Remote Giving Options

Daily, non-profits, including churches, are facing some tough financial questions. Already tight fiscal budgets have been adjusted to the bare mission needs of a congregation. However, my goal is to spark a note of hope in the coming months. Now is the time to open our hearts and minds to additional approaches of stewardship in the church. Collectively, we rely on each other to meet the needs of the Diocese and our communities. While many individuals in your communities will face financial hardships, it can be a time for our congregations to identify how they can participate financially, spiritually, and emotionally to the needs of the church.

The Diocese regularly provides guidance to congregations seeking to engage different methods of stewardship giving. The following methods, helpful not only during this time of distancing, are available for pledges and direct donations from your congregants and community partners:

1. **Direct Bank Checks** - Parishioners can establish a regular monthly check through their financial institution. This can be done through any online banking bill payment feature.

2. **Online Contributions** - There are several online giving tools out there. This is not an endorsement; however, many churches use the following:
   a. **Realm** - Realm® connects your church administration, accounting, and community in one software application. There are several different modules included. Credit card, debit card and e-check payments are collected through a partnership with a company called Vanco. The Diocese and several congregations currently use this program. There is both a maintenance fee and transaction fee for online payments except no transaction fee is charged for ACH/e-check payments. Text to give is a helpful option available for one-time or infrequent givers.
   b. **Tithe.ly** - is free to sign-up and charges a transaction fee for payments (including ACH/e-checks) but does not charge a maintenance fee for the base level plan. It can be set up as an online or app product.
   c. **Paypal for Non-profits** - Online payment website allows you to set up donations through your website, links, and text.

   **All of these online contribution websites allow you to set up recurring gifts. Additionally, their reporting is designed to support accounting best practices.**

3. **Mail a paper check** - Oldie but a goodie. Parishioners can mail a personal check directly to the church office.

With all of these approaches, it is important to communicate the need for the donor to provide a note stating the purpose of the gift, whether it’s a pledge, gift to the food pantry, or other mission funds within the community. For additional support or guidance, please feel to reach out to me directly at keasterlin@gaepiscopal.org or 912-441-1220. The Diocese is here to support you in these uncertain times.