

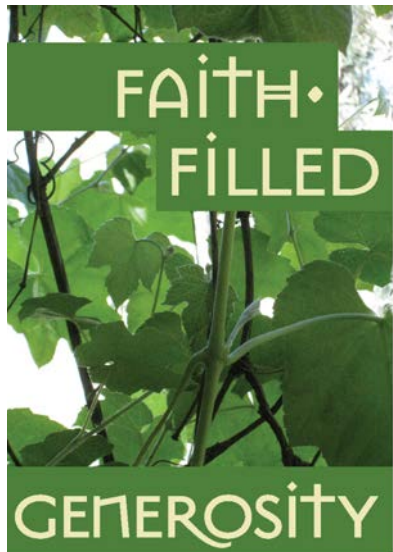
Creating Virtual Community for Stewardship

J. Davey Gerhard
Executive Director
The Episcopal Network for Stewardship



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Goals for this Webinar



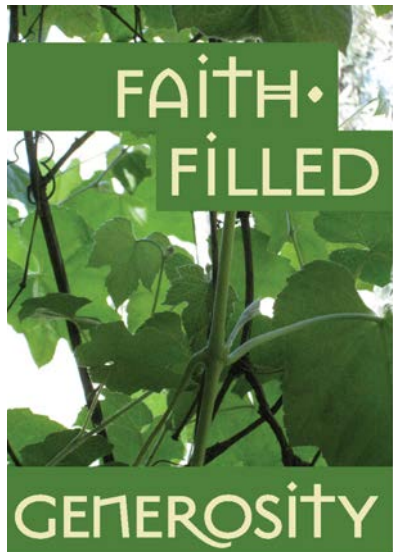
1. Learn how to **give space for meaningful formation** in stewardship practices and shape our theology of money
2. Common **best practices and tools** in story-telling around stewardship themes and generosity
3. **Review the TENS 2020 materials** for virtual campaigns and the small group process
4. Implementing **stewardship practices that work year-round** in your congregation



Faith-Filled Generosity

Let's name some of the challenges:

- Communities are meeting virtually, some are hybrid
- Economic fallout from the pandemic differs greatly by region, but is felt keenly in many faith communities
- Uncertainty about what 2021 and recovery might bring

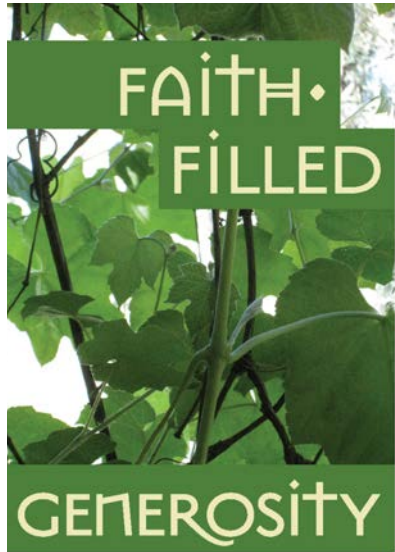


Creating the
Space for small
groups



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Why this year is different



How to talk about money when there is economic fallout from pandemic-related unemployment

- There is no shame in a household pledging less this year than other years. Every gift matters.
- Remember, some families are not struggling right now, so some of your members may be able to increase their giving
- Every conversation about pledges is a pastoral one
- We remember the Great Recession in 2008-2009. We recovered, and we will recover again. This too, shall pass.
- Christians are people of Hope.
- The work of the church is more acute in times of need

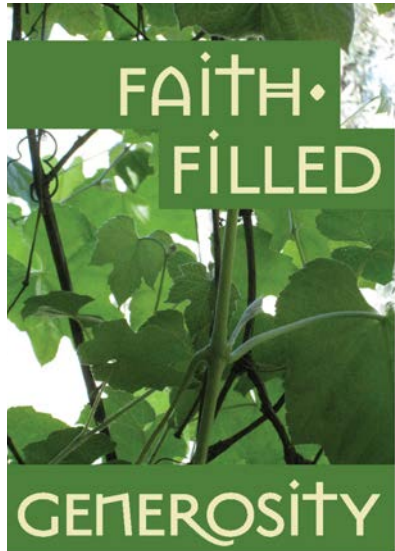
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Why this year is different

How to talk about stewardship if your congregation is facing budget cuts, program cuts, or staff reduction



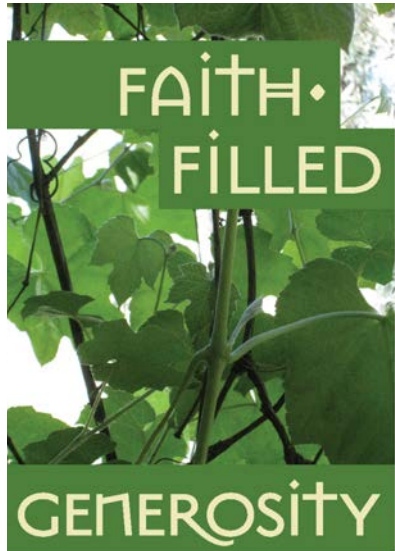
- Keep your conversation **focused on the mission**
 - The work of the church continues because the needs of our neighbors are still present.
 - We may have fewer resources to spend on mission, so we find other ways to do the work of God
- Did your congregation receive an SBA/PPP loan?
 - Remind members that this insulated staff and programs from cuts for a period of time. Thank your staff and treasurer for completing the paperwork for these loans
- There may be some members who can make extraordinary gifts to cover these unexpected shortfalls – **ask them**

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Why this year is different



How to talk about stewardship in times of uncertainty

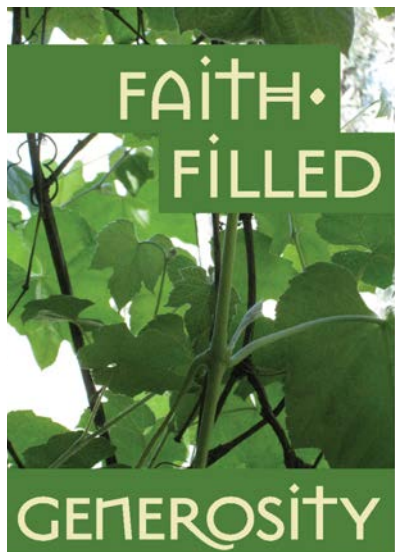
- Our times are often uncertain, it is our **Christian hope** and our prudent planning that can help us prepare and survive this uncertainty
- **Pledges can be changed** throughout the year if circumstances change – we are open and honest
- We can also make gifts from securities or other channels which **may be performing better**
- **The most important thing is to teach that all giving matters**, regardless of the amount. Be prayerful.

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Strategies to Talk about Difficult Topics



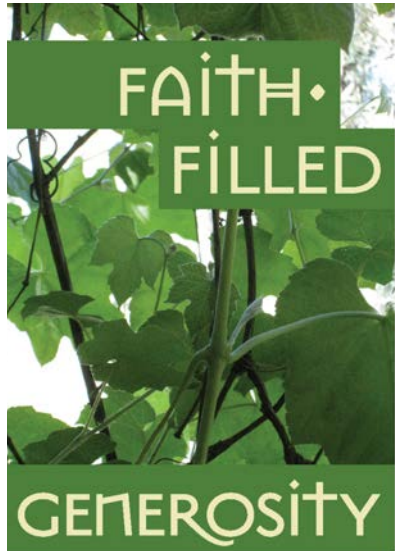
- Create Safe Space
 - **Nurture all voices** but keep any one voice from dominating
 - Allow silence or time to process – **give space** for introverts
- Keep things positive
 - That doesn't mean everything has to be "just fine."
 - **Dwell on what's possible**
- Train your small-group leaders or conversation partners on facilitation
 - **Leaders don't need to have all the answers**
- **Pray for each other** in group and outside of group – keep each other in your hearts

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Common Small-Group Norms



- Speak for one's self: use "I" statements, and **speak from experience**
- Make sure **everyone gets a chance** to speak before you speak again
- **Don't comment or respond** to another person's sharing unless the convener has explicitly invited responses
- Keep the content of the conversations private, **share the lessons or insights instead**
- Know, respect, and maintain your congregation's **Safe Church guidelines**
- Listen actively
- Practice empathy
- Don't be rushed – give the process time to work

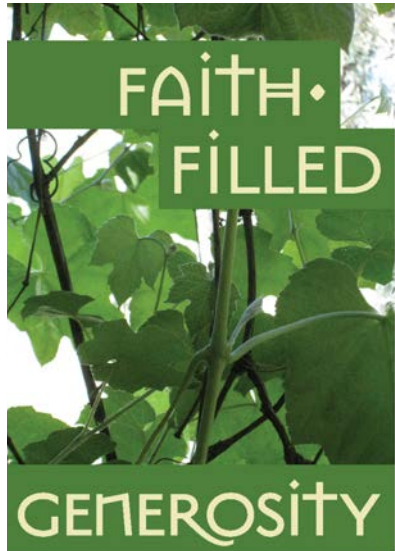
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Quick Review of the TENS Resources

Each year TENS provides a complete Pledge Campaign package, ready to download, customizable for your congregation, easy to use. All our resources are in English and in Spanish.



- A theme for the year, and a **theological statement** about it
- **Logos** in most common forms to use in web and print
- Pledge cards, customizable for your congregation
- **Sample letters** from clergy and campaign leadership, adaptable for your congregation
- **Seasonal Reflections**
- Pledge Season **weekly reflections** for the October and November Sundays
- **Training, teaching, and coaching** on how to best use the resources

This year, we have also made our resources easily adaptable to virtual stewardship campaigns and online giving

**Tools and
Strategies**



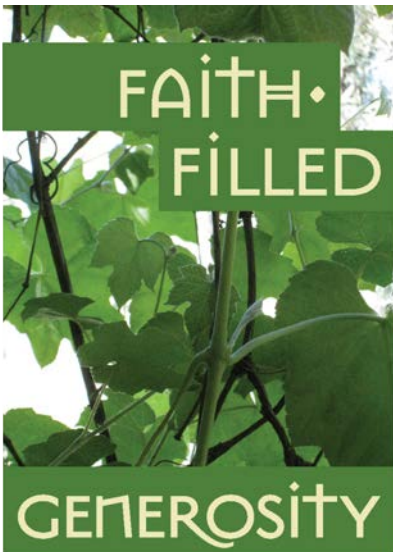
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Stewardship-focused Small Groups

A powerful connection and deepening relationship is possible when members ask each other for their gifts or enter into dialogue about the mission and priorities of the church. Your stewardship campaign this year should create small groups focused on formation and mission. **Small groups are the best way to develop meaningful formation about money and mission.**

In times of physical distancing, small group meetings, led by members of the **vestry, stewardship committee, or other lay leaders** facilitate the education of mission and the teaching of good stewardship fundamentals.

- Facilitated Small groups
- House churches
- Bible studies or topical studies



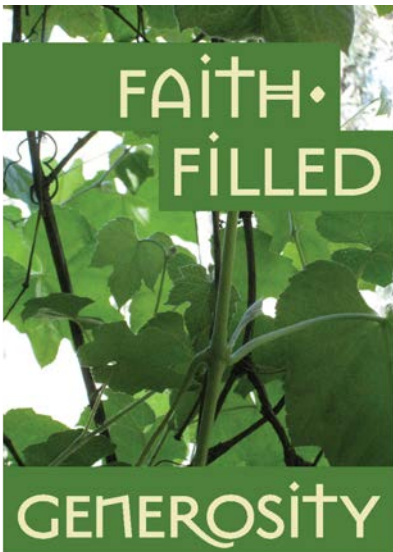
Tools and
Strategies



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Small Groups in Virtual Times

We recommend at least three small groups during your pledge campaign



1. Kick-off: Walk through the stewardship materials, the case for giving, and the ministry. If there are pre-recorded testimonials or other accounts of the work your congregation is doing, show them. If there are questions about where the money goes, answer them. **Ensure everyone has materials and pledge cards.**
2. Bible Study: Picking one of the passages suggested in the upcoming slides, run a facilitated Bible study on a stewardship theme. **Ask people to pray about their pledge.**
3. Appreciative Inquiry: vision and mission. The last session should be about **dreaming about the possible**. We'll look at this in more detail in a moment. This is where the **invitation to pledge** should come.

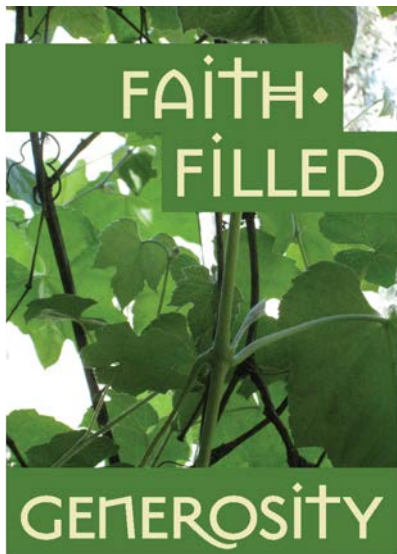
Tools and
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Small Groups in Virtual Times

Job description for a small-group leader (convener)



- Committed to stewardship
 - They have **already made their own pledge**
 - Embrace the theme “Faith-Filled Generosity”
- **Know and believe in the case for giving**
 - Can answer questions about mission and ministry, or direct people to the answers
 - Know the budget of the church, and can speak to it
- Good listeners and facilitators
 - Small groups are about **intimacy and vulnerability and mutual support**
- Comfortable with technology
- Available to host – we are all busy people. Make sure your **hosts can give the time** to do it right

Tools and
Strategies



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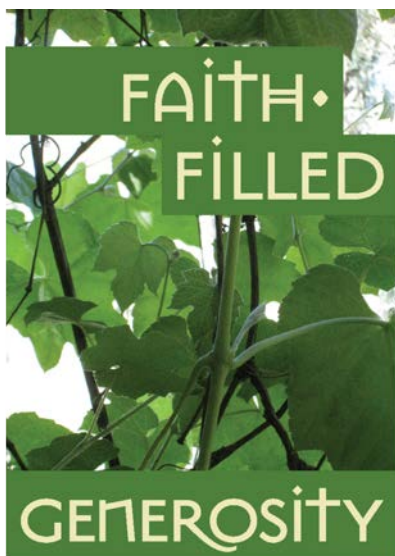
Small Groups in Virtual Times

How many small groups do you need?

- Groups should **have no more than 12 people** to allow for connection and conversation
- Each group should be able to **meet at least three times** during stewardship season

How to convene small groups?

- Randomly – Take the directory and divide people by the number of conveners
- Use existing small groups – Some small groups may already be meeting (men's groups, parents' groups, knitting groups, gardeners, etc.). Ask them if they would be willing to devote a few sessions to stewardship themes
- Create a Google Sheet or other online tool to let people sign up for their own groups



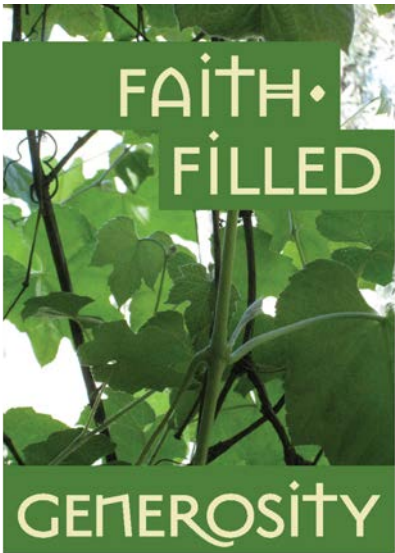
Tools and
Strategies



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Kicking Off in Community

Kick off Sunday is a great celebration!



1. Host a **Virtual Coffee Hour** following your Sunday Service(s)
2. **Share testimonials** – pre-recorded or pre-arranged via Zoom
3. Walk through this year’s materials and the **case for giving**
 - a) Include budget or narrative budget (or both!)
 - b) **Include mission-related stories** and pictures (or videos!)
4. Make sure everyone has access to the materials
5. Use the **Zoom Breakout Rooms to form your first small-group meetings** right then and there.
6. Bless the work with which you are about to engage and go forth!

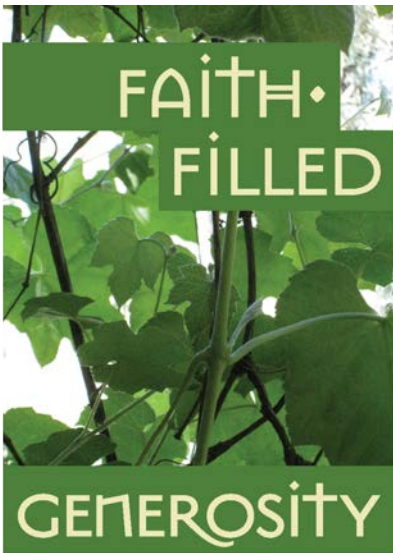
First Small Group Meeting



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Kicking Off in Community

Whether it happens following a virtual coffee hour, or as the first stand-alone small group meeting, here is a format to use.



- This is a great opportunity to **get to know each other**, if people don't. Ask some easy questions such as:
 - How long have you been a member?
 - What was it that made this place feel like home?
 - What is your favorite thing (person, ministry, event) about our congregation?
- Convener can **use this time to introduce the schedule** of the next meetings, and talk about the values of small group norms (see slide 8)
- Make sure everyone has seen or has **access to the campaign materials** including budgets, case, pledge cards, and other collateral
- **Ask and answer questions** about the mission, budget, and process of the pledge campaign

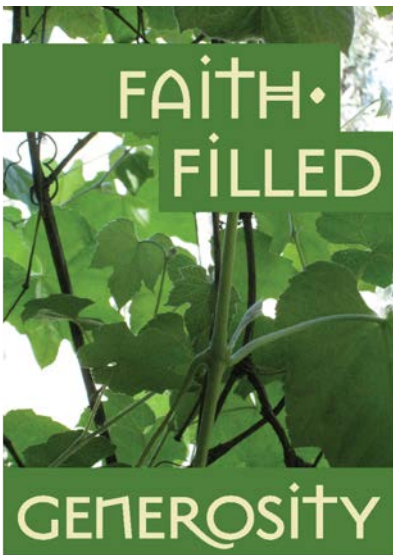
First Small Group Meeting



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Small Group Bible Study Format

- Opening Prayer: perhaps a prayer of thanksgiving or a prayer inviting the Holy Spirit to be present during the meeting and particularly the engaging scripture.
- Ask someone to read the passage the first time.
 - Group Conversation: **What word, phrase, idea, or sentence stands out for you?**
- Ask a different person to read it a second time, perhaps from a different bible translation.
 - Group Conversation: **What is God/Jesus/this passage saying to you?**
- Ask a third person to read it, perhaps from yet another bible translation.
 - Group Conversation: **What is God/ Jesus/this passage calling you to do?**
- Close with prayer for each person, that each of you may become more and more the faithful, loving, generous stewards God calls us to be, that each of us may indeed respond to what God is calling us to do and to be.



Second Small
Group Meeting



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Small Group Bible Studies on Stewardship

Genesis 1:27-28 We are made in God's image

Psalms 30 The world belongs to the Lord and all that is in it

Malachi 3:7-12 Robbing God

Matthew 3:1-12 What does our baptism mean for us as stewards?

Matthew 5:1-12 The Beatitudes and stewardship

Matthew 6:7-14 Praying the prayer Jesus taught us as stewards

Matthew 25:14-30 The Parable of the Talents

Mark 4:21-25 A Lamp on a Stand

Mark 10:17-25 The Rich Young Man

Mark 12:41-44 The Widow's Offering

Luke 12:13-34 The Parable of the Rich Fool

Luke 12:22-34 Where is your heart?

Luke 15:1-10 The Parables of the Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin

Luke 15:11-32 The Parable of the Lost Son

Luke 18:9-14 The Pharisee and the Tax Collector

Luke 18:18-27 The Rich Young Ruler

Luke 19:1-10 Zacchaeus

Luke 5:1-11, John 21:1-14 Two Fishing Stories

John 6:1-13 The Feeding of the 5,000

Colossians 3:12-17 Paul's guidance for living lives as God's Children

1 Peter 4:7-11 Stewards of the manifold grace of God

1 Timothy 6: 17-19 Be rich in good works

1 Corinthians 4:1 God loves a cheerful giver.

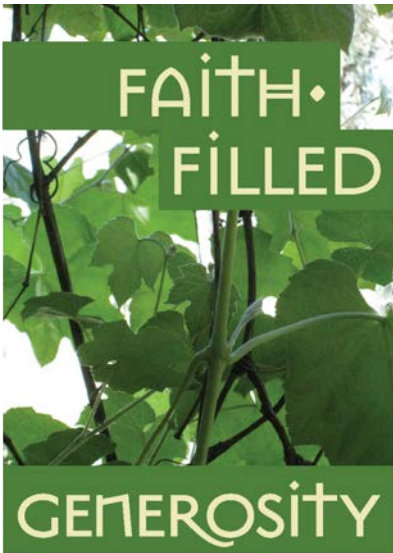
Second Small Group Meeting



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Other Topics for Small Groups

Appreciative Inquiry is a model of design thinking or development that **focuses on what is possible, what is good, what is exciting**. It purposely does not ask negative questions or frame problems. It is a solutions-based, inclusive way to engage in respectful conversation.



1. What ministry of our congregation is most hopeful or most exciting to you? Why?
2. If money were no object, what service to our neighborhood / neighbors would you hope to begin? Why?
3. What are examples that you can name of nonprofits, organizations, or other churches that are doing remarkable work in our community? Why are they inspiring to you?
4. Which of your gifts are you most willing to share with our church? (some examples: music, accounting, website, answering the phone, yardwork, translation, invitation, having fun, leading groups, cooking food) Why?

Third Small
Group Meeting

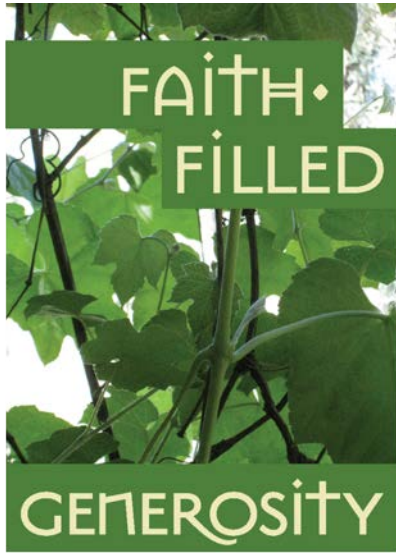


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Modeling Stewardship Dialogues: Making the ask

This year, we recommend that small-group hosts also extend the invitation to pledge to their members.

Peer to peer asks are so powerful because they are authentic.



- **Develop a short and simple script** around the core mission of the congregation – three to five talking points that can be shared
- **Write** some questions for each group to answer as they gather
- Ask each participant to review the materials they've received, pray about their giving, reflect on their household budget, and submit pledges by a due date.
- Ask each participant one direct question: **Will you support the mission of our church this year?** Do not ask for the amount -- just a yes or a no.
- Regardless of the answer, **thank them for their time**, and ask them to follow up with you (or the appropriate people) for more support or answers to questions they have.

Third Small
Group Meeting



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Modeling Stewardship Dialogues: Making the ask

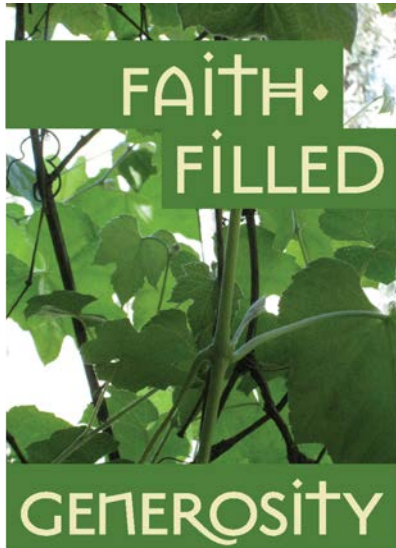
Asking for a gift

Whether you are asking within the context of a pledge campaign, or making a special request for a capital need, an outreach ministry, or other designated purpose, **asking for money is never easy** ... but it doesn't have to be terrifying or impossible.

Focus on your mission. Know that you are doing good work in the world, spirit-filled and prayer-supported. **There is no shame in being bold.**

Rely on your relationship to guide you, look for body language cues, **listen more than speak.**

Be clear about the fundraising need – know the case for fundraising, believe in it, support it with your own time, talent, and treasure.



Third Small
Group Meeting



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Modeling Stewardship Dialogues: Making the ask

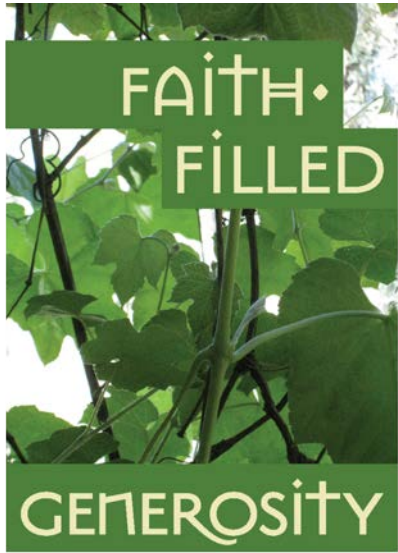
How to make the ask

Susan, this year we are raising more money than ever to fund our youth program, outreach to elders, and to fund our community. **Mary and I made our gift to the campaign, will you join us in supporting the campaign this year?**

Jonathan, my husband and I increased our giving this year because we want to see our congregation grow. **Can you make a stretch gift to the campaign this year?**

Dick and Bill, your giving to our church has been so faithful all these years, and I know this has been a tough year for you. Still, I am asking you to make a gift to our pledge campaign, **no matter the amount.** Will you?

Cindy, you and your family are new to our congregation, **are there any questions I can answer** about why we raise money through pledges or how you can join us?



Third Small
Group Meeting



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Modeling Stewardship Dialogues: Making the ask

Say this

Don't say this

We fund our whole mission

You can designate your gift for specific ministries

Your gift has impact

Your gift keeps the lights on

We pay our staff a living wage so they can raise their families with dignity

Our priest has student loans to pay off!

Every gift matters!

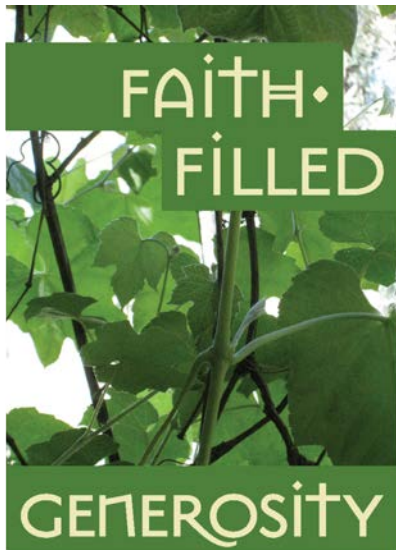
Give 'til it hurts!

Consider proportional giving – making a percentage gift of your income

I give for the tax deduction!

Our assessment supports our sister churches, and theirs support ours

Assessment is our tax to the diocese – can't beat it.



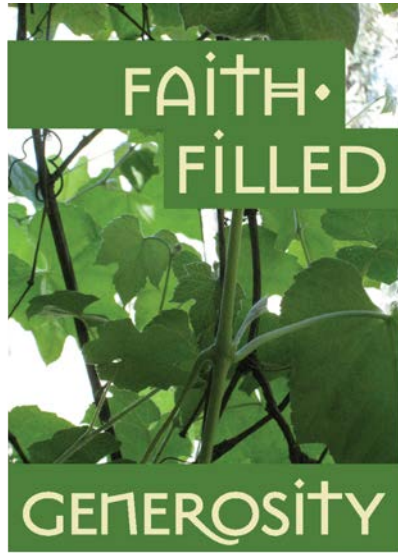
Third Small
Group Meeting



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Year-Round Stewardship Formation

Why not keep these groups going year-round?



- Money Autobiographies
- Story-telling for Stewardship
- The Baptismal Covenant as a statement of fundraising values
- Topical themes throughout the Church Year
- **A mid-year Pledge Campaign review is often a great way to remind people that their pledges are being used well**
 - Update on ministries
 - A word from the treasurer or wardens about the budget
 - Testimonials from people working in ministries or impacted by them

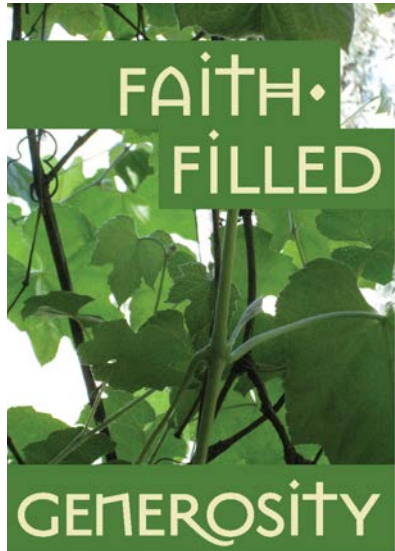
**Other Tools –
Year-Round
Stewardship**



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Spiritual Money Autobiographies

A simple tool to get everyone talking about their relationship to money



- Does God give us anything? If so, what and why?
- What is your happiest childhood memory in connection with money? What is your unhappiest memory? Did you feel rich or poor?
- How has the role of money shifted in your life as you have gained experience?
- How do you feel about your present financial status? Are you generous? Sparing? Do you feel guilty for what you have? Covetous of what others have?
- How would you feel about asking for help if you could not pay your rent or mortgage? How do you feel if others ask for help?
- How do you deal with the knowledge that 2/3 of the world's population is poor?
- How do you feel about giving to your congregation?

**Other Tools –
Year-Round
Stewardship**



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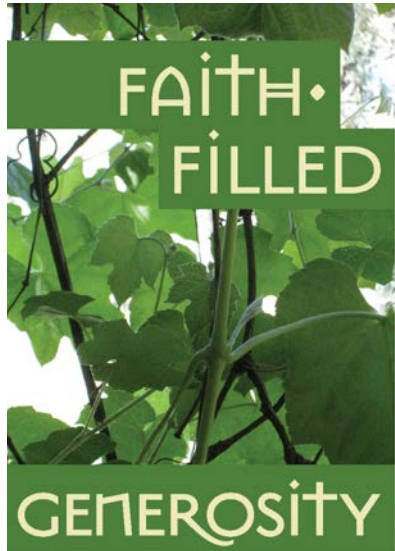
Story-telling – measuring impact of mission

A client's success story – If your programs and services are benefiting people, sharing a client's success story is a great opportunity. After all, these are the people who have directly benefited from a donation that made a program possible. Members will want to hear about positive changes in their lives.

A program staff member's story – Members of your congregation will love hearing from program staff members because they have such a fiery passion for their work. And if you have a difficult time collecting stories from clients, staff members might be able to share their accounts of the program.

A story from a member who pledged– Nothing is more compelling than hearing from someone who has made a financial gift to a ministry. Giving them the opportunity to talk about why they were motivated by this ministry and how they became involved will be inspiring for everyone.

From "The Storytelling Nonprofit"



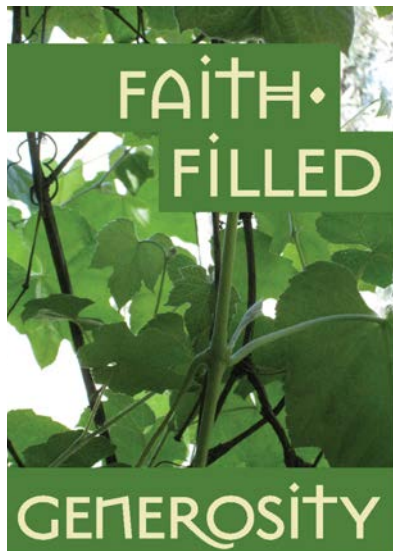
**Other Tools –
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Baptismal Covenant as a statement of fundraising values

- *Continuing in the Apostles Teaching*
 - Bible Study on a parable about money or possessions
- *Persevere in resisting evil, repent and return to the Lord*
 - How do our financial decisions reflect our values? Have we ever made decisions about money that take us away from our faith values? **What do we do when we feel a conflict between our money and our values?**
- *Proclaiming the Good News*
 - When we talk about our giving as a sign of our faith and an action of our values, we invite others into this relationship. **People who give to their congregations are the best evangelists** in stewardship campaigns
- *Seeking and serving Christ in all people*
 - **How does our church serve our neighbors?** Do we raise funds for the care of our neighbors, or is our stewardship focused on our buildings and staff? How do we talk about what we do?
- *Respecting the dignity of all people*
 - **Every gift matters.** Every gift counts. Help everyone to be a grateful giver.

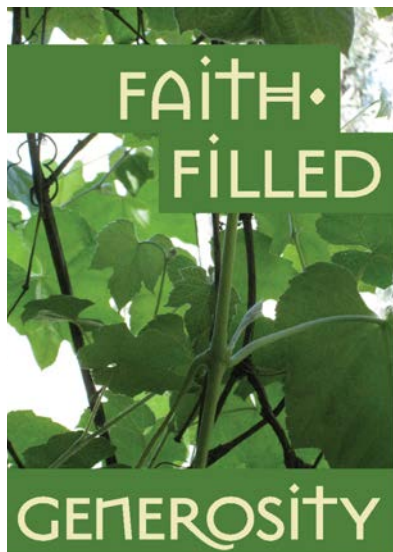


Other Tools –
Year-Round
Stewardship



Keep the Conversation Going Year-Round!

TENS provides seasonal reflections to help keep us focused on stewardship and fundraising themes throughout the Christian Year



Advent: To a world longing for change, we focus on our **gratitude** for all we have received and **communicate our hope** for justice and peace

Christmas: The greatest gifts are the ones we give to each other through our **faithful generosity and abundant love.**

Epiphany: We focus on how we are **Christ's body in the world** as we manifest God in our lives, families, and work

Lent: Dust to dust is a powerful reminder that **planned gifts** are an essential part of faith-based fundraising and giving.

Easter: Our faith and our works are alive, just as Jesus lives. Renewed with joy and refreshed by the waters of Baptism, we can't help but **shout our Alleluias to a world longing for love.**

Pentecost: Our faith scatters us in all directions as we bring **healing, feeding, comfort, teaching, faith, and love** to a hungry world.

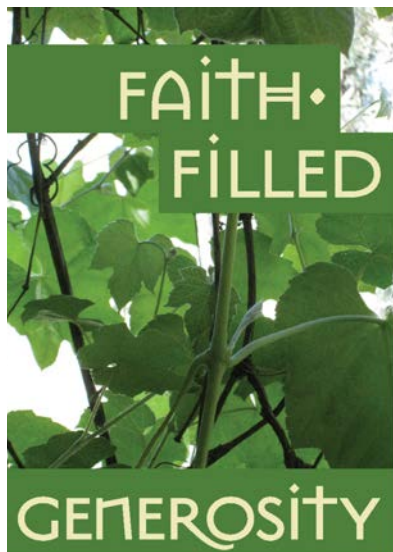
Other Tools –
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Keep the Conversation Going Year-Round!

In addition to the seasons of the Church year, the great feasts and fasts are good times to talk about stewardship. Use these conversation topics in small groups.



The Epiphany: What is the star that guides you in how your ministry? **How does your faith inform your giving?**

The Presentation: When you lift up your eyes to **glimpse the future** of the Church, what do you see?

Ash Wednesday: If you had to give up everything you had, **would you still find yourself rich?**

Rogation Days: What is our commitment to the Earth? How does our stewardship for God's greatest gift to us **inform our generosity?**

Ascension: **What gifts does your church need to prepare** itself for future generations? To serve your neighbors?

Transfiguration: If we truly saw the face of Jesus in each other, **how would we treat our neighbors?** How would we provide for their needs?

All Saints: What are the **lessons about giving and generosity** that you have learned from the saints in your life?

Your Patronal Feast: Who are the people who left legacies and planned gifts to your church? **What will your legacy be?**

**Other Tools –
Year-Round
Stewardship**



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Your Questions or Comments



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TENS 2020 resources <https://www.tens.org/resources/member-resources/>

Username: 1PETER

Password: FOUR:10

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