

ACTION AREA:

Where your treasure is



In this Action Area, we reflect on how we can use our money and resources for the common good.

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matthew 6:21)

Start a conversation

What resources do you steward as a congregation? Most churches will have funds in a bank or building society account for day to day transactions. You may also have a savings account or investments. Perhaps your church owns land, buildings or equipment? How do you use these resources to love your neighbours and care for creation?

How do you help people reflect on financial decision-making? While some people in your congregation may have very little disposable income, most will have a bank account, and many will have a pension, and could explore switching to more ethical options.

... all things come from you, and of your own have we given you. (1 Chron 29:14b)

1. Banking and savings

A simple place to start is: who do you bank with? Your bank is making loans and investments, and your money is helping them to do this.

Could your bank be investing in industries to which you object, such as fossil fuels or weapon manufacturers? Does your bank pay its fair share of tax?

There are banks that are actively supporting businesses that have a positive impact on the world.

Resources and ideas for action

- Explore the [Money Makes Change Action Starter](#) on Ethical bank accounts and share with others in your church.

- If you have concerns about the ethics of your bank, write to them and let them know.
- Consider switching to a more ethical current or savings account. Organisations like [The Good Shopping Guide](#) and [Ethical Consumer](#) can provide you with information to help you decide.
- If you are happy with your existing bank, you might choose to focus on raising awareness of ethical banking for individuals e.g. with a newsletter article, a blog post on your website or an event or display during [Good Money Week](#).

Did you know? Over 80% of current accounts are held with the five biggest banks in the UK; Barclays, HSBC, Lloyds Group, RBS Group and Santander. According to Ethical Consumer “all of these companies score very badly against our Ethiscore rating. Santander scores highest but still only receives a score of 5/20.”

2. Investments

As a church, your reserves may be invested in a fund but are they invested ethically? What kind of world is your money creating? You may have people in your congregation who are able to invest small or large amounts of money. Are they making a connection between their faith and how they invest?

Resources and ideas for action

- Use the Investments conversation in the [Money Makes Change workshop](#) to help your church think through the issues that would be important in developing an ethical investment policy.
- Make a commitment to divest from fossil fuels through Operation Noah's [Bright Now campaign](#).
- Look at organisations like [Ethex](#), [Green Pastures](#) or [Shared Interest](#) or visit [our website](#) for ideas of other organisations who help people invest in impactful ways.

3. Pensions

Not a topic that comes up much in church, but pensions are a powerful tool for change! Pension pots are invested in companies that are shaping the world around us. Imagine if every Christian with a pension ensured their money was invested in companies doing good, not harm.

Passionate about tackling climate change? Pension providers can put pressure on big companies to align with the goals of the Paris Agreement, to limit global average temperature rises to 1.5°C.

Resources and ideas for action

- Use the Pensions conversation in the [Money Makes Change workshop](#) to get people talking.
- Check out ShareAction's excellent [resources and Pension Power campaign actions](#) or read [The Good Guide to Pensions](#).
- If someone in your congregation has switched their pension to an ethical fund, ask them to share their story. What inspired them to do it?
- Do you have an Environment group? Encourage them to see the connections between pensions and climate change and get them on board.

4. Assets & social enterprise

Think about your resources more widely. Not just financial resources but everything that you could offer for the common good. How do you use your building, facilities and land to serve others? If your resources are limited, what about the 'people power' in your congregation?

Resources and ideas for action

- Listen to local social enterprises and community groups. Do they need space to meet or access to a kitchen? Perhaps there are members in your congregation who could offer their expertise to get new projects off the ground.
- Join the [HeartEdge](#) network and explore how commercial and social enterprise approaches can be part of the work of the church.
- Learn more about [Asset-based Community Development](#) as a model for improving community well-being. Take time to recognise

the gifts and skills of everyone in your church and community – how could you become 'treasure' for each other?

5. Giving

Are you encouraging people to live generously? There's a wealth of resources out there to help you nurture a thoughtful and generous approach to giving, which we'll only touch briefly on here.

Resources and ideas for action

- Read this [reflection on living generously](#) from the [Church of England's Parish Resources on Giving](#) or explore [Stewardship's](#) resources.
- Consider supporting organisations like [Five Talents](#) and [Oikocredit](#) who provide micro-finance to people in poor communities, to help them join savings groups and set up businesses.
- Raising money for a specific project or charity? Some companies will match-fund the fundraising of their employees. Which businesses could you encourage to give in this way?

Sharing stories: Stourbridge Quaker Meeting

"Roughly half our annual income is spent on the expenses of the Meeting and the other half is passed to various Quaker and other beneficiaries that we are committed to supporting. We have chosen to bank with an ethical bank, and we invest in the CCLA COIF Charities Ethical Investment Fund. We have a reserves policy, and we give away in charitable gifts all money that is surplus to our reserves target. We involve the whole Meeting in the setting of annual budgets, including the gifts that we make."

