

VISION FOR GIVING
Text for Bishop's address
Bishop Christopher St Albans
September / October 2008

Script to be accompanied by Powerpoint presentation:

Slide No.	
1	<p>You will know that when Vision for Action was launched, we outlined 5 main aims: Mission, Ministry, Buildings, Stewardship, Young People & Children.</p> <p>One of the great achievements of the V4A programme has been the way in which individual churches have developed the themes for themselves. It's exactly what we hoped would happen.</p>
2	<p>Let me just highlight some examples:</p> <p>St Mary Magdalene, Barkway – room: 15th Century church built a meeting room & kitchen. Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Place for local community groups ▪ Monthly Junior Church (sound proofed room) ▪ Local community use: art, concerts, plus usefulness for Carol concerts, Burma Star Assoc, etc.
3	<p>Disabled loo. Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We must do all we can to be inclusive ▪ Need loo for concerts ▪ Need loo for children & others coming to church
4	<p>St Nicholas, Gt Hormead – medieval church – need for extra room for children's work / kitchen / community use, etc.</p> <p>And lest you think that V4A has been all about buildings, not so:</p>
5	<p>Our diocese is second in the league table of dioceses in which Fresh Expressions of church have been developed.</p> <p>I could give more examples, but what we are wanting to focus on during September and October this year is the 4th of our V4A aims:</p>
6	<p>To strengthen the commitment to stewardship amongst clergy and laity.</p> <p>You may recall that at the original launch of V4A we put up this statement:</p>
7	<p>Vision without action is merely a dream Action without vision just passes the time Vision with Action can change the world</p> <p>But both vision and action require resources of time & talents & giving.</p>
8	<p>What we are setting out to proclaim is that <u>giving</u> is truly a part of Christian discipleship:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ As much as prayer ▪ As much as worship ▪ As much as service etc. <p>And we need to think about how we give and what we give, in the kinds of ways we think about prayer, or worship, or service.</p>
9	<p>And why should we give?</p> <p>Giving arises out of the belief that you and I are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Given life by a generous God ▪ Given new life by a generous God in Christ ▪ Given the glories of Creation by God ▪ Given the beauty of Word and Sacrament by God ▪ Given the gifts of the Holy Spirit by God

10	<p>The God whom we meet in Jesus Christ, in Creation, in Word and Sacrament and in our relationships is utterly, abundantly, prodigally generous.</p> <p>There is, it seems to me, a number of spiritual laws of the universe, laws which are as robust and intertwined with our lives as, say, the law of gravity. One of these laws of the universe is referred to by Paul in 2 Corinthians 9 6-15:</p>
11	- passage reading
12	- passage reading
13	<p>Why should we give?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Our relationship with God is based on God's love & God's grace ▪ True love is always mutual and reciprocal ▪ Our giving is part of that reciprocity of gifts from God being returned to God with thanksgiving and joy
14	<p>How should we give?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Generously ▪ Freely and cheerfully ▪ Proportionately ▪ Part of our budgeting processes
15	<p>So where do we go from here?</p> <p>A question – In order to put our own house in order, 'Am I right before God about my giving?' – that's a heart question.</p> <p>We should address the issue of giving in our churches through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regular teaching ▪ Annual recommitment ▪ Making use of the resources available <p>A pack of resources will be given to everyone.</p>
16	<p>Conclusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Please get real about your giving ▪ Please get real about your church's giving ○ Real in relation to income ○ Real in relation to spending ○ Real in relation to the needs of the world ○ Real in relation to God's goodness <p>Please may we <u>all</u> learn generosity of heart cf Fano</p>
17	<p>Remember the commandments of Christ:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Our love for God needs to be total ▪ Our love for our neighbour needs to be total <p>Giving is part of that total love</p>