

we would have been able to employ her without Giving in Grace. We were able to employ her on a permanent basis at the beginning of 2017 and she is absolutely wonderful."

The months since Giving in Grace have seen a marked change. "We've got improved lettings income as well as two brand new lets.

"It has been a delight to have made known the **joy** of giving and being generous, which so many people are unaware of."

Our weekly giving has increased and we have eradicated our debt, as well as attracting a Methodist District grant. At the initial launch, 50% of the congregation responded in one way or another and most were positive. Loose change giving to the envelope scheme has increased, as have

the standing orders and Gift Aid and someone gave the church a donation. Financially, we were in a much healthier place as we entered 2017."

Queen's Hall revisited Giving in Grace in 2017. John and Margaret have also noticed a change at church. "Some of our congregation told us they had never dreamt of giving more until we started Giving in Grace. It's really challenged them. Our team is staying focused on the Scriptural principles of giving and we want to go forward using the excellent model that Giving in Grace provides."

Margaret has the last word. "It has been a delight to have made known the **joy** of giving and being generous, which so many people are unaware of. The Leadership are very grateful for the difference Giving in Grace is making at Queen's Hall."



Location: Wigan town centre Congregation: 110
Started Giving in Grace: April 2016

✘ CASE STUDY ✘

"We are indebted to Giving in Grace for inspiring us to move forward as a church and for supporting us every step of the way."

Queen's Hall Methodist, Wigan



Queen's Hall Methodist church commissioned a small team to develop a stewardship programme, headed up by Brian Rollins, the Church Treasurer.

Giving in Grace was launched in April 2016. John Parker is on the church leadership team as well as being a local preacher, as is his wife Margaret, who is Church Secretary. Queen's Hall has had a difficult journey for the last few years, as John explains.

"Our church lost money for three years from 2012. The first two years was a planned loss, as we had carried out some building repairs and paid for the refurbishment of the church toilets from our reserves, but when we saw a loss the third year, we were rather concerned. There were a number

of factors – a slight dip in the weekly offering, our running costs increasing, room rental and coffee bar income down a bit – but just the same, it was unexpected, and we felt we needed to address it."

John and Margaret had heard Steve Pierce, one of the authors in Giving in Grace speak on stewardship and had not lost the sense of inspiration about giving from that talk. They spoke to their Church Council about Giving in Grace and it was decided to go ahead with the programme. Although the church wanted to stop making a loss, there was also a strong feeling that they wanted to move forward in a positive way.



Says John, "writing our Case Statement helped us to focus on our shared vision and where we wanted to go as a church community. A small group of us met regularly to drive it forward and although initially we felt anxious about some of the challenges, we soon realised that this was the right direction for us."

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The church launched Giving in Grace in April 2016. "We planned four weeks of preaching on giving and stewardship. Our leadership preached the first two weeks, Steve spoke on the third week and we had booked the Bishop of Liverpool to preach the fourth week before we even knew we were launching Giving in Grace! The congregation's response was immensely positive. We handed out brochures, elicited responses and followed up on feedback. Everyone was ready for the programme when it came."

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The small group had addressed a number of key issues during its deliberations and the Giving in Grace programme has really borne fruit. "We used to have a large Sunday school, but we lost some key leaders and it was really struggling", explains John. "We came up with the concept of employing

a part time children's and family worker, raising excess funds and paying their salary out of those. On the face of it, a church in the red couldn't possibly manage this, but it became part of our Case Statement and something we really started to believe could be possible. The Giving in Grace brochure had so many helpful key strategies embedded in it and we worked to those which was enormously helpful."

Having applied the model, the church felt they could afford to pay for 15 hours a week, hopefully then taking that up to 30 hours with a successful grant application. "We had to gain approval from the Circuit, then apply for the grant. We offered the role on a temporary basis to a recent graduate in the congregation, Nicola. She has absolutely revolutionised our children's work. She's started up our toddler group again, she leads worship, runs the Sunday school and organised our church Christmas party. There is absolutely no way