



1. Church Management Apps

Guidance for Parishes

There are a number of Church Management Systems available, and many churches are using them to help administrate day-to-day parish life. An app can help to automate tasks and features include member management, event organising, people tracking, social networking as well as making it easier for people to give and manage their donors – both regular and one off.

These types of management systems will only be relevant or appealing to certain churches. This guidance is for churches that are considering adopting this practice and exploring how to maximise their giving using the giving feature. If your church only wants to use a Church Management App for the giving feature – you may be better off using an independent Donations Platform instead. [Click here to view our guidance on web, text and mobile giving](#)

What is the Function and Usability?

A Church Management System usually has two functions. The first is a cloud-based system accessible via a computer web browser or any mobile device. The second is a member-facing app which church members can download to their mobile device and manage their own personal details.

A Core Database

- Organise and share appropriately and securely church contact information.
- The data can be segmented into teams, groups, members, adults and children.
- Targeted communications can be sent via email, SMS, e-newsletter and event mailings.
- Monitor your church's growth and track weekly attendance.

Manage Bookings

- Manage room and event bookings.
- Embed your events calendar into your website.
- Flag staff absences and locate who's serving, when and where.
- Create Rotas team members can sign up to

Giving

- Receive donations and collect payments from both web and mobile.
- Build a giving profile for each member of your church.
- View all donations made via the App and embed the App Giving page into your website.
- Set up multiple one-off or regular funds, which members can donate towards.
- Manage your Gift Aid processes.

What Should You Look For In A Provider?

Picking the wrong Church Management App can cause your efforts to stall before they've even taken off. If you want to make sure that you're choosing the right system for your church, there are a few key things your PCC should bear in mind.

1. Narrow Your Definition of "Church Management App"

In 2017, the term "app" can still mean a few different things. Your app could be a web-based app, which is essentially a mobile-friendly website wrapped up in an app container. It could be a native app, meaning that it must be downloaded and installed on the user's smartphone rather than accessed via a web browser. For the best results, pick the platform that best fits in with both your target audience and your long-term goals.

2. Know Your Church Management App's Limitations

Are the majority of your Management Team as well as congregation using Apple iPhones? If so, it's wise to make sure the donation app you've selected isn't Android-only. Does the management app you've selected have a cap on the total number of people you can add to the database or amount of money a single person can give? Does your service agreement include a fee and if so, how much? These are important questions to answer before you side with any one particular service.

3. User Friendliness

As a general rule of thumb, if you want people to adopt a new practice, the easier you make it, the more they'll embrace the change. One of the most important qualities of a Management App is to focus on the user friendliness and overall user experience.

4. Scalability

Another factor to consider is how many total users a particular church management app supports. Some platforms are built with smaller organisations in mind, whereas you might need a thousand or more. Scalability is never impossible, but most pricing structures can vary wildly depending on the total number of users you're talking about.

5. Short-term or Long-term?

Finally, consider whether this giving app is something that will be tied to a specific event, like a particular fundraising goal or campaign, or one that you plan on employing all year long. It's worth noting that Church Management Apps are a relatively new offering and therefore in the early stages of market development.

When considering use of the giving app, if encouraging users to donate on a regular basis, replacing their existing method of regular giving - it should be used with appropriate caution as the worst case scenario is that a provider goes out of business.

2. Using the Giving Feature

Why have a Giving Feature at all?

TIME: If an online transaction takes longer than 30 seconds, 85% of people stop the process.

LOCATION: If they can't physically get to church, location often keeps them from giving.

MONEY: People seldom carry cash anymore and dislike complex online forms.

CULTURE: The giving habits of millennials are dependent on culturally relevant ways to give.

Why use a Church Management App for Giving?

The giving feature is attractive to many churches, as it enables anyone and everyone to download the app and donate - which can help to increase the amount your church can raise. Many of the apps also provide the option for both a one off donation but also to set up a regular donation as well as including the option to Gift Aid it providing a unique opportunity to overcome some of the above barriers.

If your church is using a Church Management App, which enables people to donate directly as well as set up direct debits – you may wish to consolidate your existing donation platform and just use your app for everything. Please note though that a transaction fee applies for each Direct Debit set up and donations received.

Why use a Donations Platform?

If you only want to use a Church Management App for the giving feature – you may be better off using an independent Donations Platform instead. Many churches will already use a donation platform (e.g. Lepton, BT My Donate, Just Giving, Share Gift, Virgin Money Giving etc.) that enables people to donate via web, text, debit and credit card as well as setting up direct debits and reclaiming Gift Aid. This can really increase the amount your church can raise for specific appeals and one off events.

If your church wants the 'app' element - some Donation Platforms have a downloadable app for members to use and we have included these below (see page 6).

Which Provider Should We Use?

Although we cannot recommend one system, we have highlighted (in alphabetical order) the most relevant and affordable providers for churches in the UK. We have listed examples of both kinds of providers for you to compare their systems offer and prices below.

What Management Systems are Available?

* CHURCH APP



What they say about themselves: “ChurchApp is a securely hosted, web-based church database management system for keeping track of your church's most valuable data. It is designed for churches of all sizes and denominations, and is designed to work the same way you do. It helps leaders and administrators to manage people through your church's discipleship pathways.”

Giving

- ChurchApp helps you to manage the details of those giving financially to your church.
- Can take 'one-time' and recurring donations via credit/debit card (using GoCardless or Stripe Bank Transfers), Direct Debit and SMS.
- Gift Aid (UK) and tax-deductible donation processing and reporting in just a few clicks.
- Track pledged amounts, with income automatically projected.
- One-click financial statement reports.
- My Church App allows church members to manage their giving online.

Pricing

- 30 day free trial: Package deal starts from £12.50 p/m - £42.50 p/m
- Early indication of cost = £15 - £50 monthly subscription
- Direct Debit and SMS Donation = 2% Transaction Fee
- Card Donation 2.4% + £0.20p Transaction Fee

Church Case Studies: <https://churchapp.co.uk/reviews>

Website: <https://churchapp.co.uk/>

* CHURCHDESK



What they say about themselves: “ChurchDesk is the leading Church Management Solution for Europe. They provide simple tools that help churches manage internal administration with ease, and engage their community in new and effective ways. Their cloud-based system does not require you to be IT savvy, and the all-in-one platform is accessible via a secure log in. At ChurchDesk, they believe they have the church needs great tools that can help them improve the everyday workflow among their staff and volunteers.”

Giving

- Receive donations and collect payments from both web and mobile.
- Donations received online, credit/debit card (using Stripe Bank Transfers) or SMS.

Church Management Apps

- Use contribution data to segment and communicate effectively.
- No need to sign contracts with 3rd party payment processors.

Pricing

- 20 day free trial: Contact ChurchDesk for their different size and price packages
- Early indication of cost = £78 monthly subscription
- Contact ChurchDesk for their different size and price packages
- Card Donation 4% + £0.20p Transaction Fee

Church Case Studies: <http://www.churchdesk.com/customers/>

Website: <http://www.churchdesk.com/>



* IKNOW CHURCH SOFTWARE

What they say about themselves: "iKnow Church is a UK based Christian Company that is passionate for the Church to use technology effectively. Packed with features to help your church, they've developed iKnow to make it easier to communicate with your church and manage your church admin."

Giving

- HMRC Integration
- Full credit and debit card processing facilities built in.
- Online giving with a custom online payment page directly linked to your website.
- Mobile App also has giving built in for android devices.
- A comprehensive financial module via spreadsheet files.

Pricing

- 30 day free trial: Package deal starts from £20 p/m - £250 p/m
- Early indication of cost = £50 monthly subscription
- Direct and Credit Card Online = 1% Transaction Fee
- Direct and Credit Card using their Payment Service Provider (PSP) = 0.5% Transaction Fee

Website: <http://www.iknowchurch.co.uk/>

What Donation Platforms + App are Available?

If you only want to use a Church Management App for the giving feature – you may be better off using an independent Donations Platform instead. If your church wants the ‘app’ element - some Donation Platforms have a downloadable app for members to use and we have included these below.

* JUST GIVING



What they say about themselves: “JustGiving is the #1 platform for online giving in the world. It enables charities to receive donations via web and SMS and can process fundraising appeals, one-off and regular credit and debit card donations.”

Giving

- Mobile app individuals can download to access their giving.
- Text Giving Service offered with Just Giving.
- Credit and debit card donations and regular giving by Direct Debit Donations.
- Gift Aid Reclaims.
- You can set up multiple projects for mission’s support, buildings or events.

Pricing

- Registration is free using the new free START plan
- Transaction fee is 5%
- Credit card charge is 1.3%.
- PayPal processing fee is 1.45%

Website: <https://www.justgiving.com/for-charities/a-new-free-way-to-join-justgiving>

* LEPTON



What they say about themselves: “Lepton is an innovative donations platform used by churches and Christian non-profits. Lepton is designed with the local church at the centre and is built so that donations go directly to your account. Lepton can be use to raise funds for a missions trip, a specific ministry event, or a building project.”

Giving

- Mobile app individuals can download to access their giving.
- Credit and debit card donations and regular giving by Direct Debit Donations.
- Gift Aid Reclaims.
- You can set up multiple projects for mission’s support, buildings or events.
- Giving Resources for churches.

Pricing

- Set up for Free. No Contract. No Credit Card.
- Package deal starts from £0 p/m - £19 p/m - £79 p/m (see website for further details)
- 2% transaction fee on regular / monthly gifts (the first £100 incur no fee).
- 1.4% + 20p transaction fee on Bank and Card Donation

Church Case Studies: <http://www.leptongiving.com/us/main/>

Website: <http://www.leptongiving.com/us/main/>

* MY GIVING ONLINE



What they say about themselves: “MyGiving.Online is a complete online donations management system offered by Data Developments. It is designed to re-imagine the way you handle donations and giving for your organisation by opening up new opportunities and saving you time.”

Giving

- Mobile app individuals can download to access their giving.
- Credit and debit card donations and regular giving by Direct Debit Donations.
- Gift Aid Reclaims.
- MyGiving.Online can communicate directly with your website.

Pricing

- £15 per month subscription cost (NB offer for multiple churches in a parish)
- PayPal for registered charities 1.4% + 20p
The Direct Debit charge is 1% per transaction but is capped at a maximum of £2
- Credit/Debit card charges 1.9% + 20p (only charged after you receive £30k in donations)
- American Express 2.4% + 20p (only charged after you receive £30k in donations)

Website: <http://www.datadevelopments.co.uk/mygivingonline/>

Top Tips from Parishes

- If your church is going to use a Church Management App - a member of the Management Team should have competent knowledge of the technology.
- My advice would be to do a lot of testing. Make sure those in the Administration Team understand and are confident with how to use it.
- Introduce the system gradually. Ensure the settings are right before expanding the use of the programme and of the app.
- If you are going to organise a formal launch of the app and are asking members to bring their phones along to the service – make sure the Wi-Fi is boosted so it doesn't crash.

Case Study 1 Using a Church Management App

“We’ve mainly used our Church Management App to help manage our administration. The core database has streamlined our communications and it’s been very effective helping to organise Rotas, Room Bookings and Events. We organised an ‘App Day’ where we invited members to bring their phones along to the service. In 20 minutes we covered what the app did, including how you could donate. During the after service coffee we set up a Tech Support Station so people could come and ask for help downloading the app and register their details.

We have agreed not to process our regular giving through the app as we wish to continue using Standing Orders - however in 2017 we will consider how best we can use the app for one-off donations and fund-raising for specific projects". **John Woolley, Chair of Finance at St Paul’s Church, Howell Hill**

Case Study 2 Using a Church Management App

“We were triggered by our Church Administrator of 10 years retiring in 2015 – so when looking at recruitment and organisation of three sites, decided to look at a Church Management App, which has been working very well. The technical support provided has been of a high standard too.

We have linked to Stripe (an Irish technology company, operating in over 25 countries, that allows both private individuals and businesses to accept payments over the internet). We have started to use the Giving Feature and signed up with Stripe – providing the integration for card giving. For one off campaigns, this feature has worked well and we we’ve been reasonably successful receiving card payment donations. We don’t use the app for Regular Giving however because of the transaction charge for direct debit.” **Anonymous**

Case Study 3 Using a Donations Platform

“We launched our donations platform in spring 2016 as a mechanism the younger generation could use to respond to Christian Giving. We have a dynamic group of early to mid 20’s worshipping at our church, as well as a number of students. We demonstrated the Donations Platform on our screen at one of our Gift Sundays and encouraged members to download the mobile giving app. It appeals because it’s quick and easy to use, and we’ve received around £4,000 through regular and one off donations. We haven’t made it the focus of giving, but included it in all of our giving literature and on our website as another way to give to the church.

The platform is easy to use; we receive regular reporting as well as email notifications when someone has donated via the donations platform.” **Andrew Bagwell, Operations Director at St Saviour’s Church, Guildford**