



Vital Practices

for leading congregations

Why Give?

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Why We Give

BY NANCY DAVIDGE

“Thriving churches focus on transformation of life – the personal journey of faith – and on mission[s] in the community.”

Tom Ehrich

Good things are happening at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Bellingham, Washington. Their church family is growing. Their children’s ministry is growing. As are their adult formation programs. And, as the church has grown, so have opportunities to bring Christ into the local community.

Better still, church members know about these ministries, thanks in large part to lay leaders willing to lay the foundation for, and do the initial work of collecting what they call “some of God’s bountiful blessings” that result from a life of stewardship. At St. Paul’s, stewardship is a journey, it’s about life, and it is seen as

the way to God.

These good things didn’t just happen. They’ve been part of an intentional process of rebuilding following a split in the congregation seven years ago. The story is a familiar one: Differences over Episcopal theology led to the then priest and a number of parishioners electing to leave. What was different was there was no fight over the church building. Friendships and bonds of affection remained between former and continuing members. And, Charles Whitmore, the assisting priest continued in his role, providing a calm and non-anxious presence for the remaining members and preparing them for new clergy leadership.

Kathy Mintz, a newer member of the church, who serves on the vestry and finance committee, describes the split as “a crack that allowed for new growth.”

With that growth came many, like Kathy, who were from a different – or no previous – faith tradition. In California, Kathy’s home prior to her move north, she worshipped at a Christian Missionary Alliance church in Los Angeles. When she couldn’t find a similar church home in Bellingham, she began to look for another. St. Paul’s came the closest to what she left behind.

“The first year I was at St. Paul’s I attended their ‘generations of generosity’ stewardship event,” Kathy recalled. “It was their use of scripture that let me know that these were a people who were serious about their lives of stewardship.”

How did this come about?

Following the split, the Episcopal Diocese of Olympia sent priest Jonathan Weldon, to guide the congregation in their search for a new rector. They later called him as their priest.

Grounded in the belief that the Church is renewed when all of its members recognize that they are commissioned for compassionate ministry in Christ’s name through the vows of Holy Baptism, Fr. Jonathan believes the work of the clergy is to support those ministries. With members of the St. Paul’s community in need of healing, Fr. Jonathan and Fr. Chuck set

out to rebuild a transformative church, offering support and guidance to members committed to strengthening their faith and supporting each other on our spiritual journeys.

This approach might best be described by St Paul’s mission statement:

Gathered by the Holy Spirit, we worship God and, transformed by Christ’s love, we go forth into the world to love and serve with joy.

Challenges remain

As the church was experiencing growth and a new vitality, it was also facing challenges related to this growth as well as financial support for its ministries. Many of the newer members were from different faith traditions and unfamiliar with the Episcopal practice of tithing and an annual pledge campaign.

Recognizing the need to consider and reflect on these challenges, the vestry invited Andrea McMillin, a priest then serving on the diocesan team of congregational development consultants to work with them during their 2014 retreat. Conversation centered on visioning related to what St. Paul’s could be and what was holding it back. Three areas of focus emerged: welcome, accountability,

and effective communication.

Building on their commitment to effective communication, for the 2014 pledge campaign, the vestry identified three specific ways funds raised from pledges would be used. This information became a centerpiece of campaign messaging, from letters to messages from the pulpit. It worked. Pledges increased.

Next steps

Building on the belief the annual appeal would be strengthened by adopting a narrative budget, Fr. Jonathan introduced this approach to the finance committee in the summer of 2015. Their silence spoke volumes.

At the next month’s meeting, Fr. Jonathan tried again, this time offering a detailed example. He also shared his idea and the example with the vestry, stressing the advantages of using a more descriptive process to help people see their pledge dollars at work.

As Kathy recalls, the message was “If we want transformative lives, we need to talk about the transformational aspects of growth.” And the way members’ pledges support this work. She volunteered to help.

Guided by Fr. Chuck's vision of a detailed 'state of the church' report showing not only how funds were used but also all of the various ministries taking place, an approach began to take shape. Central to this process was finding a way to *show* these ministries, to connect giving with the blessings that result from a life of stewardship.

Presenting this information as a narrative *story* rather than a narrative budget, sprung from a conversation Kathy had with diocesan canon for stewardship and development, Lance Ousley. "He introduced me to the posters All Saints Episcopal Church in Pasadena created for their congregation's 'Your Pledge Dollars at Work' campaign and also shared samples of a similar approach used by a Congregational church in South Carolina."

Parish webmaster Ron Weitnauer soon joined Kathy and Fr. Chuck in this ministry, bringing his expertise in communications and marketing.

Collecting the 'blessings'

The biggest hurdle in this process was collecting the data or what Kathy describes as 'God's bountiful blessings.' Recognizing the value of inviting all of the ministry leaders into this process, Fr.

Jonathan and Fr. Chuck extended a written invitation, inviting them to join this journey of discovering and sharing the many ways St. Paul's was engaged in transformation both within and outside of the church's walls.

Kathy visited each ministry group and described the process of collecting data related to the work of a particular group. There were many questions and some resistance. And then, transformation began to take place within these ministry groups. Members began to think about their ministry's role, discussing their purpose, thinking about or naming objectives, evaluating 'why' they approached their ministry in a certain way, and in some groups, making changes as a result of this self evaluation.

Sharing the story

As Kathy was collecting data, Ron began to think about how to present it visually. "You can't assume that the parish knows what is going on. We have grown quickly, and outside of a few dozen very active members, most simply do not know."

His solution? "As you know, the first thing Episcopalians ask each other is 'what service do you go to?' So, I went to the 7:45 am service, which is a lot of our older

parishioners, and asked around. Nobody knew that in the middle of the 10:30 service 25-30 little kids come streaming down the aisle from the Godly Play classes. A few years ago there were less than 10 kids in the program. We cancelled Vacation Bible School five (?) years ago due to lack of interest. This year we had to cut off registration at around 100 kids! So this is only one example of joyous news, and very inspiring to all. Time to get the word out."

Working with the posters from All Saints Pasadena, as well as the collected data, the team decided to organize it around the themes of connect, inspire, transform, and send with a fifth category, supporting the ministries (buildings, grounds, staff, and clergy). As Kathy fed him the data, Ron worked to group it all into the five categories. "Then it was just grind it out and go back and forth (with Kathy and Fr. Chuck) on creating the graphics, wording, proofing, and publishing," shared Ron. "Fr. Chuck challenged us to turn it into some large poster boards which were set up on easels around the Great Hall for a month or so."

The finished posters were a visible symbol of the many ways the people of St. Paul's were joining together in faithfulness and obedience to use their time, talents, and treasure to seek and serve God.

Results

The posters (also offered as a printed handout and turned into a PowerPoint presentation for the annual meeting) served as a foundation for the other elements of St. Paul's annual pledge drive: letters targeting three different groups of parishioners and messages from the pulpit. They also served a different purpose: providing joy as people gathered to view and share 'aha' and 'I didn't know' moments as well as the sense of accomplishment and pride at the depth and breadth of their combined gifts of time, talent, and treasure.

Towards the end of 2015, there was some anxiety related to the number of pledges received and concern about not meeting budget projections. By the end of January 2016, they had received 110% of pledges, representing \$7,000 more than the year before. With the approach of fall 2016, Ron shares, "I was talking with Fr. Chuck yesterday during coffee hour. Pledges are again up around 20% for this year. He had an absolute twinkle in his eye. Very cool."

"God is faithful beyond what we can ask or think," said Kathy, "God is honoring our faith, sometimes with money."

Nancy Davidge is an ECF associate program director, editor of ECF Vital Practices, and editor of the recently revised Vestry Resource Guide. A long-time member of Episcopal Communicators, and recipient of numerous Polly Bond Awards of Excellence, she also served on their board and as president.

Try This

Wondering if adopting a practice of sharing a narrative budget or story illustrating the impact of your church's many ministries on parishioners as well as members of the wider community might make a difference in your annual or other fundraising campaign? As a first step, perhaps your vestry, finance, or stewardship committee might take a closer look at St. Paul's 2015 annual report posters and/or the ones from All Saints Pasadena to become familiar with the ministries each chose to represent. Notice that while St. Paul's adopted some of the All Saints language, they took the idea and adapted it to reflect their ministries.

Individually and as a group, reflect on what your leadership team might learn from, adopt, or modify from this approach.

Resources

- 2015 Annual Report and Posters St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Bellingham, Washington
www.stpaulsbellingham.org/2015-annual-report/
- All Saints Episcopal Church, Pasadena's visual representation of its commitment to "connect, inspire, and transform the human race into the human family in so many, many ways."
<http://ascideas.org/2015/10/27/your-pledge-dollars-at-work/>
- Andrea McMillin, Canon to the Ordinary, Episcopal Diocese of Northern California <http://www.norcalepiscopal.org/andrea-mcmillin>
- Episcopal Diocese of Olympia Stewardship & Giving Resources and "Don't Panic' Kit
<https://resources.ecww.org/stewardship-and-giving;>
<https://resources.ecww.org/dont-panic-kit>
- L.E.A.D.E.R. – The Mission-Driven Budget by Matthew Freeman, ECF Vital Practices, Vestry Papers
<http://www.ecfvp.org/vestry-papers/financial-planning/l-e-a-d-e-r-the-mission-driven-budget/>

- **Make Your Money Talk. Or at Least, Your Budget**, by Richelle Thompson, ECF Vital Practices blog
<http://www.ecfvp.org/posts/make-your-money-talk-or-at-least-your-budget/>

- **Narrative Budget Template**, a resource shared on ECF Vital Practices <http://www.ecfvp.org/yourturn/narrative-budget-template/>

- **St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Bellingham, Washington** <http://www.stpaulsbellingham.org>

- **Reboot Your Reporting** by Frank Logue, ECF Vital Practices Vestry Papers
<http://www.ecfvp.org/vestry-papers/reboot-your-vestry/reboot-your-reporting/>

- **"What to Measure If You're Mission Driven"** by Zachary First, Harvard Business Review, July 9, 2015
<https://hbr.org/2015/07/what-to-measure-if-youre-mission-driven>

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Editor's Letter

Labor Day is past; a new program year begins, often followed by the annual giving campaign. We invite you to set aside time to think about the 'why' of a person's decision to give, perhaps starting with your own giving story and reflecting on how to speak to the 'why' this annual campaign season.

The experiences and ideas of these congregations and individuals may spark conversation in your congregation:

- Congregational leaders willing to try something different were the catalyst for a new approach to St. Paul's 2015 annual giving campaign. Working with all church committees and groups, this team wove all of the church's blessings into a compelling narrative. "Why We Give" by Nancy Davidge shares their story.
- Presidential election years bring questions about their impact on charitable giving. In "Annual Giving & Elections" Erin Weber-Johnson shares the results of her research into this question and offers five recommendations – the first is

remembering the 'why' – to consider when planning an annual giving campaign.

- En "Abre tu corazón a la misión de Dios," Verónica Godinez nos comparte cómo el amor, el abrir su corazón, y dar a Dios de su tiempo, talento, y tesoro ha hecho viva la misión de Dios. (Video entrevista por Sandra Montes.)
- What is good stewardship around educating our next generation of clergy? In "Rethinking Clergy Education," Gary Shilling invites us to consider changes in the way our church identifies, recruits, trains, and financially supports emerging clergy leaders.
- Their belief that "God is good! All the time!" helped sustain members of St. Stephen's in North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina after their diocesan leadership broke away from The Episcopal Church. "Being One with God" by Wilmont T. Merchant II and Sally Davis shows us how the parishes'

deep commitment to God and a sense of responsibility to give back for all they have received, as well as the strength and stability of their leadership, has helped the parish to both heal and grow.

- Sometimes, the obstacle to creating an endowment is simply, "we don't have the money." In "Building a Legacy," Demi Prentiss shares the story of how a smaller church, made smaller by a church split, found a way to build a legacy for future generations. Their experience might inspire others.
- El Padre José Ortez nos dice que la mayordomía tiene mucho más que ver con el corazón y la renovación que con el dinero. En La mayordomía es un estilo de vida, el padre José da una lista de seis actividades que han sido exitosas en su iglesia. / Stewardship has more to do with our heart than with money. "Stewardship is a Lifestyle" by Florida priest José Ortez shares six stewardship-related activities that have proven successful in his church.

■ In a vineyard, a trellis is essential to support and guide growth. Celeste Ventura's "Building Our Trellis" invites us to explore our own financial trellis, and provides a framework for starting a conversation among members of your church.

Practices content delivered twice a month to your email inbox.

Faithfully,

Nancy

Nancy Davidge

We encourage you to think about how the ideas presented in this and every issue can provide an impetus for evaluating and reflecting on what you could learn from the experiences of others. To help in your discernment, we offer a list of resources related to the topic at the end of each article. If you have a resource you'd like to share, please email me at editor@episcopalfoundation.org with the link or add it to the site using the Your Turn feature. (<http://www.ecfvp.org/yourturn/>)

PS: To make it easier to find the resources offered through *ECF Vital Practices*, please consider adding a link to ECF Vital Practices to your website. Here's how: Using your websites 'add a link' tool, insert our full URL – <http://www.ecfvp.org/>.

PPS: Do you live in an area with limited Internet access? If you have a smart phone, consider browsing ECF Vital Practices from your mobile device.

If you are interested in Spanish language content, please visit our searchable index for our Spanish content here. (<http://www.ecfvp.org/topics/es/>)

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Annual Giving & Elections

BY ERIN WEBER-JOHNSON

The impact of this Presidential Election on Fundraising---and what you can do about it.

Should churches be concerned about their pledgers giving less this year?

While church and state are separate entities, there is ongoing debate as to the impact a presidential election might have on annual giving to a parish. Researching past giving trends, I was tickled to find this quote:

“Many fundraisers are facing the remaining months of 1984 with great trepidation... Indeed, there is reason to be concerned. Many people with limited amounts of money to give away may feel forced to prioritize an election. And it is difficult to argue with those who choose as first priority defeating Ronald Reagan in his campaign for a second term as president. Those of us whose organizations are working to create a more egalitarian, just, and peaceful society also see defeating Reagan as a high priority.”

- “Fundraising During an Election Year.” *Grassroots Fundraising*

Journal, July 1984.

Thirty-two years later we are still asking about the impact of presidential elections on annual giving at parishes. In March 2016, Blackbaud Inc, a provider of services to the global philanthropic community released a new report, *Giving in an Election Year*, featuring the giving habits of 400,000 political donors based on data from the 2012 presidential race.

“Fundraisers have long debated whether or not political fundraising affects charitable giving, and for decades, important fundraising decisions in election years have been based largely on the conventional belief of a fixed giving pie,” said Chuck Longfield, co-presenter of the report and Blackbaud’s chief scientist. Data from the *Giving in an Election Year Study* demonstrated that political giving does affect charitable giving in the following ways:

- Donors who gave to federal political campaigns in 2012 gave 0.9% more to the charitable organizations studied in 2012 than they had in 2011.

- Donors who did not give to political campaigns reduced their giving to the charities studied in 2012 by 2.1%.
- These findings held true across all subsectors as well as the demographic segments of age range, household income, and head of household gender.

“The study’s overall assertion is that political giving during the 2012 election did not, in fact, suppress charitable giving. Donors to political campaigns continued their support of charitable causes,” reports Longfield. This data indicates that there are effective strategies for annual giving this fall.

These strategies include:

1. **Remember the “Why.”** In his blog “Finding God’s purpose in your Capital Campaign,” Maurice Seaton reminds us that what we do is less important than a clear understanding of why we do things.

Are you fundraising to simply meet your annual budget?

Or, are you working to live more fully into your parish's mission? Perhaps you are inviting donors into transformation in the process of giving their resources to the kingdom of God. Articulating the 'why' is vital to the success of any fundraising effort.

2. Approach Major Donors Before November. If possible, try to have an in-person conversation with major donor in September and October. This will provide parishioners a chance to discuss any potential pastoral concerns. A major donor may need to discuss their anxiety about the election. This is an important opportunity of formation both to pray and talk about a theology of stewardship rooted in faith.

3. Fear Not! Linda Buskirk recently blogged, "Fear Not the Capital Campaign." She reminds us, "Angels in the Bible often say, 'Fear not!' as they are about to deliver some awesome news from God." Linda also notes she has found, "Do not be afraid," to be a needed preface to many conversations."

"Fear not" is the foundation of fundraising ministries. In an election year, parishes may determine annual giving as lost due to a fixed pie mentality.

Volunteer efforts are diminished as some will ask, "What's the point if we know donors will be giving to campaigns or waiting to pledge till after the election?"

Fear not! The only way to truly fail in fundraising is not to try.

4. Do not assume your annual giving will decrease. In the Vestry Papers article "Lessons from Fundraising Volunteers," I write about this fixed pie mentality:

"There's a visualization exercise I do with people to help change their perception about fixed capacity:

"I like pie. To help people overcome their perception that giving capacity is fixed, I invite them to picture a pie as representing donors' dollars. And then I ask them to visualize cutting the pie into slices to represent their budget. Now here's the twist: Once they have the picture of a pie in their mind, I invite them to visualize a bigger pie, rather than cutting the smaller pie differently."

Charitable donations are not a fixed pie. In fact, the Blackbaud study indicates donors who gave to federal political campaigns

in 2012 gave 0.9% more to the charitable organizations studied in 2012 than they had in 2011. Now is the time to increase your efforts.

5. Use this as an opportunity to make specific increased invitations. During the course of your one-to-one conversations, you may find particular major donors will be decreasing a gift. This is a wonderful opportunity to identify new major donor to "prioritize their giving." Often potential donors are giving to a number of worthy nonprofits in a single year and need to be asked to make your parish their top priority. With a pledge decrease comes the chance to directly invite others to increase their pledge by 2-4%.

What is your experience with giving in a presidential election year?

Erin Weber-Johnson is ECF's Program Director for Strategic Resources. She works with Episcopal leaders to faithfully answer the following questions, "What is God calling this organization to be/do?" and "How do we respond?"

Erin provides financial and leadership resources through a broad range of services. She has facilitated diocesan workshops, vestry

retreats, and live webinars on annual giving, volunteer engagement, generational giving characteristics, and debt retirement. Utilizing a year-round stewardship model, Erin has worked with parishes on annual giving and successfully completed capital campaigns widely ranging in size.

Previously, Erin was a grants officer at Trinity Wall Street in New York City, a consultant for the United Thank Offering (UTO), and she and her husband served as missionaries in Taiwan. Erin holds a master's degree in public administration from New York University and is a member of St. John the Evangelist Church in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Try This

Invite others on your vestry or stewardship committee to watch "Start With Why," (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sioZd3AxmnE>) Simon Sinek's 18 minute TED talk. He shares a simple but powerful model for how leaders can inspire action, starting with a golden circle and the question "why?"

In small groups, share why you are involved in this ministry and what you believe, recording responses to both share with the wider group and to refer to

when crafting your message. Then reflect on – and talk about – why anyone else should care about this. Again, keep notes from the conversation to reference later.

Resources

- "Fear Not the Capital Campaign" by Linda Buskirk, an ECF Vital Practices' blog <http://www.ecfvp.org/posts/fear-not-the-capital-campaign/>
- "Finding God's Purpose for Your Capital Campaign" by Maurice Seaton, an ECF Vital Practices' blog <http://www.ecfvp.org/posts/finding-gods-purpose-for-your-capital-campaign/>
- "Lessons from Fundraising Volunteers" by Erin Weber-Johnson, ECF Vital Practices' Vestry Papers <http://www.ecfvp.org/vestrypapers/sharing-our-gifts/lessons-from-fundraising-volunteers/>
- "Start With Why – Simon Sinek TED" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sioZd3AxmnE>
- "The 2% Campaign" by Carla Roland Guzman, ECF Vital Practices' Vestry Papers <http://www.ecfvp.org/vestrypapers/rethinking-stewardship/the-2-campaign/>

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Abre tu corazón a la misión de Dios

POR SANDRA MONTES

Verónica Godinez nos comparte sus experiencias con la mayordomía y su papel como líder en la Catedral Iglesia de Cristo en Indianápolis. Nos dice que hay que desarrollar tus talentos y tiempo, y pensar en la mayordomía como algo más que el dinero.

Entrevista con Verónica Godinez
<https://youtu.be/r4sMApOwYYY>

La mayordomía es un proceso y cuesta, pero cuando ves que estás trayendo a la vida la misión de Jesús, lo haces. Dios nos llama a apoyar y servir y tenemos que abrir el corazón y ver las muchas bendiciones que pasan en tu vida cuando das un granito de tu tiempo, talento, y tesoro. Dios provee y multiplica. Y aunque no lo creamos, sí se puede cuando abrimos el corazón. Pero como nadie ama lo que no conoce, tenemos que entender por qué estamos dando nuestro talento, tiempo, y tesoro. Somos importante, tenemos dones que debemos compartir con el resto de la comunidad. Lo que hacen en su iglesia es: conscientizar, tener campañas, y las personas que están practicando la mayordomía deben compartir sus experiencias con las demás

personas. También la Iglesia debe ser transparente y mostrar cómo y en qué se invierten las ofrendas. En su comunidad no ha funcionado que las personas llenen sus promesas por el miedo al compromiso, aunque ya están comprometidas. Tenemos que confiar en el proceso y en Dios porque muchas veces la gente nos sorprende cuando da y hay resultados que ni te puedes imaginar.

La clave para la mayordomía es el amor porque cuando amas, no importa cuánto cueste, no te duele dar y das con gusto, con emoción y no esperas nada a cambio. Te da más dicha el poder dar que recibir. Su consejo para los y las sacerdotes es que escuchen y confíen en las personas laicas porque tienen muchas ideas y pueden apoyar su crecimiento y desarrollo.

Verónica Godinez es la coordinadora del ministerio Hispano de Christ Church Cathedral en Indianapolis, Indiana. Verónica es originaria de Tala, Jalisco México. Ha sido miembro de Christ Church Cathedral desde hace 16 años, Ella está muy agradecida de la

oportunidad de recibir las buenas nuevas en su lengua materna. El ser Coordinador del Ministerio Hispano, apoya a que Verónica facilite la comunicación entre los diversos ministerios de CCC.

Sandra T. Montes nació en Perú, se crió en Guatemala y se instaló en Tejas lo antes que le fue posible. Sus pasiones son Dios, familia (especialmente su hijo), música, educación y escribir, y ha estado esperando y orando por este puesto por años. Sandra ha estado elaborando recursos bilingües originales para su iglesia, escuela y otros por años. Sandra ha estado trabajando como voluntaria y en la Iglesia Episcopal desde que le dieron la bienvenida a Ella en 1986. Se desempeña como música, traductora, oradora, asesora y redactora.

Recursos

- Sitio web de Christ Church Cathedral
<http://www.cccindy.org/im-new/im-new/?lng=esp>

- Conversaciones sobre la mayordomía (Video-conferencia realizada 8/23/16) https://youtu.be/YhGwesN_deY
- Varias entrevistas con personas alrededor de la Iglesia sobre la mayordomía <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL2aHXsg3WpN1o7L6GrHWaSH1nD-113cU69>
- Sitio web de Iglesia Episcopal San Mateo <http://www.stmat-thewshyattsville.org>

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Rethinking Clergy Education

BY GARY SHILLING

Editor's note: What is good stewardship around educating our next generation of clergy? In this article, commissioned as part of ECF's Lilly Endowment initiative, "From Economic Challenges to Transformational Opportunities," Gary Shilling, economist and chair of the board of Episcopal Preaching Foundation, invites us to consider changes in the way our Church identifies, recruits, trains, and financially supports, the next generation of Episcopal clergy, the women and men who will guide seekers and followers into deeper relationship with Christ.

A successful team is invariably led by an excellent coach. So are Episcopal parishes.

Polls show that Americans are increasingly spiritual, but organized religion, especially mainline Protestant denominations, continues to atrophy. Strong clergy leadership is needed to direct the seriously spiritual into Church, to their benefit as well as to fulfill our mission. As Christ said in Matthew, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest."

We desperately need to identify, recruit, train and financially support a new generation of topflight parish priests. To this end, I propose a six-step program.

1. Right-size Episcopal seminaries and rationalize their areas of concentration. At present, we have too many seminaries for the current and likely pool of qualified seminarians. A seminary is a graduate school, and is probably not economically viable with less than 100 full-time-equivalent students, considering the administrative, faculty, physical facilities and other costs. Also, to be a first-class graduate school, it must be strong enough to turn away well-qualified applicants. Under the current business model, weak seminaries run their financial resources down to zero and then close their doors. That's simply bad stewardship. Taking into account Episcopal seminarians at non-Episcopal seminaries, probably three or four Episcopal seminaries are needed. Some should be oriented toward full-time residential master of divinity and other degree programs while others concentrate on part-time, online and other formats.

Since going out of business is painful as is losing identity in a merger, it will take considerable effort to effect the needed consolidation. No doubt, the vigorous leadership of the Church, including the Presiding Bishop, will be necessary.

2. Once Episcopal seminaries are consolidated to a sustainable number, they need to be made financially viable. This will involve meaningful endowments and ongoing contributions that will come from foundations and financially able lay people. Seminary graduates may be loyal but, unlike many college alumni, they generally are not able to provide significant donations. Adequate funding is necessary not only to finance seminary activities, but also to keep time and energy riveted on their basic missions and not distracted by financial survival.

3. Actively recruit topflight candidates as future parish priests. Consider the Wall Street model, which identifies outstanding prospects early

in their college years and then cultivates them with summer internships, orientation programs, etc. Clergy and laity need to find prospects with the ability and interest in becoming outstanding priests, accompany them on visits to seminaries, coach them, etc.

The current model relies too heavily not on active recruiting, but on passive acceptance of interested prospects, and often results in less-than-ideal candidates. Also, adequate scholarships and other money must eliminate any financial constraints on seminary attendance. God may tap prospects on the shoulder, but they no doubt can feel that tap more easily if they don't worry about finally repaying their student loans only when their children enter college and they incur new indebtedness.

4. Provide a first-class seminary education, whether residential or in mixed forms. In recent years, online courses, part-time programs and other forms have been explored, but sometimes out of financial necessity. Adequate money will allow concentration on modes that are geared to contemporary lifestyles, family responsibilities, etc.

5. Prepare ordination-track students, beyond academic studies, for parish work.

Earlier, new graduates served as curates under experienced rectors before assuming overall parish responsibility. Now many become rectors or priests-in-charge directly, sometimes covering more than one congregation. So they need to be prepared to run parishes, which really are small businesses, before moving to the field.

The Episcopal Preaching Foundation's Preaching Excellence Program—boot camp for future preachers—is a weeklong training program to equip seminarians for hands-on parish preaching. Other summer conferences might cover evangelism, parish financial management, congregational development, etc.

6. Provide guidance and necessary financial support for preachers in their initial years of ministry. Topflight people will be more attracted to parish work if they know they will be supported early on.

For parishes that lack financial and other resources but can become viable with superior clergy leadership, the venture capital model is attractive.

Mentoring by senior clergy from other parishes and salary seed money supplements would be provided for three-to-five years with the understanding that during that time, the priests will develop self-sustaining parishes.

Obviously, this six-step process requires considerable commitment and money from dedicated Episcopal lay people as well as Bishops and other senior clergy. I believe, however, that a well-defined program will attract the necessary leadership and funding.

***A. Gary Shilling** is an economic consultant and columnist for Forbes Magazine, Bloomberg View and other publications. He is a consummate Episcopal lay leader and an enthusiastic and generous supporter of The General Theological Seminary, where he was earlier treasurer and a member of the Board of Trustees. Thirty years ago he founded and still chairs the board of the Episcopal Preaching Foundation (EPF) which partners with Episcopal dioceses to plan, staff, and conduct preaching conferences for priests, deacons, and lay preachers at the diocesan and national levels. EPF also sponsors*

the annual Preaching Excellence Program (PEP) for 50-60 seminarians each year from Episcopal seminaries and other institutions preparing students for Episcopal ordination. They spend an all-expense-paid week honing their preaching skills and are led by four or five homiletics professors, an equal number of skilled parish preachers, a faculty dean, and well-known guest lecturers.

Dr. Shilling has written eight best-selling books on economic developments and investment strategy and has drawn praise for his sometimes-contrarian economic forecasts. He holds a master's degree and a PhD in economics from Stanford University and an AB magna cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa from Amherst College. He is the president of A. Gary Shilling & Co., Inc., economic consultants. Dr. Shilling has received honorary degrees from Church Divinity School of the Pacific, Berkeley at Yale, Sewanee, and The General Theological Seminary in recognition of his efforts as an Episcopal layman.

Resources

- Bexley Hall Seabury Western Theological Federation
<http://www.bexleyseabury.edu/our-history/>
- Bishop Kemper School for Ministry , Topeka, Kansas
<http://www.bishopkemper-school.org>
- ECF's Lilly Endowment supported "From Economic Challenges to Transformational Opportunities" <http://www.episcopalfoundation.org/programs/lilly-national/about>
- Episcopal Divinity School to stop granting degrees in June 2017, Episcopal News Service, July 21, 2016 <http://episcopal-digitalnetwork.com/ens/2016/07/21/episcopal-divinity-school-to-stop-granting-degrees-in-june-2017/>
- Iona School for Ministry, Episcopal Diocese of Texas
<http://www.epicenter.org/iona-school-for-ministry/>
- Seabury and Bexley form partnership, Episcopal News Service, February 11, 2011
<http://www.episcopalchurch.org/library/article/seabury-and-bexley-form-partnership>

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Being One with God

BY WILMOT T. MERCHANT II AND SALLY DAVIS

Our beginning as a parish followed a familiar path. In 2012 we were thrown off course.

In 1969, St. Stephen's began as a summer chapel of Trinity Episcopal Church in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Membership grew; in 1974, St. Stephen's became a year-round congregation and mission of the Diocese and eventually a parish in North Myrtle Beach (Horry County). When the Diocese of South Carolina broke away from The Episcopal Church in 2012, St. Stephen's was the only congregation left in the county. Today, in addition to St. Stephen's parish, there are two missions in Horry County – St. Ann's Episcopal Church in Conway and The Church of the Messiah in Myrtle Beach. This historical perspective is important because Horry County, South Carolina continues to grow in population as more retirees choose Myrtle Beach, North Myrtle Beach, and the surrounding communities as their new home.

Due to the 2012 split, St. Stephen's congregation experienced a departure of about 30 parishioners. Many of these members

were active members and leaders. Their absence created a vacuum in some areas of leadership, however their departure provided an opportunity for other parishioners and new members to step up and become more involved. One of the ways we build up leadership is through our parish council. Council membership consists of all lay leaders in the parish: the officers from every commission, committee, or group. The vestry, which meets monthly also meets every other month with the parish council providing a way to share information, raise issues, and to bring questions or recommendations to the vestry.

As an active worshipping congregation of about 200 on Sunday mornings, in order to continue our involvement and partnership with other organizations in the community, our congregation had to regroup. This is not to underestimate the painful experience we had to deal with, both as individuals and as a parish. Those who chose to leave were more than just parishioners. We saw them as family members, and this event fractured our parish family.

One example of the strength of these relationships is the story of a parishioner who left the congregation but requested, and, in fact, *insisted* that at his death, our rector would preside at the celebration of his life. Our rector was the celebrant at his wife's funeral, a few years earlier, and he wanted the same celebration. Two years later, when this former parishioner died, the celebration of his life did take place at St. Stephen's, even though he had not worshipped there in over two years. Many of those who left the parish returned and joined the congregation for this funeral service. Our rector reminds us that, regardless of our position on issues, we as Christians should welcome all persons as Jesus did in his earthly ministry. As a parish, we are strongly encouraged to welcome all -- especially those who had walked away from us.

In the midst of dealing with the painful split, remaining parishioners felt compelled to demonstrate that we could, and would, continue to be a vibrant and active congregation in Horry County. Over the years, we have worked intentionally at the way

we welcome visitors into our congregation on Sunday mornings. Assigned greeters and ushers offer welcome and assistance at both services. Every first-time visitor is given a gift bag and invited to join us for fellowship and refreshment at the end of the worship service. This is just one of the ways we have continued to attract individuals and families into our congregation. New members have shared with us the experience of their first visit, speaking highly about the way in which they felt welcomed.

Supporting ministry and mission

Our rector, vestry, parish council, and congregation have also continued to support our ministry and mission through annual pledges. Year-round appreciation of the “Triple Ts” – time, talent, and treasure – from our members is practiced in many ways. A hallmark of our fifth Sunday combined worship service is the public recognition of one of our volunteer ministries, one month greeters and ushers, another flower and altar guilds, and so on, recognizing all ministry groups each year. In October, we kick off our month-long pledge campaign, beginning the first Sunday of the month with our rector’s message of gratitude for all we have been given by God, distribution

of pledge envelopes, and instructions to prayerfully consider our gifts. Our worship services on the last Sunday of the month include the collection and blessing of all pledges as a symbol of our faithfulness in becoming one with God and humanity in Jesus Christ.

Our gifts of time, talent, and treasure encompass much more than our annual pledge drive. In 1969, in an effort to raise funds for the new chapel, parishioners began a community yard sale. Over the years, it has grown to the point where St. Stephen’s now has one of the largest yard sales in the county. The actual sale takes place the first full weekend of May and October every year with as many as 75 volunteers working the sales. This ministry was deeply impacted by the departure of some of the key leaders when the split took place, yet, once again, we were able to regroup. You may be wondering how much we make during the year. In 2015, we made a little more than \$70,000 from the May and October sale. So, as you can see, this is not your typical garage/yard sale. The Rummage Sale serves a three-fold purpose:

1. It is a major fundraising effort and, as such, the proceeds support the parish and other charities.

2. It has become a social gathering. The social aspect allows parishioners to interact with one another casually as they work as a team, diligently sorting the rummage every Tuesday from 9:00 am to noon.

3. It is outreach, which allows us to provide to individuals and families in our community who may have experienced a natural disaster, or who may need support because of their circumstances.

Visit our website, ststephensnmb.com and click on Rummage Sale to get a sense of the scope of our parish effort. As St. Stephen’s folks will tell you, at the beginning of every sale our rector reminds us during the prayer time that, “We are a church, and not a flea market.” During the sale we are to wear the face of Jesus, and treat everyone as Jesus would, because there is bound to be someone who will test our patience and humanity.

Living the Gospel

During the 2009-2010 school year, St. Stephen’s became an affiliate of Kids Hope USA. This mentoring program, which pairs churches and schools, began more than 20 years ago in Michigan. St. Stephen’s was the first congregation in South Carolina to become

an affiliate, a result of our partnership with the Horry County School District. During our first school year, about 40 parishioners drove round trip 40 miles every week to Loris Elementary School to participate in one-on-one mentoring. The National Kids Hope USA organization expressed amazement at the number of mentors we had volunteering based on the size of our congregation. Perhaps the fact that our congregation is comprised of many retirees may have helped.

The Principal of Loris Elementary gave one of our best testimonials a few years ago. He wrote an article for the Diocese in which he said he could not envision Loris Elementary School without St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. This ministry was directly impacted by the departure of parishioners who were leaders and mentors. In order to avoid the disruption of the program mid-stream, those parishioners agreed to stay on for the last semester of the school year, even though they were no longer worshipping with us as a congregation. Although it felt very awkward for everyone at times, for the sake of the students we all did our best to keep things normal and cordial. Though we no longer have 40 mentors, we have kept

our level at more than 25 mentors each school year since. We are excited that in the summer of 2016, we expanded this ministry by providing a free, seven-week summer program for students in the Loris Community.

About ten years ago, St. Stephen's began hosting a golf tournament to raise funds, with proceeds distributed to charities in our community and beyond. The tournament is now named The Rich Jacobs Memorial Pro Am Golf Tournament, in memory of the beloved parishioner who was instrumental in organizing this event. In June of 2016, St. Stephen's, in partnership with the Myrtle Beach Golf Desk and Arrowhead Country Club, hosted the tenth annual tournament. Approximately \$12,900 was raised. Church leaders used outreach funds to round this amount up to \$15,000; on August 14th our church awarded these proceeds to five local ministries.

One might ask how we have continued to grow stronger as a congregation in the midst of all of the uncertainties and challenges we have faced. Parishioners note that we have remained stable, and attribute this stability in large part to our rector and his commitment to the parish and community over the 15 years he has served us. We

also believe we have been able to stay the course because the congregation trusts its leadership, although this has not always been an easy or smooth journey. As we continue to wait for the decision of the South Carolina Supreme Court regarding the properties of the Diocese, we know that we are fortunate to continue to be able to worship in our facilities and continue our ministries and partnerships with other organizations. Many of our brothers and sisters were not as fortunate because they were forced out of their facilities by those who broke away.

What happens to a parish after a diocesan split?

In the case of St. Stephen's, we grieve but forge ahead with what God has called us to do. Our Mission at St. Stephen's is to become one with God and humanity in Christ by living the Gospel with love and compassion. Our Vision is to become comfortable with Jesus Christ and boldly proclaim Him. So as we seek to live the gospel with love and compassion, we also, as Episcopalians, want to be comfortable with Jesus Christ, in that we make no apology for our bold proclamation of who He is as our Lord and Savior. So, if you will, this is the "Jesus movement" in Horry County, and

we are excited by what God is doing in this place through this congregation. Should you find yourself on the Grand Strand in South Carolina, look us up and you just might realize why we are who we are – a faith-filled congregation, excited to live and worship in this part of God’s vineyard. God is good! All the time!

The Rev. Dr. Wilmot T. Merchant II is the rector and **Sally Davis** senior warden of St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church in North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

Try This

At St. Stephen’s there’s a shared understanding of what God is calling them to do. This has carried them through a painful split and helped their church to grow and thrive. Questions for reflection and discussion:

- What do the parishioners and members care about in the church and the world? What do you know about their caring commitments? How might you explore these together theologically? From a stewardship perspective?
- What opportunities are provid-

ed to help people reflect on what matters to them?

- Apart from your annual stewardship drive, what opportunities does your church provide for members to express their values and priorities financially?

(Adapted from *Funding Future Ministries*, an ECF publication.)

Resources

- “Basics of Annual Giving: Strategies that Work,” an ECF webinar by Erin Weber-Johnson <http://www.ecfvp.org/webinars/the-basics-of-annual-giving-strategies-that-work/>
- *Funding Future Ministries*, an ECF publication <http://www.episcopalfoundation.org/programs/ecf-publications/funding-future-ministry>
- Kids Hope USA <http://www.kidshopeusa.org/home/>
- St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church in North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina <http://www.ststephensnmb.com>
- St. Stephen’s rummage sale <http://www.ststephensnmb.com/rummage-sale>

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Building a Legacy

BY DEMI PRENTISS

Or, how this smaller Episcopal Church got its endowment...

Joan Kilian has been rector of Trinity Episcopal Church, Statesboro, Georgia since 2002. As she recalls, following the consecration of V. Gene Robinson as bishop of New Hampshire in 2003, the congregation weathered the departure of some 20 households, reducing their \$185,000 operating budget by nearly 30 percent. They had no funds set aside to cushion that blow, which required making difficult financial decisions. That wake-up call raised both awareness and commitment in the congregation, and members saw clearly the impact of their individual contributions, both in finance and in ministry.

In 2005, in the midst of both a Lenten series on final affairs and the creation of a centennial memorial garden, the congregation began to discuss how they might build a legacy for future generations – “our grandchildren.” Joan had successfully worked with leadership at her previous congregation to start an endowment and the time seemed right at Trinity.

Many congregations think of themselves as “too poor” to aspire for an endowment. Yet the very fact that there is no endowment can rule out a potential gift from a member or a person in the community who loves the church and wants to express their appreciation. Because an endowment structure hasn’t been created, donors sometimes have concerns about how funds will be used: Will my gift simply be spent on operating costs? Will my gift have lasting impact, and testify over time to how much I loved the church? Will my intent be honored appropriately when there’s no structure in place to receive, invest, and disburse the gift over time?

In consultation with Episcopal Church Foundation’s senior program director, Ken Quigley, Trinity’s leadership used the resources in ECF’s *Funding Future Ministry* as well as their sample structure documents to set their endowment fund in motion. They spent many months fine-tuning resolutions and policies to suit their situation. They raised awareness of the need for and the benefits of an endowment among the members of the congregation. And they provided a way to

honor those who contributed to the effort. By 2009, careful work by the vestry and church leaders had laid the groundwork. The church held a gala kick-off for the All Saints Society, with the goal of raising the \$10,000 minimum needed for opening an ECF endowment account. The successful event allowed Trinity to become an ECF client.

Frequently, the obstacle to creating an endowment is, simply, “we don’t have the money.” ECF’s \$10,000 minimum allows congregations with limited assets to start small. Trinity’s fundraiser was a creative way to get started – they needed an attainable amount to open an account, and that became their goal. The immediately measurable success – “we raised enough money to start an endowment fund” – provided a “quick win” that earned the congregation “bragging rights.” And the news that there was now a fund, ready to grow, became part of Trinity’s story in the community.

To complement their endowment work, Trinity formed a legacy society. The All Saints Society is dedicated to honoring donors to the fund as well as those who name

Trinity as a beneficiary of their end-of-life planning. Because of Trinity's engagement with the larger community, even people who are not members of Trinity have joined the legacy society.

Now, donors of \$1,000 or more to Trinity's endowment as well as those who name Trinity in their wills are celebrated as legacy society members each All Saints Day. Just this past year, the church received a gift from the daughter and son-in-law of a member that nearly doubled the size of their endowment, bringing it to over \$60,000. The church hosts weekly yoga classes open to the community, and the rector has recently learned that a woman in the community who attends those classes has named Trinity in her will. The All Saints Society has grown to include some 20 households.

In giving thanks for the growth of Trinity's endowment, Joan recalls how long the process of studying and customizing the endowment policies and guidelines seemed to take. She recognizes how that careful process has borne fruit. "I remember the ECF book [*Funding Future Ministry*] talks about building 'a well-constructed nest.' People need to have confidence that their gift will be used well." Joan celebrates the contribution the endow-

ment makes each year in helping to fund scholarships for students in their companion Diocese of the Dominican Republic, as well as other outreach efforts. A favorite quote from Archbishop William Temple serves as a good reminder of why continuing these ministries is important: "The Church exists for the benefit of those who do not belong to its membership."

The rewards of creating an endowment extend far beyond money in the bank. The congregation that educates its members about planning for the end of life gives a gift to them and their families. The process of structuring an endowment and creating a legacy society offers an opportunity to address stewardship as a whole-life, year-round concern for Christians. Listing endowment income in the parish budget, showing how those funds enable ministry, demonstrates the impact of each gift. The endowment provides a way for the saints who have gone-to-glory to provide ministry impact far beyond their lifetimes. And making intentional plans to fund future ministry can benefit the church for generations to come.

Demi Prentiss is a program consultant in the Endowment Management Solutions division of Episcopal Church Foundation (ECF), offering support to dioceses and congregations in structuring and growing their endowments.

Previously, she served five years as ministry developer for the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth, partnering with individuals and congregations in that re-organizing diocese to re-imagine how to be the church. She has served a brief stint on the Presiding Bishop's staff as Program Officer for Lay Leadership, and spent many years as a ministry developer in congregations varying from family to resource size. She holds degrees from Seabury-Western and Harvard, and is author, with Fletcher Lowe, of Radical Sending: Go to Love and Serve. She lives in Denton, Texas, where she has built a practice as a life and leadership coach for leaders in congregations and nonprofit organizations.

Try This

Caring for the givers: Does your congregation have a plan and a process for recognizing those who have made a significant gift to God's mission through your congregation? Do you consider these gifts as part of their faith stories?

For reflection and discussion:

- How do you currently recognize and thank planned givers? What would be the most natural next step in your public recognition of them?
- What mechanisms do you have to keep people informed about and involved with matters in your congregation after they have made their gifts?
- If a parishioner wanted to give a gift that your vestry was not ready to receive (i.e. a donation with awkward “strings” attached), how would you handle it? How might you transform the dilemma into an opportunity?

(Adapted from *Funding Future Ministries*, an ECF publication.)

Resources

- “Basics of Endowment” webinar, presented by Ken Quigley, ECF senior program director <http://www.ecfvp.org/webinars/basics-of-endowment/>
- “Basics of Planned Giving” webinar, presented by Jim Murphy, ECF managing program director, financial resources <http://www.ecfvp.org/webinars/basics-of-planned-giving-2/>
- Creating a Legacy Society information and materials, an ECF Vital Practices resource <http://www.ecfvp.org/tools/creating-a-legacy-society/>
- Endowment Management Solutions, Episcopal Church Foundation <http://www.episcopalfoundation.org/programs/endowment-management-solutions/general-info>
- Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta’s companion diocese program <http://georgia.anglican.org/?s=companion>
- *Funding Future Ministry: A Guide to Planned Giving*, a publication by Episcopal Church Foundation. <http://www.episcopalfoundation.org/programs/ecf-publications/funding-future-ministry>
- *Planning for the End of Life: Faithful Stewards of Your Good Gifts*, a booklet by Episcopal Church Foundation available through Forward Movement. <http://www.forwardmovement.org/Products/2088/planning-for-the-end-of-life.aspx>
- Trinity Episcopal Church, Statesboro, Georgia <http://www.trinitystatesboro.org>

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La mayordomía es un estilo de vida

POR JOSÉ LEONEL ORTEZ

El tema de la mayordomía Cristiana es esencial en nuestra iglesia episcopal, especialmente para nuestras congregaciones latinas/hispanas en Estados Unidos. Podemos constatar que la mayoría de personas que asisten a nuestras iglesias vienen de la iglesia católica romana y en sus historias no han conocido la mayordomía. Yo mismo a pesar de mis múltiples estudios en seminarios y universidades católicas romanas, nunca escuché siquiera la palabra: “mayordomía”. Fue cuando empecé mi experiencia episcopal en 1995 que empecé a aprender y a vivir bajo una mística distinta.

¿Qué es lo esencial que aprendí y comparto siempre con miembros y visitantes a nuestra iglesia? Que la mayordomía es un estilo de vida. La mayordomía es un asunto del corazón: es decir que, si la persona no ha tenido un encuentro personal con Cristo e iniciado un proceso de renovación de vida le será muy difícil entender ese estilo de vida.

La mayordomía es el resultado del discipulado: es la respuesta de la persona al llamado de Jesús: “Sígueme”. Al unirse al movimien-

to de Jesús la vida gira en otra dirección y entonces podemos entender las famosas tres T: *Tiempo, Talento y Tesoro*.

Aprendí que nuestro **Tiempo** es muy valioso y debemos aprender a usarlo y distribuirlo de la mejor manera. Como hijos de Dios debemos de separar tiempo para Dios para servirle en lo que sea necesario, principalmente en nuestra iglesia. Dios ha puesto en las personas dones y **Talentos** para servirle en su obra. La iglesia es un lugar en donde usted puede hacer uso de esas habilidades. Cuando damos de nuestro **Tesoro** ayudamos a que la iglesia crezca, se mantenga, y podemos apoyar proyectos que ayudan a las personas necesitadas y mucho más. Nuestro aporte permite que el reino de Dios se predique más y más.

Quisiera compartir las experiencias prácticas y actividades puntuales que han mejorado la manera en que “administramos la vida en nuestra iglesia,” y por supuesto han impactado la multiplicación de recursos materiales y económicos en la misma.

Cuando buscas en el web actividades puntuales sobre la mayordomía en Iglesias cristianas, casi no existe nada específico. No sé si es porque cada iglesia guarda para sí los eventos que le ha dado éxito o porque muy poco se ha escrito al respecto. En nuestra iglesia tenemos varias actividades que nos han permitido crecer y llegar a la autonomía. Trataré de resaltar las más importantes.

Mes de mayordomía

Durante cuatro domingos del mes de noviembre, tratamos de predicar sobre la mayordomía y ha sido muy útil el uso de videos, historias, y testimonios. En especial tenemos un testimonio después del sermón, de un feligrés de la iglesia que haya cambiado en su manera de ofrendar y le animamos a compartir lo que pasó. ¿Qué le hizo cambiar? Y eso ha sido fantástico. En ese mes se le regala a cada miembro de la iglesia algún pequeño libro que ayude a reflexionar sobre el tema.

La última semana tenemos una cena de mayordomía gratis para todas las personas que quieran asistir. En esa cena tenemos

tenemos tiempo de alabanza, una pequeña charla y es allí donde se reparten las boletas de promesa para el siguiente año. También en ese ambiente se presenta el presupuesto del año siguiente y se contesta cualquier inquietud.

Gala Anual

Un sábado del año se prepara una “Gala Anual”: se venden boletos que incluye comida y bebidas además de algún show y de esa actividad se recibe entre \$7,000 y \$8,000.

Alcancía Familiar

Esta actividad creo que sería de mucha ayuda en especial para iglesias pequeñas que están en el proceso de hacer discípulo/as comprometido/as con la iglesia. Al final del año le damos a cada familia una caja mediana de madera, con el agujero para poner dinero y le pedimos a las familias el compromiso de ofrendar \$1 cada día al momento de hacer una oración por el bienestar familiar. Muchas familias ofrendan más de un dólar por día. Esa actividad nos permite recaudar entre \$20,000 y \$25,000 cada año. La caja se trae a la iglesia en la última semana del año y es hermoso ver lo que puedes hacer con una pequeña ofrenda diaria.

Eventos anuales de caridad

Además de esas tres herramientas tenemos varios eventos anuales de caridad, para recolectar fondos que sirven a necesidades de aquellas personas que tocan a nuestra puerta pidiendo ayuda. Son muy famosos los karaokes, bingos, festivales, etc. Esos eventos se preparan con la tarea de obtener recursos específicamente para ayuda de alguna necesidad particular y urgente en la feligresía o de la alguna fundación en especial. Representan nuestra caridad en acción y hemos hecho maravillas de esa manera.

Campañas de evangelismo y discipulado

Tenemos como iglesia, por lo menos dos campañas de evangelismo y discipulado por año. Las llevamos a cabo a través de nuestros grupos celulares que están distribuidos por toda la ciudad. Un día de la semana esa campaña se ofrece para las personas que no se han integrado a los grupos. De esa manera nuestras campañas abarcan a toda la gente. Esas campañas no son sobre mayordomía, pero al final de las mismas, el resultado que obtenemos es asombroso en todos los campos, en especial en el cambio de mentalidad y actitud de nuestra gente con respecto al *ofrendar*.

Comité de Mayordomía

Finalmente, es importante tener un Comité de Mayordomía en la iglesia que se mantenga durante el año siguiendo la pista a toda la feligresía, en especial a aquellas personas que tienen promesa. Ese comité debe estar pendiente de las fechas de cumpleaños y demás eventos familiares para aprovechar esas ocasiones dando muestras de gratitud: tarjetas, saludos, flores, etc. Las muestras de gratitud son esenciales, especialmente con personas hispanas muy poco dadas a esos detalles.

El Rvdo. Canon Jose Leonel Ortez nació en Honduras y se ordenó como diácono católico romano en 1991 y fue recibido como diácono episcopal en 1998. Ha sido sacerdote episcopal desde el 2000. Fue candidato para obispo de Honduras en el 2001. Tiene tres hijos y es el primer rector de Santa Cruz Resurrectionen Biscayne Park, Florida.

Recursos

■ “Campaña de Generosidad” por Victor H. Conrado, ECF Vital Practices’ Vestry Papers <http://www.ecfvp.org/vestry-papers/rethinking-stewardship/campana-de-generosidad/>

- “Campaña de Generosidad” por Victor H. Conrado, ECF Vital Practices’ Vestry Papers
<http://www.ecfvp.org/vestry-papers/rethinking-stewardship/campana-de-generosidad/>
 - “La campaña del 2% en la mayordomía” por Carla E. Roland Guzmán, ECF Vital Practices’ Vestry Papers
<http://www.ecfvp.org/vestry-papers/rethinking-stewardship/la-campana-del-2/>
 - “Conversaciones sobre la mayordomía” webinar, por Sandra Montes y Juan Àngel Monge
<http://www.ecfvp.org/webinars/conversaciones-sobre-la-mayordomia-2/>
 - Facebook la Iglesia santa cruz
<https://www.facebook.com/iglesia.santacruz.9?pnref=story.unseen-section>
 - “Guía de recursos para juntas parroquiales” webinar por Sandra Montes
<http://www.ecfvp.org/webinars/guia-de-recursos-para-juntas-parroquiales/>
 - Libros sobre mayordomía
 - *Una vida con propósito: ¿Para qué estoy aquí en la tierra?* por Rick Warren https://www.amazon.com/Una-vida-con-propósito-Purpose/dp/0829763783/ref=sr_1_12?source=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1475527633&sr=1-12&keywords=warren+purpose+driven+life
 - *Soy miembro de la Iglesia* por Thom S. Rainer
<http://www.lifeway.com/Product/soy-miembro-de-la-iglesia-P005606711?carid=jhowe-rainer-IAACM-spanish>
 - Lista de videos sobre la mayordomía <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL2aHXsg3WpN1o7L6GrHWaSH1nD-113cU69>
 - Mayordomía
<http://www.ecfvp.org/topics/topic/mayordomia/>
 - “Muestra de una declaración de la Junta Parroquial sobre la mayordomía” <http://www.ecfvp.org/tools/muestra-de-una-declaracin-de-la-junta-parroquial-sobre-la-mayordomia/>
 - Video: Padre José Ortez nos dice que estamos en un momento maravilloso en la iglesia.
<https://youtu.be/hYWJ0yG4m-MQ>
- ¡No se pierda ningún número de Papeles de la Junta Parroquial! Inscríbese aquí para recibirlos sin cargo.***

Stewardship is a Way of Life

BY JOSE LEONEL ORTEZ

Christian stewardship is one of the pillars of the Episcopal Church, particularly for Latino/Hispanic congregations in the United States. It is known that the majority of those who attend our churches originate from the Roman Catholic tradition and that for many the concept of stewardship had been unknown to them. I am a case in point: in all of my years in seminary, and at Roman Catholic universities, I had never once heard the word “stewardship.” It was only when I joined the Episcopal Church in 1995 that I learned of this different approach to religious life.

What is the basic meaning of stewardship? Stewardship is a way of life. Stewardship is a matter of the heart; in other words, for those who have not had a personal encounter with Christ and initiated a process of renewal in their lives, it will be very difficult to understand this way of acknowledging the church.

Stewardship results from discipleship: It is our answer to Jesus’ call to “follow me.” When we join Jesus’ movement, our lives turn in another direction, and it is then that can

we understand the famous three Ts: *Time, Talent and Treasure*.

I learned that our **Time** is very valuable and that we must learn to use it and distribute it as best we can. As children of God we have to dedicate time to God, to serve Him as needed, mainly in our church. God has bestowed us with gifts and **Talents** to serve Him in his work, and the church is the place where we can put our talents into practice. When we give from our **Treasure** we help the church grow and be self-sufficient. We are able to support projects that help the needy and beyond. Our contributions enable the Kingdom of God to be preached again and again.

I would like to share some of the specific activities that have improved the ways in which we manage our individual contributions within our congregation. These contributions have resulted in the multiplication of material and financial resources at the Santa Cruz Resurrection.

When we search the web for the specific activities of stewardship in Christian churches, there are few precise examples. I do not know if

it is because churches are reluctant to share the events that have been successful in that aspect or because very little has been written about the subject. In our church we have several activities that have enabled us to grow and become autonomous. I will try to describe the most important ones.

Stewardship month

Four Sundays in November are allocated to preaching about stewardship. The use of impact stories using video and live testimonies have been extremely helpful for that purpose. After the sermon, a parishioner of the church describes the way in which he or she has changed their way of supporting the congregation and the result of their contribution. What made him or her change? This has been fantastic. Additionally, during November we give all members of the church a small book that enables them to personally reflect on stewardship.

On the final Sunday of the month we have a free stewardship dinner for anyone who wishes to attend. During the dinner we aside set time

for praise and a brief talk about the subject of stewardship. We then distribute pledge forms and envelopes for the coming year while sharing next year's budget and taking questions from parishioners.

Annual Gala

One Saturday of the year we have an "Annual Gala", for which we sell tickets that include food, beverages, and a show. That activity generates \$7,000- \$8,000.

Family money box

I think this activity can be very helpful for small churches in the process of creating disciples committed to the church. At the end of the year we give each family a medium sized wooden box with a slot to deposit money into. We ask families to commit \$1 a day when they pray for the wellbeing of their family. Many families offer more than a dollar a day. This activity enables us to collect \$20,000 - \$25,000 every year. Parishioners bring the box to the church the last week of the year and it is beautiful to see what a small daily offering can accomplish.

Charity events

We have several annual events for charity, to collect funds for people

who come to our door seeking help. Our karaoke, bingo, festivals, etc. have become quite famous! The purpose of these events is to obtain resources to contribute to a specific or urgent need within our congregation or for an outside group. The proceeds from these events represent our charity in action and we have achieved truly wonderful things.

Evangelist and discipleship campaigns

As a church we have at least two yearly evangelism and discipleship campaigns that we undertake through our *células* (small groups), which meet weekly in people's homes. There's also a weekly gathering at the church for people who'd like to participate yet are not part of another group. We've also started alpha groups. Thus our campaign encompasses everyone. These campaigns are not about stewardship per se, but the results of the campaigns are amazing, particularly in the way that they change the mentality and attitude around the notion of *offering*.

Stewardship committee

Finally, it is important to have a stewardship committee in the church that follows up with the entire congregation throughout the year, especially those who

have pledged. This committee keeps track of birthdays and other family events, so they can show the church's gratitude by sending cards, congratulations, flowers, etc. These acknowledgements are essential; particularly due to the propensity of some Hispanic parishioners not to traditionally focus enough attention to those details.

Jose Leonel Ortez was born in Honduras and was ordained as Roman Catholic Deacon in 1991. He was received as an Episcopal Deacon in 1998 and has been an Episcopal priest since 2000. He was a candidate for bishop of Honduras in 2001. He has three children and is the first rector of Santa Cruz Resurrection en Biscayne Park, Florida

Resources

- Books recommended to members:
- *A Purpose Driven Life* by Rick Warren, Zondervan, 2002
<https://www.amazon.com>
- *I am a Church Member* by Thom S. Rainer
<http://thomrainer.com/i-am-a-church-member/>

- “Campaign of Generosity” by Victor H. Conrado, ECF Vital Practices’ Vestry Papers <http://www.ecfvp.org/vestry-papers/rethinking-stewardship/campaign-of-generosity/>
- “The 2% Campaign” by Carla E. Roland Guzmán, ECF Vital Practices’ Vestry Papers <http://www.ecfvp.org/vestrypapers/rethinking-stewardship/the-2-campaign/>
- “Conversaciones sobre la mayordomía” webinar (Webinar Stewardship Conversations) by Sandra Montes and Juan Ángel Monge (available only in Spanish) <http://www.ecfvp.org/webinars/conversaciones-sobre-la-mayordomia-2/>
- “A Walk Through the Vestry Resource Guide” webinar led by Nancy Davidge <http://www.ecfvp.org/webinars/a-walk-through-the-new-vestry-resource-guide/>
- Santa Cruz Resurrection, Biscayne Park, Florida’s Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/iglesia.santacruz.9?pnref=story.unseen-section>
- Stewardship resources, ECF Vital Practices’ <http://www.ecfvp.org/topics/topic/stewardship/>
- “Muestra de una declaración de la Junta Parroquial sobre la mayordomía” (Example of a vestry statement about stewardship; available only in Spanish) <http://www.ecfvp.org/tools/muestra-de-una-declaracin-de-la-junta-parroquial-sobre-la-mayordoma/>

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Building Our Trellis

BY CELESTE VENTURA

In a vineyard, a trellis is essential to support and guide growth. What are the components I need to create a fruitful financial trellis?

A few years back, a group of us gathered in the wine country of Northern California to celebrate the thirtieth birthday of a dear friend's youngest daughter. It was a memory-making, enlightening, and grand celebration.

One afternoon, as we were walking through a vineyard, surrounded by lush, green, healthy vines, I realized my technical knowledge of how grapes are grown was surprisingly and embarrassingly limited. The ah-ha was that only some vines would bear fruit. Yes, all the vines had the same environment: cool nights, rich soil, and proper watering and pruning. Yet without a trellis, there was no opportunity to be fruitful.

A vineyard trellis requires a series of wires, braces, and wooden posts. The structure must be adaptable, withstanding time and changing conditions while being resilient in the face of harsh weather, sustained wind, and long periods of heat. It must be

deeply anchored in the ground so as not to topple with every slight shift in the soil. A trellis is essential to support and guide growth, allow air to circulate, and most importantly to expose the vine to full sunlight. Are you surprised to learn that yes, I am speaking about our finances, individually and as a parish community?

Practices such as budgeting, financial planning, saving, patience, and wise investing provide the cool nights, rich soil, watering, and pruning, while thoughtful discernment of core values, awareness of passion, vision, and openness to change, provide a flexible trellis, essential for bearing fruit.

Where to begin

If your parish is considering ways to encourage parishioners to create and/or explore their own financial trellis, a series of workshops might be in order. However instead of jumping quickly to bringing in local experts, consider a series of conversations where reflections, experiences, tools, and resources are shared. While experts impart, conversations are synergistic and in my experience

allow for harvesting of a deeper, broader, and more fruitful crop. Ah, but we *know* people do not like to talk about money. Agreed!

So let's take a no numbers approach that feels safe for all.

Consider offering a series of five or six conversation-based workshops at your church. You will need to identify facilitators and scribes, invite participants, provide a comfortable venue, some art supplies, and offer sweet and savory treats. Identify topics that may spark conversation and reflection and assign each session one of the topics. Mix things up: Have some of the topics be practical and some conceptual.

Some ideas to get you started:

- A discussion around these or similar questions: How did your family, from as early as you remember through high school or college, handle money? Who did the banking? Was money ever discussed? What were the messages you gleaned from your parents?

Are those messages, and, if appropriate, those of your spouse whose experience might have been vastly different, evident in your handling of money today?

- Extend an invitation to identify and share financial tools and resources: websites, spreadsheets, methods of tracking, paying down student and/or credit card debt, budgeting and saving, and investing for the future.
- Reflect on this quote by Archbishop Desmond Tutu “We are all caught up in a delicate network of interdependence, unable to celebrate fully our own heritage and place in the world, unable to realize our full potential as human beings, unless everyone else, everywhere else, can do the same.” Share a time when you felt supported by community. Share an experience, in the words of Wendell Berry, when “practicing resurrection” made new life abundantly evident. How can we cross borders and break-down what divides us? How do you complete the sentence “The Kingdom of God is like...?”
- Share the core values you would like to impart to the next generation. Are those core values evident in your financial

actions? What are the next steps needed to practice what Eric Erikson termed Generativity: Care for the Next Generation?

- As people of the Sacrament, with outward signs being deeply rooted in our lives, image your trellis. In what ways does it encourage a life committed to bearing the fruit of deeper simplicity and broader generosity? With the crayons and paper in front of you, draw a prayer flag reflecting your trellis or an image through which you see the role of a trellis. The prayer flags can be hung, unsigned, around the room, outward and visible signs for all to see.

Fruitful financial planning is a matter of both heart and mind, practical and conceptual—very Anglican - both/and not either/or. Ask yourself along with significant others in your life, “What is the fruit I wish my handling of financial matters would produce? What are the components I need to build my trellis to produce this fruit? What light and air and grace and hope and love can I weave together into a tapestry that shows forth God’s light and *ruach*— wind, spirit, and breath?

Now go in peace and make it a reality.

*Crafted for the October 2016 issue of Vital Practices by **Celeste A. Ventura** with gratitude for the encouragement of Nancy Davidge at The Episcopal Church Foundation. Celeste served for twenty-two years as a financial advisor with Merrill Lynch. Since 2002, she has had the privilege of serving as one among many on CREDO faculty in the area of financial wellness. With her involvement in both the Episcopal Church and the world of personal finance over the decades, she has found the most effective entrée to financial concepts stems from visual images. “It has been a time of joy and challenge, deep collegiality, passion and insight. Images have always feed [sic] my soul and this opportunity to share some reflections with a broader community is pure gift.” She lives in Carmel Valley, California.*

Try This

Celeste outlines a process for encouraging conversations where parishioners can share reflections, experiences, tools, and resources. What might this look like in your congregation?

Resources

- *Deeper Simplicity, Broader Generosity* by Celeste Ventura, Morehouse Publishing, 2015.
<https://www.churchpublishing.org/deepersimplicity>
- *Generativity and the Generative Process* by John Kotre
<http://www.johnkotre.com/generativity.htm>
- House of Bishops Pastoral Letter March 2009 <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/posts/publicaffairs/house-bishops-issues-pastoral-letter>
- Let's Make a Plan, a resource from The Learning Center, on the website of CPF -Certified Financial Planners, has interesting video scenarios for anyone to explore. For example: More Than a Will, Easing the Mid-Life Squeeze
<http://www.letsmakeaplan.org/learning-center>
- Mint.com, Budgeting and tracking tools for income and expenses, plus access to credit score, and tools to manage and track investments.
<https://www.mint.com>

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