

The Christian Community

MOVEMENT FOR RELIGIOUS RENEWAL

Forest Row Congregation

12th March, 2023

Appeal from the Finance Group

Dear friends,

At the Annual Congregational Meeting on 5th March, I reported on behalf of the Finance Group.

Looking back on last year we can be grateful that we were able to offer a great range of activities. As well as our core activities of sacraments and services, we put on events for children and young people, held courses and conversation groups, hosted exhibitions and concerts and made our contribution to the national and international charities that support our work. Clearly, such a large amount of activity needs support. To support the priests and community activities and keep the church running, we needed around £89,000. Of this, around £39,000 (44%) was needed for our three priests, their living and housing expenses and their professional expenses. Around £15,000 (17%) was needed for the church: heating, lighting, insurances, repairs and renewals. And around £35,000 (39%) was needed for what we call Community costs. This includes a contribution of £15,000 to the national charity, which supports the lenker and our central administration, as well as vestry costs, cleaning, community helper and bookkeeper's remuneration.

In 2022, our regular income came to nearly £75,000. The largest element of this (£27,000 or 37%) was made up of regular donations. Eighty families or individuals give us an average of £28 per month. Then there are occasional donations and collections, including those in made in response to funeral services. These made up nearly £24,000 or 32% of the total. We are grateful for all those who assist in our fundraising efforts, which raised just over £7,000 or 9% of the total. We also received generous support from our affiliate congregation in Canterbury, Nutley Hall and the Mount, as well as two Camphill centres in Ringwood (£8,790 or 12% of the total).

You may have noticed that there was a shortfall between what we needed to sustain our activities and the income detailed so far. This was covered last year by what we call 'extraordinary income', namely legacies. In 2022, we received nearly £26,000 in legacies from the estates of Joan Thomson, Krista Braun and Roberta Taylor. We used legacy income last year to purchase two mantles and a chasuble, to pay off a car loan, to undertake some major repairs arising from the recent Quinquennial Survey and to fund the deficit in our Ordinary Budget (£14,000). All this means that we ended the year with a surplus of over

£3,000, which we have added to our Development Fund to enable future development. We have already embarked on the work on the front part of the church garden, which will be funded from Krista Braun's legacy.

Looking ahead to 2023, we hope to make some savings, in spite of inflation: we are forecasting normal spending of around £84,000. However, at current levels of regular giving, this will still leave us with a deficit of around £17,000. We could afford this from the reserves that we have built up over the years, but this would not be sustainable for more than a year. This is why we are making this appeal now. We have calculated that if our regular donors were able to increase their donation by an average of £5 per month, and we found 15 new families to donate the average amount of £28, the needs would be covered. If you haven't adjusted the level of your contribution for a few years, it's good to remember that £10 is worth a lot less now than it was ten years ago!

We hope that this letter helps you to understand how our finances work and why we need to make this appeal. Our appeal to you is to consider whether you could make a regular contribution if you are not already doing so, or whether you would be able to increase your existing one.

A form is enclosed for your convenience, and we would be glad to hear any questions or comments. You can view the presentation which I prepared for the Annual Congregational Meeting via this link: <https://tinyurl.com/CCFRFinance22>. Printouts are available in the church.

With very best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Ravetz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line above the first letter 'T'.

on behalf of the Finance Group: Inger Gordon, Tom Ravetz, Nataliia Shatna, Mike Small