

DIOCESE OF TRURO
Diocesan House Kenwyn
Truro Cornwall TR1 1JQ

STEWARDSHIP MATTERS

Advent 2008



Revd Julie Millar, Parish Resources Officer
Monday - Thursday at Diocesan House

Tel: 01872 274351 ext 214
Email: julie.millar@truro.anglican.org



The indescribable gift

Each year as we begin a new church year we start with a period of preparation and waiting. Although we know the Christmas story so very well there is still a sense of anticipation and hope. Then as we consider what the incarnation of God as a helpless baby actually means we realise what an amazing and indescribable gift we have been given.

In a talk on Stewardship Archbishop Rowan Williams reflects on this gift from God of himself in Christ:

“God gives what God is, his life, and that means that God is completely committed in God’s giving.

*“He sent no angel to our race,
of higher or of lower place”*

says the hymn. God does not give something other than himself, something to which he is not committed. God gives what he is and so in his giving he is promised, he is committed.

If we’re thinking about models for our own giving, we might do worse than reflect on what’s involved in saying that God is committed to his gift. The gift is not a substitute for God. It is God, God in motion, God in action.”

God’s giving of himself is a reflection of God’s nature. Our giving is a reflection of our commitment and what we hold to be most important. Our giving sustains the mission of the church in this county. It enables the witness to the gift at the heart of Christmas.

New Year practicalities

The New Year brings that time when the annual accounts of the PCC are prepared.

Here is a brief list of the documents and forms that should be submitted by each parish:

- Annual Accounts
- Annual Report
- Independent Examiner’s Report on the accounts
- Return of Parish Finance Form (ROPF)

Annual Accounts and Report together comprise the Financial Statements.

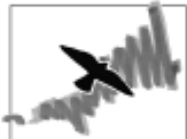
Guidance about the form of the accounts, the legal requirements for the Annual Report and an example of an Independent Examiner’s Report can be found in the book “that was sent to all treasurers towards the end of 2006.

The Return of Parish Finance must include incoming resources and resources expended on general and restricted funds, but should exclude transfers between accounts (eg from a deposit account to a current account) and Diocesan Pastoral Resource Fund Grants.

All Financial Statements and returns should be submitted by **29th May 2009**.

Income over £100,000 in 2008?

If your PCC income is going to be over £100,000 for 2008 and you haven’t already been in touch with me about Registration with the Charity Commission please do contact me as soon as possible.



Looking forward

With difficult economic circumstances many people are looking carefully at how they use their money. For Christians there is a wealth of tradition and teaching on the ethical and just use of money. How we earn and spend money says a lot about what we believe in and what is important to us.

The book "The Money Revolution" sets out to help Christians think about our use of money and also deals with issues like debt, insurance, pensions and wills. It has five chapters, and is ideal for use as a Lent course.

I have some free copies of this book. These are available in sets of 10 for parishes that wish to use them during Lent. There are 17 sets of 10 available on a first asks, first gets basis.

The book can be purchased from Authentic Media for as little as £1 per copy for bulk orders.

Looking back

At the end of the year it is common to review the year that has just passed. For a church looking back over the last year is the equivalent of the review of the day prayer practised by many Christians. Such a review can help inform the Annual Report that is part of the PCC's financial statements presented each year to the APCM.

Here are some questions that might help your church review its stewardship over the last year, and give some pointers to issues that may increase financial stability.

The current financial situation:

- The PCC has an annual budget

- Income is not dependent upon a small number of donors e.g the top 10% of committed donors give less than 40% of the committed giving £ total
- There are one-off Gift Aid envelopes in the pews or prominently on display for visitors to use (or for one-off donations from church members and visitors)
- The Common Fund is paid monthly by direct debit.
- There are designated financial reserves for quinquennial repairs (eg a building fund)
- General reserves are at least 3 months of normal operating costs

Looking at giving in the last financial year:

- More than 90% of weekly (envelope) pledges are eventually received
- 100% of the Common Fund was paid to the diocese
- Every regular donor was personally thanked for their financial support

Looking back over the last three years:

- We have reviewed our vision and mission
- We have invited our parishioners to review their giving each year

Wider stewardship concerns:

- The PCC has a clear mission
- All the key roles in the parish are filled by willing (and competent) volunteers
- The parish gives away more than 10% of its general funds to external organizations
- The parish is a fairtrade parish
- An awareness of our responsibility towards all God's creation.

These questions are not meant to be a counsel of perfection but a guide towards a healthy and sustainable church that will be there for the generations to come.