

Giving is God's Way

Stewardship materials from the Diocese of Southwark

**Part 1:
Getting
started**

How to use this guide

Giving is God's Way is designed to work in five distinct stages, each covering a different aspect of your campaign. For best results, you are encouraged to tackle each section in the order suggested. Each stage comes with a step-by-step guide to completing all the necessary tasks in that section, plus a checklist summary at the end.

Part 1: Getting started

This section shows you how to lay the groundwork for a successful campaign, including choosing your planning team, assessing the current state of your stewardship and gathering together the financial information you will need for your brochure and promotional materials.

Part 2: Teaching & preaching

The second part of *Giving is God's Way* asks people to consider their own response to God's generosity. This section links to a range of possible Bible studies to help with this question, and also provides sample sermons to preach at the beginning and end of your campaign.

Part 3: Asking for money

This section gives advice on creating your own brochure to support your *Giving is God's Way* campaign, how to write 'ask' letters and what to include in the packs you distribute to encourage giving, including response and Gift Aid forms.

Part 4: Giving thanks

An important part of your stewardship campaign is saying thank you to those who have responded. This section shares ideas for thank you letters, a thanksgiving service and how to follow up with people who may not have engaged with your campaign yet.

Part 5: After the campaign

Once the campaign is over, it is time to reflect. This section shares ideas on how to debrief everyone involved in delivering *Giving is God's Way*, how to assess your strategy and success and how to continue to encourage generosity in the future.



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Step 1: Consult your church leadership and PCC

The first step is to ensure you have the full support of those who have leadership roles in your church to run *Giving is God's Way*. It may be that a discussion on financial stewardship has prompted you to think about this but it is important that all members of the PCC understand both the need for a stewardship initiative and that this is about more than just paying the bills.

In practice, a small group will run *Giving is God's Way* but your PCC as a whole will need to own the initiative. No stewardship initiative will be successful without the full backing of the leadership and the PCC. It is better to delay running *Giving is God's Way* than to try to run it without clear support.

Step 2: Prayer

As you embark on this programme, we recommend that you pray and ask others to pray for the church's ministry and your campaign. Sometimes if we are busy or under pressure it can be easy to forget God's wonderful generosity to us. By praying we can foster gratitude, remembering God's incredible love and grace.

Therefore we would encourage you to underpin your campaign with prayer and thanksgiving. This may include opportunities such as:

- in regular services (for example using the Intercessions to focus on generosity)
- during the daily offices
- together as a church (for example with the collects, the Lord's Prayer or using the 'Hearts on Fire' prayer, right)
- in church meetings, whether in small groups or business meetings
- by writing a prayer for the campaign and church vision
- using your church's Facebook page or blog to offer different prayers of thanks
- by including all ages
- by encouraging the congregation to offer thanks in their own prayer life.

A number of resources are available online and elsewhere to provide inspiration. The following ideas may give you a place to start.

- Use the Diocesan 'Hearts on Fire' prayer (right).

'Hearts on Fire'

*Stay with us Lord,
open our eyes and set our
hearts on fire,
as you open your word,
as you break your bread,
as we live your life.
Enrich us with your grace,
empower us by your Spirit,
enfold us in your love,
as we walk the journey of
faith with you.
Amen*



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- The Parish Funding programme, available at www.parishresources.org.uk, has specific prayers for campaigns, examples of intercessory prayer and ideas for corporate prayer for use by the whole church or individuals. See Resource 1, bit.ly/ParishResources
- The Giving in Grace website from the Diocese of Liverpool (www.givinginGrace.org/Prayer-Resources) provides a helpful booklet of prayers and many creative ways to pray individually and together.
- Why not encourage members of your congregation of all ages to write their own prayers, reflecting on God's generosity and your church's mission? You could print a few on prayer cards or bookmarks to share and use. If you have giving cards, for people who use standing orders to place in the offertory, you can also use the prayers on this resource.
- Consider keeping a gratitude journal as one way of helping us to be thankful and grow in our gratitude and generosity.

Step 3: Set up your team

Once you have decided to go ahead with *Giving is God's Way*, a small team of five or six people will need to be appointed to plan and run this initiative. The team should reflect your congregation and should ideally include:

- a Team Leader to keep an overview of the campaign. Ideally this will be someone who can encourage and motivate while at the same time having a clear idea of the church's vision and plans for the future
- someone to provide support and input for those leading the Bible studies which are a key part of the campaign (see [Part 2: Teaching and preaching](#))
- a Publicity Officer to take overall responsibility for designing and producing the literature (see [Part 3: Asking for money](#))
- the Treasurer to provide the financial facts and figures
- the Church's Stewardship Officer, if you have someone in this role
- a Churchwarden to add to the general wisdom and provide a wider church perspective.

It is best to recruit a representative group of people onto the planning team as this will help to spread the message of generosity. A stewardship initiative can be a good opportunity to involve members of the congregation who are not currently heavily involved in church activities but who have the right mix of skills.



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Step 4: Plan and prepare

The planning team's first task is to work out a timetable for *Giving is God's Way*. Broadly speaking, they should allow for at least six to eight weeks of preparation ahead of starting the Bible studies. The following is a sample timetable. It can also be downloaded from [Part 1: Getting started](#).

Date	Activity
Six to eight weeks before	Post-PCC approval, assemble your planning team. Review the current stewardship position and church vision; gather financial facts and figures; decide who to target in the campaign, and when you will run it.
One month before	Send out invitations to the Bible study course at the heart of the campaign (remember to offer daytime/evening options and access to materials for those who cannot make the sessions). During the next month organise Bible study groups and publicity (for example, an article in the parish magazine, Facebook posts and prayer); prepare information packs and any special events.
Week 1	Introductory sermon to be preached.
Weeks 1-5	Bible studies to be run in small groups.
Week 6	Second sermon to be preached. Information packs to be given out.
Weeks 6-7	Congregational prayer opportunities and response forms to be returned (ask the PCC to lead by example and return by Week 8).
Week 8	Collate response forms. Give initial feedback to congregation.
Weeks 8-9	Send thank you letters to those who have responded.
Week 10	Thanksgiving service/feedback to congregation. Compile list of people to follow up on.
By Week 12	Continue to send thank you letters to those who have responded and follow up with those who haven't.
Week 14	Evaluation and future planning.

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Step 5: Assess where you are now

People give more generously and enthusiastically if they can see there is a clear vision for the future so, once the timetable is in place, it's a good idea for the planning team to spend some time considering the following questions:

- where are we now with stewardship?
- what is our vision for the future?

Doing a stewardship audit

Doing an audit of the current stewardship situation will allow the planning team to emphasise the areas that are most relevant to their church when planning their *Giving is God's Way* campaign. Some questions to consider include:

- what are the three main strengths and weaknesses of our church?
- do we have a clear statement of the church's vision, and has it been shared with the wider congregation?
- how well do our church members understand why the church needs them to give both time and money?
- when were church members last provided with principles to guide them in their giving to the church?
- how frequently is generosity, including financial gifts, referenced in teaching and preaching?
- does the church itself model generosity by giving money away to other Christian charities and causes?
- is the current financial position of the church available?
- what proportion of the congregation gives regularly already?
- what proportion of planned giving is covered by Gift Aid?

Where are we now: a quick audit is one of the [supporting documents for Part 1](#) and offers a fuller explanation of how to assess your stewardship.

Creating a clear plan for mission

Having a clear plan in place for mission can help church members to be generous, as they will know how their gifts are being spent and can see the difference those gifts are making in other people's lives.

Answering the question 'what is our vision for the future?' is not only a task for the planning team and it may be useful to use *Giving is God's Way* as a prompt to the PCC to consider developing plans for their church's mission and ministry over the next few years.



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Deciding on your church's vision is one of the [supporting documents](#) for Part 1 and offers guidance on developing a Mission Action Plan (MAP). For help, please contact our Mission and Evangelism department or visit the MAP pages on the Diocesan website at southwark.anglican.org/mission-ministry/mission/mission-evangelism/mission-action-planning/.

Step 6: Gather financial facts and figures

Your parish's financial facts and figures will play a key part in the materials you produce to support your *Giving is God's Way* campaign. It is best to assemble them in your initial planning.

Income and expenditure

You will need to prepare an estimate of the weekly expenditure and income for your church. If the campaign is held after September, use an estimate or budget for the following year. We expect that your accounts will have more account headings and detail than your brochure requires, so you will need to group them as helpfully as possible so that people can understand the key categories.

Income is generally summarised under the following headings but other categories may be more relevant for you:

- **planned giving** – this should include income from those who give by standing orders or through a regular envelope scheme

"It is important to remember that a key task of stewardship in the local church is to connect the giving of money with the difference that the money makes in people's lives...Your brochure needs to identify not the bills to be paid but the ministry which can be offered thanks to the generosity of church members"
– *Giving in Grace, Diocese of Liverpool*



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- **tax recovered** – this is tax recovered through the Gift Aid on planned giving or the Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme (GASDs)
- **other income** – this includes cash collections, fees and bank interest and may be:
 - a. income from a church hall or parish property
 - b. fundraising
 - c. other income such as ongoing investment income
 - d. one-off grants or legacies.

However, if income from these sources forms a major part of how the parish's wider mission and ministry is funded please show them separately. For example, it is important for the congregation to understand if you have significant income from a parish property that you use to help pay for the organist or for youth work, or if you benefit from and rely upon significant income from a hall or fundraising.

If your church has significant investment income you may be asked to explain whether or not this income can be used for general purposes. It is now compulsory for annual accounts to show restricted and unrestricted funds and restricted funds that have been given for a specific purpose cannot be used for anything else without the prior approval of the donor.

Expenditure is generally summarised under the following headings but there may be other categories which are more relevant to your church. For example, a church with a strong musical tradition may decide to list the expenditure directly linked to music.

- **Church and services.** This includes lighting, heating, music, candles, insurance, general repairs and maintenance, all of which make our church a welcoming place.
- **The Parish Support Fund pledged giving to the Diocese.** Your pledge towards the cost of mission and ministry in the Diocese including the cost of clergy stipends, housing, training and support. See below for comments on the Parish Support Fund.
- **Ministry and outreach.** This will include clergy expenses and any parish administration. It could also include youth workers, funding a lunch club or hearing champions, Alpha or Pilgrim courses, night shelter expenses or a parish magazine that is widely distributed. Hall expenses may be shown here or separately.
- **Giving outside the parish.** This will include regular commitments to other charities as well as any one-off collections.
- **Major repairs.** Money put aside to cover major repairs to the building. See page 8 for comments on Fabric Funds.



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Parish Support Fund

In 2016 the Diocese moved to the Parish Support Fund, a new generosity-based scheme whereby each church is asked to pledge an annual amount to mission and ministry costs. Here in Southwark, we have a strong tradition of those with more supporting those with less so that we can sustain ministry throughout the whole Diocese.

Each year, parishes receive information on the average cost of a full-time incumbent in the Diocese of Southwark: current detailed information can be found on our Diocesan website on the Parish Support Fund page at southwark.anglican.org/giving/parish-support-fund/. Based on the medium-term plan, the average indicative cost of a full-time incumbent in the Diocese of Southwark for 2019 is £78,600 (or £1,512 per week). The cost equates to £39,400 per annum (£758 per week) for clergy stipends, NI and pension; £8,400 (£162) for housing; training and other ministry costs of £15,200 (£292); and support for our wider Church responsibilities, including parish support at a cost of £15,600 (£300 per week).

If you have a full-time incumbent and your parish's pledge to the Parish Support Fund is more than £78,600 in 2019 then your parish is a net giver to the Diocese and your parish helps to support the mission and ministry of other parishes in the Diocese. If your pledge is less than £78,600 in 2019 then your parish is a net receiver and ministry in your parish is supported by other parishes in the Diocese.

Fabric Funds

Churches are encouraged to set aside a proportion of their income in a separate fund, usually known as the Fabric Fund. This is to provide for future major work on the fabric of the church. When preparing the estimates of weekly expenditure for your *Giving is God's Way* brochure, the Fabric Fund figure should represent only money transferred from the general fund to the Fabric Fund and not money spent from the Fabric Fund.

Costing your MAP plans

There may be costs associated with your church's MAP priorities and it is important to include these in any future budgets. People like to understand how their giving is leading to the growth of the church's mission and ministry. You may also need more volunteers and it is an opportunity to analyse your needs and share opportunities for people to use their gifts and get involved with another aspect of church life. Visit the MAP pages on the Diocesan website for more information.



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Patterns of giving

It may be useful to include how much your congregation is giving at the moment in your brochure as this is part of the financial picture for any church. Work out the current patterns of giving in your parish by those in the planned giving scheme. Choose categories that are appropriate for your parish and ensure that no one could be identified by having a category with only one giver. An example is given below.

Number of planned givers	Amount per week	Total given
19	Up to £5	£73
20	£5 to £10	£140
9	£10 to 25	£132
6	Over £25	£195
	Total	£540

Other questions

- How many people give regularly and how? What proportion of the congregation gives regularly through standing orders or envelopes? This will help you to analyse whether you have potential from your usual weekly attendees to increase your regular givers and whether some could move from envelopes to standing orders.
- What proportion of planned giving is covered by Gift Aid? Including a Gift Aid form as part of your response form makes it easier for all new givers to make their gift tax-efficient and may encourage others to do so too.

Step 7: Decide when to run your campaign and who to approach

Some times of year are better than others for running a campaign and it is best to choose one when a good proportion of your congregation is likely to be able to take part in the supporting Bible studies – avoid holidays and other times when your congregation may be depleted. Consider linking your *Giving is God's Way* campaign to a time of celebration such as your Patronal Festival or Harvest; alternatively, link it to a time of reflection such as Lent.

Identifying your audience

The planning team also needs to identify who they will approach during the stewardship campaign. First, they need to arrange groups for the Bible studies around which *Giving is God's Way* is based. These studies are best undertaken in small groups, although people who can't attend should still be given the course material so they can participate.



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You must decide who is going to receive the *Giving is God's Way* literature and be asked to formally respond. All members of the regular church family should be invited to be part of *Giving is God's Way*. This family roll is unlikely to be exactly the same as the Electoral Roll or list of communicant members as new members will need to be included as well as those who attend regularly, if infrequently. In some communities you may extend the invitation to the whole village or to all those who use the community buildings.

Ideally the list will be divided into different sections, recognising that people in our churches are at different places in their faith journey and are probably best approached using different language. Different groups within your church family can then receive tailored letters asking for an appropriate response, although everyone should receive the same brochure and be asked to follow the same process.

You know your church members and whether or not to differentiate your church list is a decision for the planning team – you may feel it is more pastorally appropriate for everyone to receive the same letter to avoid the chances of alienating or upsetting anyone. But if different letters can be sent tactfully then this is likely to be the most effective approach.

One way of differentiating your church list is outlined below. You will find more guidance on this, as well as letter templates for each group, in [Part 3: Asking for money](#).

- **Core members and leaders:** this group is made up of those who hold both formal and informal leadership roles in your church. It is hoped that they already invest their time, talents and money in the life and ministry of the church and the 'ask' letter needs to reflect this.
- **Congregation:** this group consists of people who are regularly in church and many will already be planned givers. You may wish to further differentiate among those who already give regularly but this does add another level of complexity.
- **Friends:** this group includes people who know and love the church but only occasionally attend. It is a very mixed group, including baptism,

Please note that the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) changed the way we handle personal information and data stored on individuals. This will make a difference as to how you circulate stewardship review material. For more details about GDPR and our Diocesan advice please see our website: southwark.anglican.org/support/for-our-churches/data-protection



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wedding or funeral families, and those involved may already support the church financially. Other people who never attend may also prove to be supportive friends of the church; members of this group will probably not wish to participate in the Bible studies but it is good to offer them the opportunity to do so.

Points to remember when compiling your family roll

- Take care with lists of new members of the church. Their first letter, or visit, from the church should not be a request for giving – but neither do you want anyone to feel excluded.
- Pastoral sensitivity is important: check your list with the clergy or ministry team to avoid any mistakes such as writing to someone who has recently died, or is very ill, or to their family.
- Make sure you have unaddressed copies of the literature available in church should new members, or potential new members, ask for it.
- Don't forget those who only attend weekday services or who are regulars at a different service from the main one, for example an 8am service.
- Some couples may prefer to have separate correspondence while others will be happy to receive only one letter and copy of the literature. Joint letters have the advantage of reducing the amount of printing needed – but deciding which is the best option is up to the planning team.
- You may decide to tailor your events depending on your audience. Some churches hold cheese and wine evenings, monthly meal and discussion groups for the community or teas with all-ages activities so they can invite baptism and other families.
- Consider how *Giving is God's Way* can be widened in your church to include everyone. Don't forget the children and young people – stewardship is not just for adults! See [Part 2: Teaching and preaching](#) for ideas on how to include children and young people in *Giving is God's Way*.
- Finally, if you decide to differentiate those on your family roll and send different 'ask' letters be careful with the terms you use to describe your groupings – labels matter.



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Step 8: review

If you have completed all the steps to your satisfaction, you are ready to move on to [Part 2: Teaching and preaching](#). Use the checklist below to review where you are.

		Notes
Step 1	Have you consulted your church leadership and PCC?	
Step 2	Ideas for prayer	
Step 3	Who is on your planning team?	
Step 4	Have you chosen a timetable?	
Step 5	Have you done your stewardship and mission audits?	
Step 6	Have you gathered the financial facts and figures you need on income and expenditure, Parish Support Fund contributions, Fabric Funds, costing your MAP plans and patterns of giving?	
Step 7	Have you decided when to run your campaign, identified your audience, selected your Bible studies groups and created a family roll?	

