



Networking | The Episcopal Network for Stewardship

Fall Edition

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How Can the Annual Giving Campaign Change Us?

The month of September brings new beginnings - a new season, a new school year, a new program year in congregations throughout the church. I wonder how many people will look toward this year's fall giving campaign as perhaps a new beginning—a new way of looking at money, giving, sharing and generosity. What if the one question we asked each other this year was not: How much money do we need to raise? but, How can this year's annual giving campaign change me? Isn't that what we are supposed to be about: change, transformation, a right relationship with God in Christ? Let's face it, many folks dread this time of year; they just want the "stewardship season" to be over. Sometimes I wonder if these are the same people who just want Christmas to be over. They don't like to be pushed and put upon, and they get overwhelmed by a sense of obligation and duty. I say, let's give these folks a pass. Don't pledge this year! For those who want to be intentional about giving and sharing as part of their walk with Christ, then pledge. It's really that simple. But not always easy. This month's contributing writers explore our human propensities to avoid conversations about money and giving, and offer fresh perspectives in how giving and sharing help us all to flourish in faith.



Yours in faith,
The Rev. Laurel Johnston
Executive Director
TENS

Stewardship is in the Air

by Charlie Barebo



Autumn brings the promise of a new program year in the church, and what many view as "Stewardship Season." So why the wailing and gnashing of teeth when "Stewardship Season" rolls around? Why the anxiety and complaints of the church talking about money? Rev. Clif Christopher, keynote speaker at this year's TENS conference, believes it is because people do not want light shone on their sin. They don't want to talk about their guilt when it comes to money: how their relationship with money overshadows their relationship with Jesus.

The gospels are clear about this. Recall the story of the rich young man whom Jesus loved (Mark 10:17-27). The young man leads a prayerful life and obeys the commandments. When he asks Jesus what more he needs to do, he runs away at Jesus reply. "Sell everything you own, give the money to the poor and

follow me.” How many of us are running away?

Those who view stewardship as a pastoral matter know that stewardship is about getting our relationship right with Jesus. Putting God and money in the proper perspective. Jesus spoke about money more than any other subject. If we are going to talk about Jesus, if we are going to study the gospels, then we are definitely going to talk about money.

Take a look at Luke’s gospel and the story about Zacchaeus (Luke 19:2-10). Zacchaeus was a wealthy man, a tax collector. Jesus sought Zacchaeus out of the crowd of poor people. He knew that Zacchaeus’ soul was in peril, that his relationship was far more intimate with money than it was with God. And we know Jesus is the master pastoral counselor. Jesus eats and spends the night with Zacchaeus. He leaves with half of Zacchaeus’ money but more importantly he has won the soul of Zacchaeus. Stewardship is a pastoral ministry.

The every member canvas is an opportunity to deliver life-saving pastoral counseling to your parishioners. It is a pastoral opportunity. A good stewardship program is always based on the gospels and our relationship to Jesus. This is a difficult thing for many to discuss. A well-crafted and designed program is integral to the success of a pastoral stewardship ministry. As Christ opened the gospels for the disciples, a good stewardship program opens the discussion about our relationship with Christ and our money.

Most parishes are not blessed with a team of wild eyed tithers who attend every diocesan and TENS stewardship conference and return home ready to make conversions. In fact, it often seems the opposite. The rector will find some devoted soul who loves their church but hasn’t been trained in stewardship to walk dutifully through the motions. In some parishes the rector will find an unconverted Zacchaeus to lead the charge. The results are rarely gospel focused pastoral stewardship programs reaping conversions. Finding disciple-stewards to lead a meaningful stewardship program is a real issue for any church.

As the senior warden and treasurer of a small parish I know this problem intimately. Our parish hasn’t had a real gospel centered stewardship program as far back as any member of the vestry can remember. My time is a scarce commodity as I also serve as the diocesan development missionary. I simply don’t have the time to develop or use a labor intensive program. We have a part time vicar and he is stretched thin. Our prayers were answered when the “Flourish in Faith” program was presented at the July TENS conference. “Flourish in Faith” is a remarkable narrative stewardship program. It is centered on the gospels and features six color bulletins in PDF form that follows the propers for six weeks, starting with Proper 22 on October 6th. The bulletins are very well done, written by bishops, seminarians and Barbara Crafton and include thought provoking discussion questions. The intent is to create an ongoing gospel centered discussion about money, God and our lives in the parish. The program includes templates for:

- Letter of program introduction
- Letter from the rector
- Letter from the senior warden
- Letter from the stewardship team
- Estimate of giving cards
- Pledge cards
- Summary letter

“Flourish in Faith” is flexible, designed for small, medium, and large parishes. It is a cookie-cutter program. Templates for all the materials are readily available online and the letters simply need to be person-

alized for your parish. To be able to deliver such a thoughtful, well developed program without having to invent it is a major blessing. We're excited about rolling out Flourish in Faith at our church and I'm going to keep a much closer eye on TENS! Our diocese is a member of TENS and all our parishes can use the program at NO COST! I'll report back to you in November and let you know how the spirit is moving through our parish. Who knows, we might have a Zacchaeus conversion or two.

Charlie Barebo is Missioner for Development in The Episcopal Diocese of Bethlehem and is Senior Warden at St. Margaret's Episcopal Church in Emmaus, Pennsylvania.

Why Clergy Should Know What People Pledge

by Charles La Fond



People can have a hard time differentiating between shame and guilt. Shame is about who one is. Guilt is about what one has or has not done. Our culture has a lot of both shame and guilt about money, and this makes it such a complicated subject for church communities. If we add fear to the mix, good discussions become almost impossible. We underestimate the fear, shame, and guilt that are woven into the subject of money in family histories, in homes, and in hearts at the peril of our pastoral ministry

and our church management.

Let me be clear. I completely understand the position of those clergy who choose not to know what their parishioners pledge. We have a poor culture of discussing money in the Church, and we do not equip clergy and other leaders to be able to approach the subject of money both at the congregational level, as well as in their interactions with individual parishioners. Not knowing helps us avoid all kinds of awkwardness and potential difficulty. And then there are the cases of Vestries and finance committees, or a powerful treasurer or parish matriarch, who keep matters financial, including pledges, “private” from the parish priest. So to the fear, guilt and shame that often attend the subject of money, we can add secrecy and the anxiety of the priest. What a tangled web we weave for ourselves!

Some clergy may feel they would treat parishioners differently if they knew what their flock pledge or when and how they pay the pledges they have made. Some vestry or lay leaders may feel that they have the kind of a clergyperson who would treat people differently with such knowledge. ‘What would Father Joe think if he knew I pledged 0.7% of my income?’ ‘What would happen to my ability to make speeches in vestry meetings about how we spend church money if people knew what I pledge?!’ ‘What would Reverend Mary think if she knew I just bought a second home or new car and was not pledging.’ What indeed.

I understand that reasoning. I understand it even when your clergy avert their eyes from filthy lucre because they fear their knowledge might change their treatment of their people. Really, it is perfectly OK for clergy to separate themselves from pledges. It is ok, that is, as long as the clergy are fired for dereliction of pastoral duty and leadership. When I say this at church meetings, some clergy and bishops get really angry. I get that. But I am not trying to make anyone angry or defensive. The Church is often tempted to protect its interests from within – church history and family systems theory tell that story. But the truth is that there are plenty of other clergy who are non-anxious about money, and whose appropriate self-understanding of intimacy, pastoral care, ecclesial and relational courage, prophetic calling and

managerial responsibility is still intact. They will do the job better than those who are not prepared to do the work and take the risk. Let the clergy who are spiritually grounded, able leaders have these jobs.

Clergy and a few trustworthy lay leaders must know what their fellow Christians pledge and when and how they pay their pledges so that these leaders can do their jobs – of which there are at least four tasks in particular with respect to the subject of pledges.

Clergy Task 1 - Teaching. When money has power over us, especially when we keep so much money talk in the realm of the “secret,” we face a fundamental theological and spiritual challenge to the well-being of individuals and communities. Proper confidentiality is one thing, and quite appropriate; but secrecy in the life of the community ought always to raise red flags, whether it is secrecy about bad behavior, secrecy about money, or secrecy about anything. It is the secrecy and the conspiracy that secrecy always brings that is the problem, not the money itself.

Clergy Task 2 - Basic Integrity. The clergy and a few trusted lay leaders should know what people pledge so that they do not place in leadership, people who are not contributing along the lines of their capacity to do so. Money is one indicator of spiritual depth and so is an essential indicator for the good pastor’s care of their flock. The vestry member who rants and raves about congregants raising their pledges to fund the budget, but whose personal, annual pledge of \$400 comes out of their \$40,000 salary (a pledge of 1% of their income), should not be placed in a position of leadership until their formation around money, community life and leadership has made some obvious progress.

Clergy Task 3- Pastoral Care. It is the responsibility of the clergy to know what is going on in the lives of their flock. Money is not a subject matter which is sequestered and set aside. If a parishioner drops their pledge dramatically or stops pledging (or stops paying a pledge) there may be pastoral or relational reasons behind that behavior which the clergy should know and be able to consider. Leadership is about making prayerfully discerned choices in response to changing issues. The knowledge of what people pledge is part of the pastoral job, just as noticing if a parishioner is “acting out” in other ways is indicative of a need of spiritual counsel, administrative action or additional formation. I would be in favor of all Bishops knowing what their clergy pledge to their parish. Bishops should know that too.

Clergy Task 4 -Leadership and Accountability. The clergyperson is held responsible for designing, managing and successfully balancing a budget. How can they be held responsible to that work if they have been barred from - or have barred themselves from - knowing how the budget is funded at its source? Not knowing, in detail, how the budget is funded is a dereliction of duty and could even be considered a failure of pastoral or leadership responsibility under new Title Four Canons .

Does the CEO of a local seed company need to know which farmers in town are buying the seed and who is (or is not) paying their bills? How can the Board of the company hold the CEO responsible for the expenses but then block the CEO’s knowledge about sources of income? The notion in real-world management is preposterous. And thinking the church is any different or “more spiritual” than other organizations amounts to Gnosticism – which we have long-since determined to be a heresy.

In the end, knowing what people pledge is simply a function of doing a job well. I have given up hoping for holy clergy. But kind, effective clergy are still a great expectation.

The Reverend Canon Charles LaFond serves as Canon Steward, Saint John’s Cathedral, The Episcopal Diocese of Colorado.

Just Another Rich Man: A Biblical Reflection on Proper 21-C, Luke 16:19-31

by Bishop Stacy Sauls

OK, this one is troubling. It's the story of a rich man and Lazarus, the poor man just outside the rich man's gate. (Lk. 16:19-31) The rich man "was dressed in purple and fine linen and . . . feasted sumptuously every day." On the other hand, there was Lazarus, "covered with sores, who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man's table." It is quite the contrast.



Lazarus died. The rich man also died and was buried. Only in his torment in Hades does the rich man realize the chasm between him and God. He asks Abraham to have Lazarus bring him water. Abraham refuses. "Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things." Then he asks Abraham to send Lazarus to warn his brothers so that they would not meet a similar fate. Again, Abraham refuses. "They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them."

The rich man's torment in Hades is not what is meant to catch our attention or even scare us. What ought to scare us is the detail in the parable that the poor man has a name, Lazarus, and the rich man does not. Something about the rich man's life leaves him nameless.

It is not, I think, that the rich man was bad. We certainly have no reason from the parable to think so. It is not, I think, that the rich man had great wealth. I see no reason to think from the parable that the rich man is punished for his wealth. It is not, I think, that the rich man's gain was ill-gotten. Again, the parable gives us no reason to think so.

The point is that names are superfluous unless we are in relationship with one another. I do not need to know the name of someone with whom I have no contact. I do not need to know the name of someone who does not affect my life. I do need to know the name of those I love. And without love, I myself might as well have no name at all.

It seems to me that the rich man's failure is that he bypassed the opportunity to love Lazarus because there can be no love without sharing. His failure to share the scraps from his sumptuous table is startling given the picture of the man just outside his gate, covered with sores, starving, and fighting off the dogs. Sharing is what gives us a name. It is what makes us who we are. Otherwise, we're just another rich man unknown to anyone who cares.

The Rt. Rev. Stacy F. Sauls serves as Chief Operating Officer, Office of the Presiding Bishop, The Episcopal Church

Ministry-Focused Budget: Deceptive or Enlightening?

by Kristine Miller

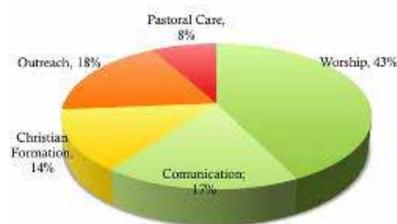
The recent TENS Conference in Salt Lake City included a live and webcast workshop on "Ministry-Focused Budgets". For purposes of definition, a ministry-focused budget is a tool for presenting the operating budget in terms of the ministry it supports. Following the conference, a question arose about whether or not the ministry-focused budget is deceptive. First, the ministry-focused budget is not intended to

deceive or camouflage budget realities. In fact, in many cases it more adequately and accurately conveys what the budget is funding. Second, the ministry-focused budget is not intended to replace the line item budget, only to frame it in another way.

In most churches, the primary tool for communicating how funds are being put to good use is the line item budget. The realities are:

- 1) few people know how to read the line item budget and even fewer people care to try,
- 2) the line item budget is completely uninspiring and typically causes the conversation to get derailed into arguments over why we are paying so much for lawn service and completely missing the point, and
- 3) the connection to money and ministry is lost.

By reassembling a church's line item budget into ministry categories such as worship, pastoral care, Christian formation, communication and outreach, the church's budget is depicted in terms of ministry. This enables church members make the connection between their generous giving and the parish's ability to do ministry.



Once a pie chart is created which proportions budget items into ministry categories, a page for each ministry category should be developed that includes the year's major accomplishments as well as a vision for the future. For example, the Communication page may include accomplishments such as a complete overhaul to the church's website and future objectives such as expanding the email communication to the parish family.

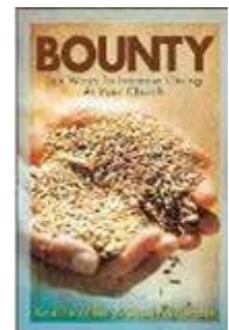
By sharing your budget in terms of ministry, you help people to connect their giving with your ability to do Kingdom building. You let people know you are doing as God has called you to do. Depicting how funds are used to enhance ministry will reveal the impact of contributions and inspire an increase in giving to your worthy causes.

Kristine Miller, CFRE (Certified Fundraising Executive) is Vice President at Horizons Stewardship Company of Cabot, Arkansas, a national stewardship consulting firm. Kristine is a co-author of Bounty: Ten Ways To Increase Giving At Your Church and C.L.I.M.B. Higher: Reaching New Heights in Giving and Discipleship.

Book Review of Bounty

by Lance Ousley

Kristine Miller's and Scott McKenzie's new book *Bounty: Ten Ways to Increase Giving at Your Church* is aptly titled, but it delivers so much more than ten ways to increase your congregation's giving. They have laid out a guide for stewardship ministry leaders to lead others, and be led, from merely being givers into the transformative blessings of generosity. They deliver straight talk about money, its place in our lives, and its place in the congregational conversation that demystifies the ministry of congregational stewardship formation. And all in six short but bountiful chapters in this 127-page book (including an appendix and notes pages)!



Miller's and McKenzie's work draws from real life stories, practical successes, and solid biblical theol-

ogy. The structure of each chapter makes putting their concepts into practice highly accessible for the stewardship ministry team, church board, finance ministry and clergy staff. They have included useful resources and templates for implementing these ideas along with a check list at the end of each chapter, instilling confidence in even the newest of stewardship ministry leaders. But don't let the practical nature of the book fool you; it also is a deeply spiritual book that can help to shape a faithful stewardship culture in any congregation. I believe this is because Miller and McKenzie have placed stewardship at the heart of building God's kingdom, rather than building church budgets. And I believe the results of utilizing their work in this book will be bountiful.

The Rev. Canon Lance Ousley is Canon for Stewardship and Development, The Episcopal Diocese of Olympia.

10 Reasons Not to Pledge

by Tim Schenck

As stewardship season rolls around in churches throughout the country and people begin to squirm in their pews, I thought I'd help parishioners who don't want to pledge with some helpful justifications. I encourage you to use these on your rector, stewardship chair, parish treasurer, or the poor sap designated to give you a follow-up phone call. With a little creativity, you too can do your part to avoid furthering the Kingdom of Heaven here on earth.



10 Reasons Not to Pledge

1. "I'm morally opposed to pledging." This allows you to stake out the moral high ground. And, after all, shouldn't the church live up to its name as a community of "faith" and take it on faith that there will be enough money to pay for the heating bill this winter?
2. "The disciples didn't pledge. Why should I?" True. Plus, this statement demonstrates your expansive knowledge of Scripture. Nevermind that they gave their entire lives over to Jesus — they never actually filled out a pyrus pledge card.
3. "I don't attend church very often." Only Christmas and Easter. Oh, and every family baptism, wedding, and funeral. You may not be there when the church needs you but, boy, that church better be there when you need it.
4. "It can't cost that much to run a church. Just bread, wine, and a priest, right?" Make sure to tell the priest you assume he/she took a vow of poverty upon ordination. And that if your priest actually wanted a lifestyle that included a working boiler in the rectory, he/she should have become a hedge fund manager instead.
5. "You'd just waste my money on candles. Or give it away." Accuse the church of spending too much on frivolous things like feeding programs.
6. "I don't trust the treasurer. He has shifty eyes." It's always good if you can blame others as the reason for not pledging. Some popular ones include "I don't like the rector's sermons" and "The senior warden avoided me at coffee hour last May."

7. "I prefer to give my talent rather than my treasure." Who cares if your real "talent" is avoiding contributing to the life of the community?

8. "I give when I can." In other words, you drop two single dollar bills in the plate (rigorously folded to look like an \$11 bill) on the one Sunday a month you happen to show up.

9. "I can't tell the future. The stock market might crash." It's possible. Then again, why go to the grocery store? You might start a hunger strike next week.

10. "What if letting go of the fear of pledging makes me generous in every aspect of life and brings me unexpected joy and abundant blessings?" Sorry. I can't help you with that one.

If these don't work, you can always propose a new slogan for your church: "All of the benefits, none of the commitment." Think of all the money your parish would save on stewardship mailings.



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This article first appeared as a blog post on Clergy Family Confidential: Finding God in Domestic Chaos and reprinted with permission.

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