget for the financial year, based on the anticipated income, adjusting for possible losses and / or growth and all other sources of income including Gift Aid tax refunds. The publication of this budget should take place no later than 3 months after Thanksgiving Sunday in the first year and no later than one month after Thanksgiving Sunday in subsequent years when the data may be better established.**
- **Have the Parish Council discuss and decide what can be afforded and how any additional funds should be allocated based on the budget prepared by the Treasurer and the Parish Priest jointly.**
- **Communicate the outcome of Thanksgiving Sunday, the budget and any future plans to the community by the usual means as soon as the data is available and without any undue delay.**

Q3. Should unfulfilled pledges, Gift Aid decisions and ongoing commitments be followed up? Should givers be thanked for their donations? What about new joiners attending after Thanksgiving Sunday during the year?

A3. Under no circumstances should individuals be followed up on their pledges. Fulfilment or non-fulfilment is between them and God. However, a

general announcement about not forgetting to update bank standing orders is often necessary immediately after Thanksgiving Sunday. Following up on Gift Aid forms as requested on the Card is also good. People forget!

Occasional reminders about fulfilling pledges on a regular basis may be necessary. The Gift Aid system of course depends on the use of either envelopes (tiresome to manage) or payments from a bank account (much to be preferred), with regular and recorded payments.

People who would like to give but who could not be present on Thanksgiving Sunday can be approached using the Thanksgiving Card.

Do not thank people for their gift ... the impression is thereby given that they are pleasing men rather than God. Giving is part of discipleship. Nobody ever said to anyone: "thank you for being a disciple"!

Between annual Thanksgiving Sundays any new arrivals should be taught Christian giving principles and practice and encouraged to participate by reflection and prayer. Current Thanksgiving Cards should be used for these situations. They are of course redesigned annually.

Q4. Should there be regular reviews of the global giving record against the pledges total throughout the year? Should the Clergy and Treasurer report this progress to the Parish Council and the wider Parish? How often should this review and reporting take place?

Q4. Yes, this is a good idea as it keeps budgeting on track. Reports could be made both to the Parish Council and Parish, optimally every quarter.

Q5. How should pledged income be assessed when budgeting and making financial commitments?

A5. For budgeting purposes, adjust the pledged income by deducting a percentage (estimated or based on past experience) for unfulfilled giving and add back a percentage for anticipated church growth (all conservatively estimated).

A more cautious policy is prudent if the budget depends on a small number of generous givers with a high percentage share of total giving. The loss for any reason of such givers would make a larger contingency reserve more prudent.

Q6. Is an extraordinary AGM necessary to present the revised budget to the Parish for approval? Can the Parish Council instead handle this and communicate the outcome to the community?

A6. Annual Meetings, General or Extraordinary are convened for the purpose of presenting annual accounts, reporting on the community's progress and considering constitutional changes. The Parish Council is responsible for all budgeting matters and reporting to the community its decisions. The Council should communicate the Thanksgiving Sunday Report to the whole Parish by whatever method or methods are most effective, but in detail only when it has agreed the budget. An immediate announcement should be made of the global result of Thanksgiving Sunday as soon as possible.

Q7. How should expenditures be authorised and at what level within the budget?

A7. The Clergy should have a monthly topped up expense fund allocated to them for smaller individual expenditures. The initial payment should be receipted with a signed clause to the effect that the funds are held on trust for the church and must be repaid when the clergyman dies or, before that time, retires or becomes incapacitated. The Council should set the maximum claim per item and the total fund available. The total expense fund for the clergyman should be increased with the growth of the Parish and accounting for any increases due to inflation. The parish priest will manage the main and largest expense fund with the biggest individual item limit.

Non-trivial expenditures with a higher fund limit should be authorised jointly between the Parish priest and the Treasurer or other officers. Expenditure above this limit should only be authorised by the Parish Council.