



Thank You Day ideas for churches with potential funding available

"I want to thank everyone in the country who has risen to the huge challenge we have faced and is seeking to build new communities and bring us together" Justin Welby – Chair of the / - Together Steering Group.

Starting from just 13 individuals proposing a Thank You Day, the idea is now supported by hundreds of organisations across the country, ranging from the Scouts and Guides to Rotary and the Royal Voluntary Service, NHS, The Mirror and the Sun, the Football Association and the Church of England.

The Together Coalition (with a steering committee chaired by the Archbishop of Canterbury) is working across the country with communities and organisations to build the first ever National Thank You Day on Sunday 4th of July. We want to celebrate all that has got us through the past 18 months - inviting communities throughout the UK to get together to say Thank You to everyone who has helped us - from shopkeepers and teachers, to the friends, families, next door neighbours and people from our places of worship and community groups.

Through this incredibly difficult year, we know that churches throughout the UK have particularly stepped up and gone above and beyond, reaching out to their communities from all backgrounds to run food banks, hold online prayers and worship, connect with those who are lonely, to provide much needed support to those who have lost loved ones and so much more.

We would therefore love to make sure churches are celebrated and can be a central part of Thank You Day - in the giving, receiving and in the facilitating of acts of thanks and gratitude.

We want to make sure everyone feels included and a part of the day. No idea is too small or too big. Use the list below to spark some ideas. Adapt them, make them work for you: If you want to go for one of the more ambitious options there could even be funding available as there is £500k set aside to support events <https://www.neighbourly.com/VMO2TogetherFund>.

- Distribute cards in your service that people can fill out and pass on to the people they want to thank or even do it via social media – resources are at <https://thankyouday.org.uk/resources/>. Maybe even find a tree, a wall, some railings or another suitable spot and invite people to hang / write messages of who they want to thank to create a photo opportunity before they are distributed. Share on social media. Get your local media to come and take photos. Get creative!
- An interfaith moment of thanks on the morning of the 4th July, with faith leaders and community representatives from a host of faith traditions coming together. For some there are theological challenges in, for example, saying mixed prayers inside places of worship. That's OK, think about hosting something outside instead (we are praying for sun!) such as a community garden or the town/city centre or maybe in a non faith specific indoor space such as a community centre or the Town Hall.

- Host a thank you breakfast or tea party for your neighbours of other faiths or no faith to thank them for being there during the pandemic.
- Organise a litter pick or tree planting with people from different backgrounds to thank our environment for getting us through. Share snacks and cold drinks together afterwards.

Keep it simple, this can be the start of new friendships in the months and years to come.

Let us know your plans so we can help you shape them and so we can share with others to inspire them too. The 4th of July will be a special day - **TOGETHER!**

Email lindsey.donoghue@yourneighbour.org for help and support