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## Giving for Life

In July the General Synod debated a report by the National Stewardship Committee called 'Giving for Life'. Rather than a mechanistic or legalistic approach to giving that doesn't touch the heart, or a desperate plea to pay the bills, this report emphasises a different approach to our Christian giving. This is best shown by a quote from the introduction to the report:

'Our use of God-given resources needs to be seen primarily as part of our **discipleship**, and our resourcing of the **mission** of God. If we are to live **generously**, seeking to reflect God's generosity to us, this has implications for our **lifestyle**; causing us to want to give more for the benefit of other and spend less on ourselves so we give away a greater proportion of our incomes.'

The four words in bold, discipleship, mission, generously (generosity) and lifestyle underpin Giving for Life, and indeed reflect the approach taken by me in my diocesan stewardship role. Christian faith is something that affects all aspects of our lives, and that includes our use of money and time.

All of these four things need working at, prayerfully and with attention to God's promptings. None can be achieved without the help and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The vision of Giving for Life is for an integrated lifestyle inspired by automatic generosity, and looking outwards beyond our selves. It responds to the generous self giving of Christ to all of us, which we can never repay, but which we can seek to share.

When we give for life we are not simply paying the bills, important as that is in keeping churches open as places of worship and reflection. We are stating how important our relationship with God is to us, and for our generation and those to come.

Giving for Life emphasises four key tasks when encouraging generous Christian giving where we are:

**Preaching and teaching** – about the use of money and resources from a Christian perspective

**Linking to vision and mission** – giving examples of what money and time given actually achieve

**Annual review** – annual presentation of vision and needs

**Saying Thank you** – for the contribution made to the life of the church

The Giving for Life report was recommended to parishes by the General Synod for **prayer and action**. To support its implementation a range of resources have been produced. A parish pack is going out to every parish in the Diocese. The Vision, Mission, Money? Diocesan stewardship pack complements the Giving for Life material and provides practical resources to help implement it.

In keeping with the wider vision promoted in the report, parishes are being encouraged to work with each other and at a deanery level to pray and act in promoting generous Christian giving in all our church communities. Working together helps us help each other and learn from each other. How might your church work with others in the deanery to encourage the Giving for Life principles of discipleship, mission, generosity and a God inspired lifestyle?

Giving for Life is commended by Bishop Tim and his senior staff, and they hope to see it widely used across the Diocese. Our giving resources God's mission in our Diocese. May it be giving for abundant life.

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## Make a Will - Make a Difference

It is good stewardship to have a Will and keep it up to date. It helps your family greatly to know your wishes, and a Will ensures that people you care about and causes you believe in are provided for. In November, you can have a basic Will professionally drawn up by a solicitor free of charge through the Will Aid scheme. Solicitors are generously offering this service to raise as much money as possible for the Will Aid charities: ActionAid, British Red Cross, Christian Aid, Help the Aged, NSPCC, Save the Children UK, Sightsavers International, SCIAF and Trocaire.

The scheme benefits the Will Aid charities through the donations made for the Wills, but there is no restriction on which charities may be named in your Will as a beneficiary.

There is a suggested donation of £75 for a single Will, £110 for a pair of matching or mirror Wills or £40 for a codicil, which goes to the Will Aid charities.

The next campaign is in November 2009. Details of local solicitors taking part are now available from the Will Aid website [www.willaid.org.uk](http://www.willaid.org.uk) or by phone on **0300 0300 013**

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## The Giving Machine

Do you or your family shop online? If you do you can give money to your favourite charity while you shop at no extra cost to yourself.

The Giving Machine is a new way to support your favourite charities and schools with cash donations collected from online retailers. It will not cost you anything other than the 2 minutes it takes to register the first time you use the site. Thereafter it's just one extra click of the mouse every time you buy online.

Major retailers like Amazon, eBay and Marks and Spencer are included. You can nominate a charity for registration, and this can include your local church or school.

Find out more at:  
[www.thegivingmachine.co.uk](http://www.thegivingmachine.co.uk)

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## Association of Church Accountants and Treasurers (ACAT)

ACAT is a membership organisation open to church treasurers of any denomination. It currently has 8,600 members across the UK. They produce a very comprehensive handbook, a newsletter, conferences and a helpline. All this for a membership cost of £12.50 per annum.

ACAT membership is an inexpensive aid to the parish treasurer, which the PCC may like to consider paying.

An application form is included in the Treasurers' mailing.

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## Gift Aid Guide

Data Developments have produced a guide to Gift Aid which is comprehensive and accessible. Normally priced at £4 they have given the Diocese one copy of the booklet per parish. The booklet is included in the Treasurers' mailing.

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## Church Accounting Software

Data Developments produce the church accounting packages "Finance Co-ordinator" and "Donations Co-ordinator". At a cost each of £149 these are more suited to larger parishes, but they do make the job of treasurer easier.

Some treasurers already use these programs, and they are used to record the donations to the Umzimvubu link. If you think either program might be suitable for your parish please contact me at Diocesan House to talk further about it and to put you in touch with someone who uses them for parish record keeping.

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## Vision, Mission, Money?

A disc containing the Vision, Mission, Money? stewardship pack material will be sent to clergy in the November mailing. This pack can be used with Giving for Life to encourage giving as part of discipleship in your parish.

