

Becoming Disciples

March 2019

Leading for Discipleship

Jay Sidebotham

In my ministry as parish priest in the Episcopal Church, I have been both guided and challenged by a question posed by Brian McLaren. Looking at the state of American Christendom, he asked, “Are we a club for the elite who pretend to have arrived or a school for disciples on the way?” The fact is, widespread complacency marks the Episcopal culture, sometimes causing it to resemble a club, a resting place, a destination.

Several years ago, Pope Francis preached that there is no such thing as a stationary Christian. His insight may explain why first Christians were called ‘people of the way.’ That’s a contrast and challenge to the many folks in mainline congregations who wonder what the talk of transformation is all about. Why should they bother? Why should they change? As one congregant commented, “We are spiritually shallow and we are fine with that.”

The heart of the leader is key in vital congregations

In our work with close to 300 congregations, [RenewalWorks](#) has noted five best practice principles that mark vital congregations. The first principle is: Get people moving. Get people to recognize that as individuals they are on a spiritual journey, that they are meant to go deeper and to never stop growing. Other principles include:

- Embedding scripture in the life of the community
- Creating a spirit of ownership and personal responsibility for spiritual growth
- Pastoring the community, engaging with outreach efforts, forging a deeper connection with the neighborhood.

At the center of these first four principles is the most important – the heart of the leader. Getting people moving, creating a culture of discipleship is dependent on the community’s leadership. How does that happen?

First and foremost, the leader must work on his or her own spiritual life. In the 1930’s, Evelyn Underhill wrote the Archbishop of Canterbury to express concern about what she observed among the clergy of her day. She felt compelled to tell him that clergy needed to be called to a “greater interiority, a deeper life of prayer.” She reminded him that God was the interesting thing about

religion and that people were hungry for God. What made her need to remind the archbishop that God was the interesting thing about religion?

Spiritually healthy clergy are able to get people moving

Her words resonate because after decades in parish ministry, I'm struck with how clergy can lose sight of the original call, their first love. Leading a congregation brings out the ADD in all of us, as we simultaneously attend to buildings, finances, personnel concerns, landscaping, cooking, all while we're trying to preach, preside, prepare, pastor and plan. Any hope for vitality in our churches rests with leaders committed single-mindedly to the spiritual growth of the members in those churches. That starts with leaders focused on their own spiritual health and growth. Too often clergy are spiritually depressed, distracted or depleted, losing touch with why they got into the ministry in the first place. Clergy cannot give what they don't have. They cannot share with authenticity what they are not experiencing themselves. Too often, that causes them to lose effectiveness in spiritual leadership. Sometimes they end up looking for an exit strategy.

But that doesn't need to happen. We have discovered spiritual health and vitality in congregations led by clergy who have deepened their own spiritual lives, engaging with scripture to nourish themselves, developing meaningful prayer practices, engaging on their own with ministries of service. When clergy leaders experience that spiritual health, they can share it with the congregation. With humility and transparency, courage and vulnerability, they can lead their flock into a deeper life with God, closer discipleship of Jesus, all empowered by God's Holy Spirit.

We find that clergy leaders who have committed to their own spiritual growth, who are intent on building a culture of discipleship in their congregations, are able to get people moving. And that spiritual leadership is not limited to the clergy. Clergy leading vital, vibrant congregations discover ways for lay leaders to focus on spiritual growth.

Vestry members are spiritual leaders, too

We are frequently asked to lead vestry retreats to help lay leaders understand their role as spiritual leaders in the congregation. Often in the Episcopal culture, vestry members limit their role to monitoring finances and facilities. Those are, of course, vital ministries. But at heart, vestry members are spiritual leaders, leaders of a spiritual community. That concept often triggers a deer-in-the-headlights look. Many vestry members (and other lay leaders) don't feel equipped to be spiritual leaders. Many are not sure of what that would even look like. Some have no interest in such a role. Many have served on boards, corporate or non-profit, and have no idea of how service on the vestry differs from those other kinds of service.

It's been heartening to witness clergy who rise to meet this challenge. One rector begins each monthly vestry meeting with an hour of Bible study and prayer for each other. That leads into a well monitored 90-minute meeting about other issues. Vestry members agree to serve knowing of this commitment. It has transformed the congregation, making vestry service not a depleting, boring series of business meetings but a deep spiritual community. Frankly, that is more time in study and prayer than I was ever able to include in a vestry agenda as a rector, but I share it as aspirational example of how to make a culture shift toward spiritual leadership.

Another rector recognized how ill-equipped her lay leaders were for spiritual leadership, when in other aspects of their lives they were extraordinarily competent. She developed a program called REVIVE, in which a clergy person builds discipleship in lay leaders through small groups focused on scripture, prayer and vocation. We see spiritual depth and vitality in congregations where everyone (clergy, lay leaders, staff) is pulling in the same direction, focused on spiritual growth as the priority for their congregation.

Congregations *can* change

With spiritual growth clearly identified as its priority, congregations are poised to move forward into deeper love of God and neighbor. For many congregations, that movement begins with a common endeavor. One of the most successful programs of engagement is some parish-wide engagement with scripture – for example, the Bible Challenge or the Good Book Club, currently promoted by the Presiding Bishop. Some have focused on teaching prayer and learning about Christian essentials. Others have embraced a new emphasis on outreach, anchored in Jesus' call to reach out to those in need, responding to needs in the community in Jesus' name.

Such efforts begin with leadership committed to discipleship. The heart of the leader matters. It's key to the culture change needed in contemporary congregations. The change won't happen quickly. It may not be easy. It won't happen without intention. But when it happens, the church grows in vitality, which is a wonderful thing to behold. All of it is possible, by God's grace, with God's help.

The Rev. Jay Sidebotham is the Director of RenewalWorks. He also now serves as associate rector at St. James' Parish in Wilmington, NC. Jay comes to this work out of his experience as rector of Church of the Holy Spirit in Lake Forest, IL, where he led the congregation through a period of sustained focus on spiritual growth and renewal. Before coming to Church of the Holy Spirit, he served at St. Bart's, New York City; St. Columba's, Washington, DC; St. Luke's, Durham, NC; and St. Martin's, Providence, RI. He is well known for his cartoons about church life and his animation work on the television series Schoolhouse Rock! For more information about RenewalWorks or about ways clergy are leading for spiritual growth, contact the Rev. Jay Sidebotham at jsidebotham@renewalworks.org or go to the RenewalWorks [website](#).

Resources:

- [Beliefs and Teaching that Engage My Heart: What's Your List?](#) by Jay Sidebotham, ECF Vital Practices blog, October 4, 2016
- [The Leader's Heart](#), an ECF Vital Practices webinar presented by Jay Sidebotham, January 27, 2015
- [Episcopalians on Baptismal Mission](#), an ECF Vital Practices tool
- [Can the Church Learn from McDonalds?](#) by Alan Bentrup, ECF Vital Practices blog, August 1, 2017

Transitioning to a Network of Missional Communities

John Maher

In 2012, after 33 years of full-time ministry, I retired and began taking my clergy pension. I was not ready to completely stop parish ministry, but I liked the idea of no longer working full-time, and my wife and I wanted to move closer to both of our families. In the winter of 2013, I was called as half-time vicar of St. Francis, Manakin Sabot, in the Diocese of Virginia. The position filled both of my goals – to work half-time and to be closer to our families.

St. Francis at that time was 12 years old. The congregation had peaked at around 90 and then fallen back to 40 members after some conflict and the move to a small ranch house renovated for worship. After about a year of getting to know one another we set our minds on coming up with a new long-range plan.

The plan the congregation had adopted during the search phase included becoming a very large parish with multiple staff and a substantial building. A theme I kept hearing from parishioners, however, was that they loved being a church of around 40 people. So I challenged the vestry with this question, “If you love being a church of 40, why did you plan to become something you do not want to be?” It turned out, they thought it was expected that all churches would grow to become large.

I told them they were faithful in the planning process during the search. I also told them that they were completely right about 40 people being a good size, that it was, in fact, the perfect size. Then I gave them a further challenge: “Let’s grow by multiplying groups of 40 as often as we can.”

A different kind of church

They agreed to go in that direction, and now the challenge was on me as well as the congregation. Multiplying groups of forty, or missional communities as some call them, was going to be new to all of us. I knew enough to know it would be a different kind of church than any of us were used to. It would take an emphasis on discipleship instead of attendance, developing leaders instead of managing volunteers, building missional communities instead of programs, and learning to multiply ministries and groups instead of adding people to what we already have. We started walking down a very different and challenging path, and we are still on that path today.

We have developed three missional communities since 2013. Each has its own mission focus and arranges worship, fellowship and outreach around that focus.

- The Parke’s mission focus is to meet and serve people in their community, the Parke. They have been meeting now for four years, and have grown to 20 people, 14 of whom are not members of St. Francis. They look for neighbors in the community who are in need and see what can be done. Currently, they are forming a bereavement committee for those in the neighborhood who have lost a family member.
- The Symphony’s mission focus is to serve the residents and staff of the Symphony Assisted Living facility nearby. Twice a month, a team from this missional community leads worship

there on a Sunday morning. They visit residents at other times during the month. When one of the residents died, they were called upon to help lead the funeral.

- The Garden's mission focus is those people in our county who are hungry and use the county food pantry. Fresh produce is grown for the food pantry, and some members of the garden volunteer there, so they can get to know those who are receiving help. The idea is to do more with those whom they are serving and not just do things for them.

Growth in discipleship and mission

Each group has seen a deepening of the discipleship of its members. The ministry of these groups has broadened the influence of St. Francis in our community far beyond what it was before. Each has its specific challenges. Each faces the challenge of how to multiply by developing new leaders.

One of the most powerful dynamics in becoming disciples in this work is paying attention to the mission focus. When a group is committed to reaching and serving a certain group of people, a neighborhood or an affinity group, and its members organize as a group to equip one another for that mission focus, each will grow as a disciple of Jesus. It is my task as the vicar to keep equipping the leaders to live a life of discipleship so that they, in turn, can encourage and equip their group members to likewise live a life of discipleship, pursuing the mission that God has given them.

It's a challenging way to "do church." It's also very fulfilling. I am thankful to God that I can pursue this kind of ministry in these final years of parish leadership.

The Rev. Dr. John F. Maher, Jr. is vicar of St. Francis, Manakin Sabot, in the Diocese of Virginia. He has been married to his wife, Carol, for 44 years. She has been a public school art teacher, a pastoral counselor and conference director. They have two children and one grandchild.

Resources:

- [Taking Church Out into the Community](#) by David Rice and Anna Carmichael, Vestry Papers, November 2018
- [Love Listens](#) by Alan Bentrup, ECF Vital Practices blog, July 2, 2018
- [Sharing the Bounty of God's Garden](#) by Bill Eakins, Vestry Papers, November 2018
- [Small Groups, Big Impact](#) by John Adler, Vestry Papers, July 2014
- [The Resurgent Church](#) by Peter Strimer, ECF Vital Practices blog, February 17, 2011

What Is Discipleship?

Bill Campbell

Too often, when we talk of discipleship, we turn to the root word "discipline," or we talk about the suffering servant, or the things we must give up in order to devote our lives to Jesus. These things are important, but they are not the only image of discipleship that our Church needs to carry. The life of a disciple of Jesus is one of love, charity and hope. Not a perpetual Lent!

Rob Bell has an interesting video series that gained popularity in the early 2000s called “Nooma.” One of his videos, “[Dust](#),” discusses discipleship in terms that many of us might not normally consider. It’s just over 15 minutes long and worth a watch, if only so that we can share a common language for this conversation. Rob Bell is not everyone’s cup of tea, but this idea of carrying Jesus’ dust is fascinating, and I think important, for how we think about discipleship in the 21[1] century.

Living like Jesus

Can this child of God do what I do? Jesus continually asks this question of us. And, importantly, Jesus answers it as well – *Yes, you can be like me. You can be the hands of God on this earth.* Jesus tells us that our faith can move mountains, it can enable us to walk across the stormy seas of our life. Let’s not dismiss this as fodder for Hallmark cards. Let’s agree that when Jesus tells us something about our abilities, he means it.

It is these encounters with Jesus that we need to focus on. It is impossible to become a disciple of Jesus if you have never had an encounter with him. In essence, discipleship is responding to an encounter with Jesus by modeling your life after Jesus. Like all things in life, the details make all the difference. What does an encounter with Jesus look like, feel like, sound like? you may ask. It’s difficult to nail down. There are as many descriptions of an encounter with Jesus as there are people who have encountered Jesus. What is the best way to model my life after him? Well...if I had an answer that would satisfy everyone’s theology, lifestyle, culture and background, I would be living a very different life.

Proximity to Jesus does matter though. The charge is, “May you be covered in the dust of your rabbi, Jesus.” That the dust that falls off your teacher would wind up on your feet, your clothes, in your hair and that you might breathe it in. We not only have to have some sort of encounter moment, where we acknowledge Jesus in our life, we then have to find a way keep up with the movement that follows the moment! Too often, we think of a life devoted to Jesus where he is some sort of frozen leader that lived and died, and we know everything there is to know about him. This is a heresy. Jesus is risen. The Holy Spirit is with us as our guide. Being a disciple means movement. It means keeping up.

And good luck keeping up. It’s my experience that Jesus moves fast. The Holy Spirit pushes and pulls at the same time. God is still in the creation business and is doing a new thing and wants you to get the work done!

Stop, pray and listen

This is a good time to address the dual (dueling?) nature of a life in Christ. I do believe that Jesus moves fast. I do believe that being aware of the movement of God is vital. I am also painfully aware that the best way to stay attuned to the movement of Christ is to find a way to stop, get quiet and listen. Silence, meditation, centering prayer, whatever you call it, the end result is the same – God is yanking at you hard, God has faith in you and wants you to get to work, God’s directions come in the still small voice. I once worked for a Japanese chef who seemed impossible to understand. Things happen so fast in a kitchen. It’s hot, fast, hectic and I loved it. This guy was adamant that if I

couldn't understand him, it was my fault. He was right. I found that when I allowed the insanity to wash over me and put my focus on Chef Chen, I could hear him, understand him and deliver.

My own experience isn't nearly as interesting as Martin Luther's or Bishop Desmond Tutu's. Luther has been credited with saying, "I have so much to do that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer." In our own time, Bishop Tutu has changed the world through action, activism and prayer. He moved quickly with Jesus and yet spent hours each day in prayer. Look to the spiritual mentors in your life. Chances are that they believe in prayer and take their prayer life seriously. Our friends at [RenewalWorks](#) have data on this actually. They know that people are far more likely to deepen their life with Christ the more they pray and read the Bible.

Just do it

So, I have some sage wisdom for you. Go and be a disciple. Go and talk to the people you think are already disciples, and ask them where they found Jesus. Chances are you are an Episcopalian, so I'm not asking you to go to the store and ask people there if they have met Jesus. I am asking you to go to your faith community and ask your faith leaders about living a life devoted to being more like Jesus. I am suggesting that a life in Jesus is exciting, wild, stable and peaceful.

God has already declared a great faith in you. Jesus has called you. The Holy Spirit is pushing and pulling you. I hope you get covered in the dust of the Trinity, I hope you get filthy in it. I really hope that our walks with Christ intersect and that we get to greet each other on the road. I'll stop and pray with you – I believe it helps!

Bill Campbell is the Executive Director of [Forma | The Network for Christian Formation](#). He is now a program director at ECF through a collaboration between ECF and Forma that combines the best discipleship practices and networks of Forma with the amazing leadership resources and networks of ECF.

Resources:

- [What is Episcopal Evangelism?](#) by Alan Bentrup, ECF Vital Practices blog, August 10, 2018
- [There's Still Time](#) by Linda Buskirk, ECF Vital Practices blog, March 23, 2018
- [Transform Your Congregation: Read the Bible](#) by Scott Gunn, Vestry Papers, November 2012
- [Discipleship in the Episcopal Church Today](#) by Jay Sidebotham, Vestry Papers, May 2017
- [The Cost and Benefits of Discipleship](#) by Greg Syler, ECF Vital Practices blog, September 23, 2015

The Gift of Giving

Margarita Gomez

For the past twenty-six years, I have been a member of Trinity Church in Los Angeles, California. Before that, in the 1980s, I was an accountant in the diocese of El Salvador for seven years. During that time, the Rev. Luis Serrano, other members of the Episcopal Church and I were incarcerated by

the state authorities. They said that the Church was a terrorist entity because we had given preferential treatment to the poor. A group from the Episcopal Church Center, with the help of the Rev. Canon Robert Brooks, came to El Salvador and with their help we were released. Those were very tough times, and we continued to receive threats after our imprisonment. I left the Church and later, El Salvador.

After some time in New York, I went back to my country, but it was never the same. Shortly after returning to El Salvador, the threats resumed. I was also going through a divorce and I wasn't well. My sister recommended that I go to my brother's home in Los Angeles. When I arrived in California, I attended a church where a priest I knew worked. Because it was far from where I was living, he helped me find a closer church, and that is how I ended up at Trinity.

The Rev. Mac Thigpen, the rector of Trinity, didn't speak Spanish, but he understood the importance of Latino/Hispanic ministry. He saw that I attended mass but didn't take communion. Because I had grown up in the Roman Catholic Church, I was tormented by the sin of divorce. With the help of someone who spoke Spanish, Rev. Mac asked why I didn't take communion. When I told him that it was because I was divorced, he explained that I was all right with God, and that I could take communion. That is how he opened the doors of the Church for me. Later, he asked if I wanted to be an acolyte, and that was the beginning of my service at Trinity.

At that time, Trinity's English-speaking congregation was large. At the same time, many Latino/Hispanic children began coming to the church, and I had the idea of starting a daycare. I called it a 'daycare,' but it was actually a Sunday school where we taught the children about God. I had a calendar for rotating the teachers so no one would feel tired or stuck. When that first group of children grew older, we decided to offer first communion classes for them, as was customary in our Roman Catholic tradition. As the Latino group grew larger, the English-speaking group became smaller.

When the Rev. Anna Olson arrived in 2002 as priest in charge, the Latino/Hispanic congregation realized that Trinity was Episcopalian and not Roman Catholic. Many left, but some people returned later. Anna trained me to become the congregation's senior warden.

During Father Mac's time, members of the English-speaking congregation with more substantial resources had maintained the church's finances. We didn't hear much about stewardship. I was helping with Christian education and other ministries in the Church, and I wasn't ready to make a pledge. When Anna arrived, we began hearing more about stewardship, and as senior warden, I learned about the church's finances.

It is not easy to feel the desire to pledge, because putting money in the plate every Sunday is easier and a smaller commitment. I was out of work for a while and wasn't able to save, but I survived by preparing and selling food. I saw that God didn't take what I needed and always provided for me and my daughter. Since I was the senior warden, I asked myself: "Why not make a pledge to God?"

When I began pledging it was because I wanted to thank God. Even though I have had some hardship, I have never lacked a place to live, food or clothing. I pledge because I am so thankful for what God has done in my life.

When the Rev. Liz Munoz became Trinity's rector in 2006, she trained me to lead baptism and confirmation classes and sent me for training in Godly Play. Under her leadership, I was elected treasurer because the congregation needed a person in that role who spoke Spanish. As treasurer, I could explain the financial reports, expenses, budgets and administration to the congregation. Financial reports and teaching about the church's financial needs helps the congregation understand why their pledges are needed.

As a daughter of God, I am grateful and I passionate about continuing the work of Jesus. The talent and time that we dedicate to a church is very important, and we should not focus on the financial aspect alone in teaching about stewardship. If we do, we lose sight of the main vision, that the Church is Christ and his teachings, and we must try to follow his path.

I have learned that when talking with members of the congregation of all ages about stewardship, the most important thing is to be transparent about the finances of the church. Also important are quarterly reports that explain the church's situation and the way money is handled in language that everyone can understand. It is important to educate the people about how their offerings and pledges are used. When they are aware of a situation, they want to help and they will donate.

Personal examples are important in promoting stewardship. I invite people to share stories that show their gratitude for the help they receive from God. I also read Bible passages that talk about giving. I remind the people that giving is a gift. Let us remember, too, not only to talk about stewardship during the stewardship campaign, but also throughout the year. Because I think everyone should have the opportunity to give, I invite the children in my daycare to give a coin, and that can begin their pledging.

My relationship with Jesus has grown a lot since I began pledging. The truth is, that when I was incarcerated and facing death I was greatly inspired to work with young people and children. God has invited me to give more, to be grateful and to commit to give still more. This commitment is with God. When I offer my pledge, I never think, "Oh, this money will be used for this or that." Instead, I say, "Thank you Lord for all you give me and for giving me the gift of giving!"

***Margarita Gomez Posada** started her life in the Episcopal Church as an accountant in the diocese of El Salvador. She loves to learn and tries to attend and learn from as many church conferences as possible. Margarita is trained in Godly Play and hopes to take what she has learned to other churches around her diocese.*

Resources:

- [Stewardship, Discipleship](#) by Linda Buskirk, ECV Vital Practices blog, September 7, 2018
- [A Ministry of Invitation](#) by Nancy Davidge, Vestry Papers, November 2016
- [Financial Transparency](#) by James Jordan, Vestry Papers, September 2018
- [Campaign of Generosity](#) by Victor Conrado, Vestry Papers, September 2015
- [Mission-Based Budgeting, A Loving, Liberating, Life-Giving Process](#) by Phyllis Jones, Vestry Papers, November 2018

Mission-Based Budgeting: A Loving, Liberating, Life-Giving Process (Part 2)

Phyllis Jones

In [Part 1](#) of this series, we focused on changing the conversation around budgets and the types of mission-based budgets. In this second article, we focus on the process of creating a budget that is rooted in mission.

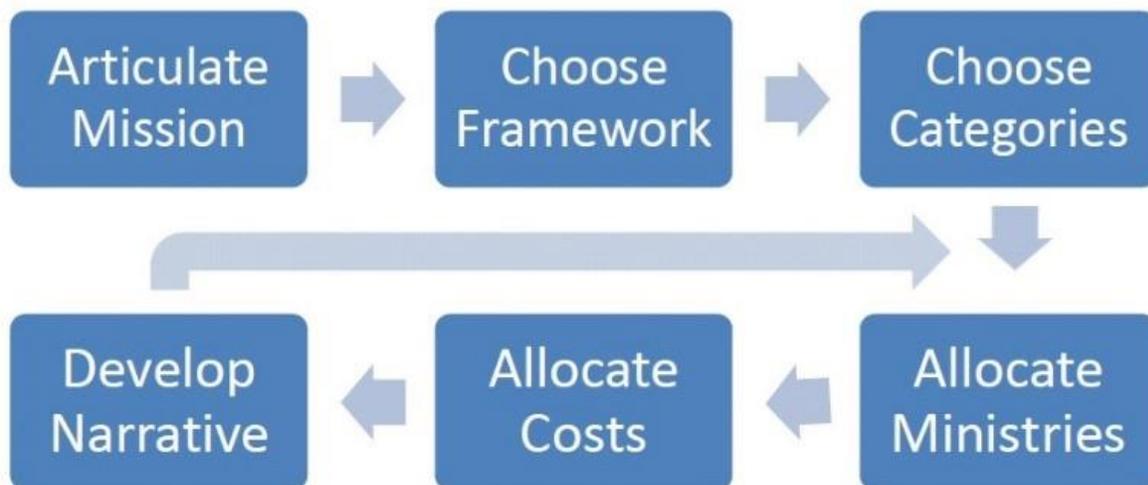
[The Way of Love; Becoming Beloved Community; the Five Marks of Mission](#); Evangelism, Racial Reconciliation & Justice; and Environmental Stewardship. All are expressions of how we live into what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. That makes them great examples of meaningful frameworks for translating our traditional budgets into mission-based budgets, so we can evaluate how well we put our money where our mission is.

At the end of Mission-Based Budgeting, Part I, we left you with a list of six basic things you'd need to get started:

1. A clearly articulated sense of mission.
2. A framework by which you can evaluate how you live into your sense of mission.
3. A list of broad categories, consistent across your framework, into which it's helpful to group costs.
4. A listing of all the ministries in which you engage (worship, outreach, formation, etc.), community programs with which you partner and groups and ministries you support.
5. Your conventional, cost-center/line-item budget.
6. A committed group of staff and people in leadership positions willing to engage in the process of transforming that dry, conventional budget into one that reaches people's hearts through the stories it tells. Ideally, at least one of that group will be fluent with spreadsheets.

Ready? Set? Let's go!

Going With the Flow



Step 1 – Articulating Our Sense of Mission

We have one purpose: To form people as disciples of Jesus Christ so that they can participate in God's mission of reconciliation in the world. – The Rt. Rev. William H. "Chip" Stokes, Bishop of the Diocese of New Jersey; Diocesan Leadership Retreat Presentation (June, 2018)

Know Your Story, Live It Boldly – tagline representing our consistent diocesan theme and our commitment to Christian Formation and Discipleship

In the Diocese of New Jersey, these foundational principles of discipleship form the basis for our sense of mission and guide our communications and resourcing priorities.

Step 2 – Choosing Our Framework

We chose the [Five Marks of Mission](#) as our missional framework to help us evaluate and tell the quantitative and narrative stories of our response to our call to mission. Some other possible examples include:

- the [Baptismal Covenant](#)
- Worship, Formation, Pastoral Care, Outreach, Congregational Development (or some variation of these)
- Worshipping, Learning, Caring, Reaching Out

Step 3 – Choosing Our Categories

To create more clarity and stronger links between the ministries that help us live into our missional framework and the various costs associated with them, we developed consistent cost categories that we use across all five missional areas. You will see them in our Sample Mission-Based Budget resource, linked below.

Step 4 – Allocating Ministries

We started by gathering our diocesan staff together, putting newsprint up on the walls with headings for each one of the five marks of mission and listing which ministries fell under each mark. Many ministries fell under more than one mark. Then we expanded the conversation to other heads of committees, commissions and task forces with budget line items. Just liberating our minds to this new culture of thought released an amazing amount of creative energy in the room, right from the beginning. The results of these conversations became the basis for our graphic “narrative” sections of the Sample Mission-based Budget.

Step 5 – Allocating Costs

Here we took the information gathered in Step 4 and used it to create a strategy for allocating each line item of our conventional budget in a meaningful way, literally connecting the ministries with the resources provided to support them. For example:

- Our ministry leaders looked at which of their activities fell under which marks of mission and made thoughtful allocations of program costs.
- Our program staff looked at how they support the ministries listed under each of the marks of mission and made equally thoughtful allocations of their time.
- We used those allocations to blend and pro-rate our support staff's time as well as some of our other administrative costs, since those costs follow the mission and ministry implemented by the program staff.
- We looked at how our facilities at Diocesan House are used by the ministries and used that data to allocate facilities costs.

Here's where your spreadsheet guru comes in, using this information to break down your conventional line items into component categories and missional areas and then re-assembling them in a format that expresses how you resource the ministries given in your narrative. You can see and download the linked spreadsheets we used to accomplish that [here](#), and we plan to offer a training webinar in early 2019 that will, among other things, explore this part of the process in more detail with hands-on exercises.

Step 6 – Developing Our Narrative

We chose a graphic presentation over a simple narrative as being more engaging and succinct, choosing from thousands available at minimal cost with resolution so good that we could make crystal clear 24" x 36" poster-board displays. Combined with the solid financial presentation, this makes a powerful connection between mission and resourcing.

And Beyond

Each year, we now require each of our groups making a request for budgetary funding to [include with their request a narrative about how their ministry area helps us live into one or more of the five marks of mission](#). This helps us update our ministry allocations among the five marks, and together with input from the leadership, allocate program costs accordingly. We also evaluate whether we need the allocation of program staff costs and, by extension, administrative support costs and facilities costs. But most importantly, this process expands the Kingdom conversations and helps keep them going!

In Summary

The results speak for themselves.

Our [conventional budget format](#) is clearly still necessary as a starting point and also to maintain the comfort level needed by our traditionalists who may need to reference specific line item costs. It helps provide assurance that the numbers in the mission-based budget can be traced back to a familiar framework.

Our [mission-based budget format](#), on the other hand, enables the Kingdom conversations that help us evaluate our impact as disciples of Jesus Christ, asking questions like: Where do we see God moving? How are we following Jesus Christ out into the world? Are we allocating our resources in alignment with that sense of mission? Do we need to adjust? And all of a sudden, our repetitive budget reviews morph from exercises in boredom to powerful tools for culture change!

Canon Phyllis Jones was appointed COO of the Diocese of New Jersey in early 2017 after serving as the diocese's CFO since 2010. In addition to having oversight of the finances of the diocese, she works closely with Bishop Chip Stokes to support and resource the vestries and people of their congregations in their ministries as they seek to join God in his mission throughout the diocese, the Church and the world. She and Bishop Stokes were among the early adopters of the Project Resource holistic financial stewardship curriculum developed by ECF, the College for Bishops and the Development Office of the Episcopal Church. She serves on the Board of Trustees for the Association of Episcopal Deacons and was recently appointed as Treasurer for Province II. Her passion for resourcing mission and developing young Christian leaders in under-resourced communities finds expression in deep, long-standing Board and development relationships with UrbanPromise Ministries and its affiliate, UrbanPromise International. In 2011, she co-founded UrbanPromise Trenton. She has called St. Matthew's Church in Pennington, NJ, her parish home for 45 years, and lives in Titusville, NJ, with her husband of 35 years, Mick Jones.

Resources:

- [Mission-Based Budgeting: A Loving, Liberating, Life-Giving Process](#) by Phyllis Jones, Vestry Papers, November 2018
- [Asset Mapping as Evangelism](#) by Tamara Plummer, Vestry Papers, May 2017
- [Facing Financial Uncertainty: Testing and Retesting the Budget](#) by Greg Syler, ECF Vital Practices blog, April 27, 2018
- [Narrative Budget Template](#), an ECF Vital Practices tool submitted by Lisa Meeder Turnbull
- [Radical Budgeting](#) by Anna Olson, ECF Vital Practices blog, June 4, 2013
- [Create a Sound Parish Budget](#) by Craig Bossi, Vestry Papers, July 2009

El don de dar

Margarita Gomez

Por los últimos 26 años, he sido miembro de la Iglesia de la Trinidad en Los Ángeles, California. Antes de eso, en los años 80, fui contadora por siete años en la diócesis de El Salvador. Durante ese tiempo, el Rvdo. Luis Serrano, otras personas de la Iglesia Episcopal y yo fuimos encarceladas por las fuerzas estatales. Decían que la Iglesia era terrorista porque habíamos hecho una opción preferencial para los pobres. Un grupo de personas de la Iglesia Episcopal de Estados Unidos, con la ayuda del Rvdo. Canónigo Robert Brooks, fue a El Salvador y con su ayuda fuimos liberados. Fueron tiempos muy duros y difíciles y seguimos recibiendo amenazas después de nuestro encarcelamiento. Me fui de la iglesia y posteriormente de El Salvador.

Después de un tiempo en Nueva York, regresé a mi país, pero nunca fue igual. Al poco tiempo de estar en El Salvador, volvieron las amenazas. Además, estaba pasando por un divorcio y no estaba bien. Mi hermana me recomendó que me fuera a California a casa de un hermano. Cuando llegué a California, asistí a una iglesia de un sacerdote conocido. Era muy lejos de donde vivía, así que el sacerdote me ayudó a encontrar una iglesia cerca de mi casa y así llegué a la Iglesia Trinidad.

El rector de la Iglesia Trinidad, el Rvdo. Mac Thigpen, no hablaba español, pero entendía la importancia del ministerio latino/hispano. El Rvdo. Mac vio que yo iba a misa pero no comulgaba. Como me había criado en la Iglesia Católica Romana me atormentaba el pecado del divorcio. Con la ayuda de alguien que hablaba español, el padre Mac me preguntó por qué no comulgaba. Cuando le dije que era porque estaba divorciada el padre me explicó que estaba bien con Dios y que podía comulgar. Así fue como me abrió la puerta a la iglesia. Después, me preguntaron si quería ser acólito y así comenzó mi servicio en la Iglesia Trinidad.

En ese entonces, la feligresía anglohablante era grande. Al mismo tiempo, al grupo de latinos/hispanos comenzaron a llegar muchos niños y tuve la idea de iniciar una guardería. Yo la llamaba guardería, pero realmente era una escuela dominical en la que enseñábamos a los niños sobre Dios. Yo tenía un calendario de rotación de maestras para que ninguna se sintiera cansada ni atada. Cuando ese grupo de niños creció, decidimos empezar a dar clases de primera comunión, según nuestra costumbre católica romana. Mientras que el grupo latino crecía, el grupo de habla inglesa disminuía.

Cuando llegó la Rvda. Anna Olson en 2002 como sacerdote encargada, la feligresía latina/hispana se dio cuenta de que la iglesia era episcopal y no católica romana. Muchas personas se fueron, pero varias regresaron con el tiempo. En ese entonces, la Rvda. Anna me entrenó para ser guardiana mayor.

Durante el tiempo del Padre Mac, muchos integrantes de la feligresía anglohablante tenían muchos recursos y mantenían las finanzas de la iglesia. No se oía mucho sobre la mayordomía. Yo estaba ayudando con la educación cristiana y otros ministerios en la iglesia, y no estaba preparada para dar un donativo. Cuando llegó la Rvda. Anna comenzamos a saber más sobre la mayordomía, y como guardiana mayor, aprendí sobre las finanzas de la iglesia.

No es fácil llegar a sentir el deseo de dar una promesa, porque poner dinero los domingos en el platillo es más fácil y un menor compromiso. Estuve sin trabajo por un tiempo y no podía ahorrar, pero sobrevivía preparando y vendiendo comida. Vi que Dios no me quitaba lo que necesitaba y siempre proveía para mí y mi hija. Como era guardiana mayor me pregunté, ¿por qué no voy a darle a Dios una promesa?

Cuando comencé a hacer mi promesa fue porque quería agradecerle a Dios. A pesar de haber pasado penurias, nunca me faltó un techo, ni comida ni ropa. Doy mi promesa porque estoy tan agradecida por lo que Dios hizo en mi vida.

Cuando la Rvda. Liz Muñoz vino a ser la rectora de la Iglesia Trinidad en 2006, me preparó para dar pláticas de bautizo y confirmación y me ayudó a capacitarme en Jugando Junto a Dios (Godly Play). Bajo su liderazgo, me eligieron como tesorera porque sintieron que necesitaban un tesorero que

hablara español. Como tesorera, podía explicar a la feligresía los informes financieros, gastos, presupuestos y la administración. Los informes financieros y enseñar a la feligresía las necesidades de la iglesia es una manera de ayudar a la congregación a entender por qué se necesitan sus promesas.

Como hija de Dios, siento mucho agradecimiento y deseo fervientemente continuar la obra de Jesús. También son muy importantes los talentos y el tiempo que damos a una Iglesia, y no debemos basarnos únicamente en el aspecto económico cuando enseñamos sobre la mayordomía. Si lo hacemos, perdemos la visión principal de que la Iglesia es Cristo y sus enseñanzas y que debemos tratar de seguir su camino.

Ha aprendido que, al hablar con miembros de la feligresía de todas las edades sobre la mayordomía, lo más importante es ser transparente con las finanzas de la iglesia. Es importante presentar informes cada cuatro meses para dar a conocer la situación de la iglesia y cómo se maneja el dinero de una manera que la gente pueda entender. Es importante educar a la gente sobre cómo se usan sus ofrendas y promesas. Cuando la gente está al tanto de una situación quiere ayudar y da.

Es muy importante darles ejemplos personales para promover la mayordomía. Invito a diferentes personas a compartir sus historias de agradecimiento por la ayuda que han recibido de Dios. Leo pasajes de la Biblia en los que se habla de dar. Les recuerdo que el dar es un don. Recordemos que no solo se debe hablar de la mayordomía durante la campaña de mayordomía sino todo el año. Porque creo que todas las personas deben tener la oportunidad de dar, yo invito a mis estudiantes, a los niños, a que den una moneda, y así comienzan a dar sus promesas.

Mi relación con Jesús ha crecido mucho desde que comencé a dar mi promesa. La verdad es, que cuando estaba encarcelada y enfrentando la muerte me inspiraré mucho a trabajar con jóvenes y niños. Dios me invitó a dar más, a estar agradecida y comprometerme más. Ese compromiso es con Dios. Cuando doy mi promesa nunca pienso, "Oh este dinero va para esto o para lo otro." En cambio digo "¡Gracias, Señor, por todo lo que me das y por el don de dar!"

***Margarita Gómez Posada** comenzó su vida en la Iglesia Episcopal como contadora en la diócesis de El Salvador. A ella le encanta aprender y trata de asistir y aprender de tantas conferencias de la Iglesia como sea posible. Margarita está entrenada en Jugando Junto a Dios (Godly Play) y espera llevar lo que ha aprendido a otras iglesias alrededor de su diócesis.*

Recursos:

- [Actitud de Gratitud](#) de Demi Prentiss, Vestry Papers, septiembre 2014
- [Vivir la mayordomía](#), un webinar ECF de Wendy Pineda y el Rvdo. Alejandro S. Montes, agosto 22, 2017
- [El presupuesto impulsado a través de la misión](#), una herramienta de ECF Vital Practices
- [Hablando de la Mayordomía](#) de Miguel Escobar, ECF Vital Practices blog, mayo 24, 2011
- [El Futuro o el Hoy](#) de Juan Ángel Monge, Vestry Papers, septiembre 2011