

Rethinking Stewardship

IN THIS ISSUE:

Stewardship:
Gratitude or
Obligation?

From Scarcity to
Generosity

Métodos para vivir en
abundancia /Ways to
Live in Abundance

Stewardship: More
Than an Annual
Campaign

Stewardship: Gratitude or Obligation?

BY MARK BECKWITH

Buried among the hundreds of resolution at the recently concluded General Convention in Salt Lake City, and hidden in the line items of the The Episcopal Church's budget was a modest amount of money set aside to promote stewardship across the church. Initially there was no money in the budget for stewardship, but at the last moment a symbolic amount was put in.

Several General Conventions ago, both the House of Deputies and House of Bishops gave overwhelming support to the following statement: "*stewardship is the main work of the church.*" And at every General Convention since, stewardship has been highlighted as fundamental to the ministry of the church. Something to that effect was memorialized at this Convention, but it was lost among all the other resolutions and activities that commanded more attention.

I believe that stewardship is indeed the main work of the church. Stewardship is all we do with all we have all the time. At its heart, stewardship is paying close attention to the gifts God has given us – and being clear as to how we invest those gifts with our time, our talent, and our money.

Stewardship was sidelined at this General Convention. Of all the prepared questions directed to the nominees for presiding bishop at an open forum, none were about stewardship. There was a daily Eucharist, but at first no provision was made for an offering to be taken and brought to the altar to be blessed (as required in the Prayer Book on page 361).

Stewardship nearly got lost at General Convention. It nearly gets lost in our own lives. There are other pressing matters to attend

to. Momentous decisions to be made – and mundane tasks that often crowd out everything else.

Years ago I attended a church in another denomination in Memphis, Tennessee. Somewhere in the middle of the service, the pastor announced, “It’s offering time!” The entire congregation stood up and cheered. It was a moment in which the community could express their gratitude, and they did so eagerly. When I returned to my Massachusetts congregation I told the story of the Memphis church’s response to the offertory, and then I declared, “It’s offering time!” There was some outpouring of excitement, although I couldn’t really tell how much of it was genuine and how much was an attempt to humor me. I tried it again the next week, and it was clear from the silence – and some groans – that what plays in Memphis doesn’t have traction in a New England Episcopal Church. A key lay leader told me gently, graciously – and clearly, “it’s offering time!” needed a permanent rest. She said it felt like a gimmick.

“It’s offering time” may come across as a gimmick, but the impetus for it, the source of it – which is gratitude – is not. My reading of the Gospel tells me that gratitude needs to come first. In reality, resentment, disappointment,

and distraction usually knock gratitude way down on the priority list. As people of faith, we are invited to discipline ourselves to express our gratitude at every opportunity: in the morning, at noontime, at the end of the day. We are challenged to figure out how we can express our gratitude, by saying and living “thank you,” by sitting at the kitchen table and figuring out how, and how much of, our money we want to give in gratitude. The Bible says a tithe. The church has repeatedly said a tithe is good start. What happens in the moments of anxiety in congregations, usually around budget time, is that stewardship morphs from people’s need to give into the church’s need to receive. Gratitude gets trumped by obligation. And our giving devolves into an exercise of what we think we can afford, rather than opportunity to discover deeper gratitude and generosity.

My hope and prayer – for myself and the rest of us – is that we will take time this fall to take time and provide space to claim the gifts given us by God and consider how best to use those gifts to do God’s work in the world. Provide some space and time for this work at a vestry meeting. Provide some time and space for this work on your own time.

How we exercise our stewardship

and how we allow ourselves to be drawn into the gift of gratitude, determines how we participate in healing the world. It takes some work. It is primary work. It’s the main work of the church. It takes time, and prayer. Stewardship can’t get lost; it needs to be brought from the sideline into the center of our souls and minds – so it can be the main work of our faith-driven lives.

Mark Beckwith (<http://www.dioceseofnewark.org/staff/mark-beckwith>) is bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Newark. He also serves on the Episcopal Church Standing Committee on Stewardship, the Board of the Episcopal Service Corps and is the current Chair of the Liberian Covenant Committee for the Episcopal Church. On the denominational level, he co-founded and chairs Bishops United Against Gun Violence and is currently the co-chair of the statewide New Jersey Interfaith Coalition.

Try This

In “Creating a Culture of Giving,” <http://www.ecfvp.org/posts/creating-a-culture-of-giving/> Angela Emerson offers congregational leaders a step-by-step process for crafting an annual stewardship statement to help guide their congregation towards realization

of their mission and vision. This three part statement, considers:

- What do I believe about God and money?
- What am I committed to doing about making my faith and my relationship with God a more integral part of how I think and act about financial decisions?
- To what action, process, practice, and/or reflection do I want to invite the congregation?

Click here for Angela's full process <http://www.ecfvp.org/posts/creating-a-culture-of-giving/>

Resources

- An Experiment: Year Round Stewardship by Ken Howard, ECF Vital Practices, September 2014 <http://www.ecfvp.org/vestrypapers/sharing-our-gifts/an-experiment-year-round-stewardship/> and resources from St. Nicholas' Episcopal Church <http://www.ecfvp.org/yourturn/resources-for-an-experiment-practicing-year-round-/>
- Communicating Stewardship Year Round, an ECF webinar presented by Nancy Davidge <http://www.ecfvp.org/webinars/communicating-stewardship-year-round/>

- "Creating a Culture of Giving" by Angela Emerson, ECF Vital Practices, Vital Post <http://www.ecfvp.org/posts/creating-a-culture-of-giving/>
- Year Round Stewardship, an ECF webinar presented by Erin Weber-Johnson <http://www.ecfvp.org/webinars/year-round-stewardship/>
- Year Round Stewardship: Talking About Money, an ECF webinar presented by Chris Harris <http://www.ecfvp.org/webinars/year-round-stewardship-talking-about-money/>

Don't miss an issue of Vestry Papers! Sign up for your free subscription at www.ecfvp.org.

Editor's Letter

It's September. The program year is kicking off, soon followed by annual campaigns, budgeting, and diocesan convocations or conventions. It's a busy time and I'm about to suggest adding something else to this mix: Plan time this program year to rethink your congregation's stewardship programs.

Our September articles and resources share how others are thinking about stewardship. Perhaps some of their experiences will spark a conversation at a vestry or other leadership meeting and provide a catalyst for looking at your own situation in a different way.

■ In "Stewardship: Gratitude or Obligation" Mark Beckwith notes that while The Episcopal Church, dioceses, and congregations often state "stewardship is the main work of the church," in practice, stewardship is often sidelined. He also challenges all of us to make time this fall to provide time and space to claim the gifts given to us by God – and how to best use these gifts to do God's work in the world.

■ A congregation's culture – and where they are on the spectrum of giving – has a significant impact on their understanding of stewardship.

Helping congregations move from a culture of scarcity to one of generosity takes time, requiring intentional work by congregational leaders. In "From Scarcity to Generosity: Moving the Needle," Mary MacGregor offers recommendations to help congregations move toward a culture of generosity.

■ There are no shortcuts in ministry; especially in Latino-Hispanic ministries in the United States. In Sandra Montes' "Métodos para vivir en abundancia/Ways to Live in Abundance" Alejandro and Laura Montes share their experiences, challenges, and advice on how to evangelize as Christ does and have a vibrant and growing ministry by living a life of surrender, love, forgiveness, and example. In Spanish and English.

■ What does stewardship mean to your congregation? In "Stewardship: More Than an

Annual Campaign," Nancy Davidge and Susan Elliott share approaches and strategies for developing a congregational culture built on the belief that God will use the gifts of the people to do "more than all we can ask or imagine."

■ The leadership at St. George's Episcopal Church in Valley Lee, Maryland recognize that changing from 'the way we've always done this' to a new approach takes time. In "Raising Disciples, Generous Givers," Greg Syler, continues the story he began sharing in 2012 with an update on how their approach to giving is working and introducing their new emphasis on raising disciples as an integral part of their giving program.

■ In "The 2% Campaign/ "La Campaña del 2%," Carla Roland-Guzmán shares great examples of the differences between almsgiving, offerings, and tithes. She gives practical advice on how to start giving 2% and continue toward 10% when we understand the basis of our giving. In English and Spanish.

- Doubts about a congregations ability to raise money can be the 'elephant in the room' threatening to undermine a campaign's best efforts. In "Antidote to Anxiety (About Raising \$)," Leslie Pendleton names some of these fears and offers a strategy for addressing them.
- In "Campaign of Generosity/ Campaña de Generosidad" Victor Conrado talks about what has worked and what hasn't in his bilingual and multiethnic church's quest to have a relationship with God and share their time, talent, and treasure as they give generously. In Spanish and English.

Most Vestry Papers articles include a practical application that you might try at an upcoming vestry meeting. You'll also find a list of the resources related to the topic. If you have a resource you'd like to share, please email me with the link or add it to the site using the Your Turn feature.

Not a subscriber? Subscriptions are free; visit ECFVP.org and click on the Subscribe tab on the upper right hand corner of this page. New subscribers are asked to fill out a short registration form to have Vestry Papers and ECF Vital Practices content delivered twice a month to your email inbox.

Faithfully,

Nancy

Nancy Davidge

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; the site has been optimized for smart phones which makes it easier to search for content.

From Scarcity to Generosity

BY MARY MACGREGOR

To live as a steward is counter cultural. So is being Christian. In my ministry, I often use this Funk and Wagnall's Dictionary definition of steward:

"One who is entrusted with the management of property, finances, or other affairs not his own."

This simple definition drives home the point that if we are to live as stewards we must realize that all we have is entrusted to us to manage, it really isn't our own.

The power of congregational culture

I have been privileged to work with many congregations. Having been invited to go deeply into the lives of these churches, I have come to recognize the significant power of congregational culture, especially when it comes to giving and money. I clearly see that each congregation is on a spectrum of giving, ranging from having a culture of scarcity to one of generosity. There are characteristic behaviors of congregations that speak volumes about their giving cultures. These behaviors run deep, often being demonstrated

from year to year, decade to decade, shaping the very nature of the place. Moving from scarcity to generosity can happen, but this takes years of intentional work on the part of the leaders. Central to this work is helping people understand that giving is a spiritual issue; it is about one's relationship with God. People have to be taught the theology of stewardship, it is not instinctual and teaching it is the work of the church.

Churches are called to challenge us to grow in our faith and incorporate the principles of faithful stewardship in our personal lives. The church also has a corporate responsibility to model stewardship, which is exhibited in the ways it raises, spends, manages, and talks about money. It is through these practices that their culture of giving has been established over time.

The church has taken on many secular business practices and many of these practices have helped congregations be wise and necessarily accountable. Budgets have become essential tools for responsibly managing church

funds. However, in many churches the budget has supplanted any serious conversation about stewardship. I have seen budgets take center stage in annual giving campaigns. I have heard leaders ask parishioners to take on their 'fair share' and 'give to make the projected budget for next year.' Churches that only focus on budgets are often on the scarcity end of the giving spectrum.

Constant fundraisers to support the church budget, scratching for every penny, along with frequent small and large financial crises are all indicators of a culture of scarcity. These have become normal operating behaviors for many congregations. These behaviors scream, "not enough money, never enough money!" People get so tired of hearing these messages and they should. Often there is little understanding or personal commitment to stewardship in churches such as these. To move from scarcity to generosity the leaders have to be willing to change the old behaviors and attitudes that are so deeply imbedded in their congregations. The good news is that progress can be made, the needle can move. A

A good place to start is the church's annual giving campaign. This focused effort is one of the best opportunities to impact the congregation's giving culture for change.

One congregation's experience

I recall a church in my diocese that was at its wits end about income. They called me to coach them for their upcoming annual campaign. Their budget and need to raise more money was central to the way they lived and they were stuck in an attitude of scarcity. One of many admonitions I gave them was to get through the campaign without EVER mentioning the word 'budget'. They asked, "How can that be done?" I promised if they took on some new approaches to their efforts they could successfully reach their annual giving goal. They called me at the completion of their campaign to joyfully report that giving went up 31% and they never mentioned the word 'budget.' This was a number of years ago and they have made steady progress toward changing their giving culture and employing new behaviors. I am not recommending that every church not talk about their budgets when raising funds, however every church needs to be keenly aware of their potential over emphasis of budget conversations.

Campaign essentials to try

Here are some annual campaign essentials I recommended to that church and others I coach:

Appoint a stewardship team

The vestry should empower a stewardship team made up of four to six people to be responsible for designing and implementing all the details for an annual campaign and other stewardship activities during the year. This team should include at least one creatively gifted person who thinks outside the box! It is important that this team have a member of the vestry and/or finance committee but be made up primarily of additional members from the congregation. The team reports to the vestry and the clergy.

Choose a meaningful, memorable new theme every year with a creative means to express it

A theme can be scriptural or a catchy tag line but it must be short and easy to recall. It's more than a visual logo; it should be the catalyst for generating ideas to creatively and meaningfully encourage congregational participation and engagement. Here are two examples to get you started:

■ **Theme: Reflect God's Generosity: Pay it Forward!**

Creative Activity During the

Campaign: Invite every member from grade school children on up, to commit to an act of unsolicited generosity weekly during the campaign. On Sunday, provide slips of paper and pencils in the pews so people can share their act of generosity, then put their slip into the offering plate. Support and encourage this activity through sermons, educational opportunities to reference God's generosity through scripture, and the sharing of personal stories. During the service on the last Sunday of the campaign, invite people to bring their pledge cards forward and put them in an alms basin placed as close to the altar as possible.

■ **Theme: Thank You God!**

Creative Activity During the Campaign: Distribute inexpensive sticky note pads to each member of the church that are custom printed with the words, "Today I thank God for..." Encourage every member to write a message to a loved one on a sticky note every day of the campaign and to share them generously on mirrors, lunch boxes, dashboards, etc. You might also have extra pads at church and encourage people to post their messages of gratitude to God on a large wall space, for all to see.

These two themes and the corresponding activities share the same principle of active engagement of people reflecting God's generosity. These themes and activities are just part of extremely well planned and carried out campaigns which help congregations move toward greater generosity.

Use Electronic Media

Incorporate videos and other electronic media during campaigns. This can include electronic commitment/pledge cards, video testimonials uploaded onto YouTube, the use of inexpensive professionally produced videos on stewardship, and other creative means to both get the word out about the campaign and to visually and emotionally engage potential givers.

Fearlessly refer to the biblical standard of the tithe

There is a lot of talk in church circles about doing away with the biblical concept of tithing. The argument is that the tithe is an ancient standard of agrarian cultures and simply doesn't apply to modern times. I believe this conversation is driven by fear, the fear of asking people to seriously reflect on their financial giving and their motivation for doing so. Referencing the tithe is not about shaming, it is simply teaching.

Encourage the practice and com-

mitment to proportional giving, working toward a tithe. Have the vestry commit to the same and communicate their commitment to the members of the congregation.

Committing to pledge a proportion of one's income, starting with 1% working toward 10% or more, is a method that often helps people think seriously about their giving. Persons should be asked every year to prayerfully consider increasing their percentage with every new year. The church should supply percentage giving charts with their other campaign materials. It is a powerful witness to have every member of the vestry sign the same letter stating their individual and corporate support of proportional giving working toward the tithe.

Arrange for personal testimonies by parishioners that focus on their experience of God's generosity in their lives and how they have responded financially and otherwise out of thanksgiving.

Personal stories of stewardship are immensely important in annual campaigns. They often reflect vulnerability and faithfulness. Three to four new people should be invited to share every year. A little coaching on the part of clergy can encourage people to share their stories of giving.

Create a sincere atmosphere of joy and thankfulness to God can help people grow in their awareness of God's abundance in their lives.

The sincere and upbeat efforts of the clergy, vestry, and stewardship team set the tone of annual campaigns and directly impact the campaign results. The creativity, spiritual engagement, energy, and commitment to doing a campaign well not only insures optimum results but also helps individuals move from scarcity toward generosity in their personal lives. Over time, this can be life changing.

No two churches are identical and each will take its own path toward generosity. Just start.

Mary MacGregor is canon for congregational vitality in the Episcopal Diocese of Texas.

Try This

What is your congregation's culture when it comes to money? Here are some questions to ask yourselves:

- Consider a spectrum of 1 to 10, 1 being a place of scarcity, over-focused on budgets, fund raising, and re-occurring mini financial crises and 10 being a place of deep personal and corporate stewardship, significant generosity to mission outside

the church of both people and money, and a healthy corporate response when there is financial need. What number on this spectrum would your church be?

- When was the last time the congregation had an annual campaign that was very creative, out of your predictable routine?
- Do you intentionally teach the theology of stewardship? If not, where might you start?

Resources

- *Ask, Thank, Tell: Improving Stewardship Ministry in Your Congregation*, Charles R. Lane <http://store.augsburgfortress.org/store/product/7366/Ask-Thank-Tell-Improving-Stewardship-Ministry-in-Your-Congregations>
- *Bounty, Ten Ways to Increase Giving at Your Church*, Kristine Miller, and Scott McKenzie <http://www.abingdonpress.com/product/9781426765971#.VeUh1BbEy7k>
- *CLIMB Higher: Reaching New Heights in Giving and Discipleship*, Scott McKenzie and Kristine Miller <http://www.abingdonpress.com/>

product/9781426714832#.VeUh8hbEy7k

- “Crazy Wisdom” by Dan Edwards, ECF Vital Practices’ Vestry Papers <http://www.ecfvp.org/vestrypapers/wholehearted-stewardship/crazy-wisdom/>
- Ecumenical Stewardship Center website includes resources, stories, online store, etc. www.stewardshipresources.org
- *Fearless Church Fundraising, The Practical and Spiritual Approach to Stewardship*, Charles LaFond <https://www.churchpublishing.org/products/index.cfm?fuseaction=productDetail&productID=9741>
- Generous Giving www.generousgiving.org
- *Not Your Parents’ Offering Plate, A New Vision for Financial Stewardship*, J. Clif Christopher [http://www.centerfor-faithandgiving.org/Reviews/NotYourParentsOfferingPlate\]-CChristopher/tabid/925/Default.aspx](http://www.centerfor-faithandgiving.org/Reviews/NotYourParentsOfferingPlate]-CChristopher/tabid/925/Default.aspx)
- The Episcopal Network for Stewardship website, for members only. Churches and dioceses can join for a fee and have access to significant materials to run an annual campaign.

www.tens.org

- *Transforming Stewardship*, C.K. Robertson (Episcopal Series) <https://www.churchpublishing.org/products/index.cfm?fuseaction=add&productID=3333>
- Worship House Media - Great resource for inexpensive videos on giving, thankfulness and stewardship that can be downloaded and used during campaigns www.worshiphousemedia.com.

Don't miss an issue of Vestry Papers! Sign up for your free subscription at www.ecfvp.org.

Métodos para vivir ivir en abundancia

POR SANDRA MONTES

La mayordomía. A veces la vemos como una mala palabra porque tiene que ver con un tema que muchos quisieran olvidar: el dinero. Pero la mayordomía no sólo tiene que ver con el tesoro (o dinero, pisto o como quieras llamarle), sino también con el tiempo y el talento. En la Biblia vemos muchos ejemplos de cómo el Pueblo de Dios usaba su tiempo, talento y tesoro, y de lo que Dios pedía y pide de Sus hijas e hijos. 1 Pedro 4:10 dice, “Como buenos administradores de los diferentes dones de Dios, cada uno de ustedes sirva a los demás según lo que haya recibido”. La mayordomía tiene mucho que ver con la buena administración de lo que Dios nos ha dado: tiempo, talento, tesoro. Yo vi el ejemplo de mi papi y mami toda mi vida. Lo que aprendí de Dios, de la Iglesia, del trabajo, de la educación y de la vida aprendí más por los ejemplos de mi mami y papi que por sus consejos. Vi cómo manejan su tiempo para poder estudiar, atender muy bien a la familia y tener un ministerio energético. Vi cómo administran su dinero y aportan su diezmo, ahorran y dan mucho a la familia y necesitados. Vi cómo desarrollan sus talentos de música,

redacción y educación mediante el estudio diario, la práctica y horas de capacitación para poder ayudar al prójimo.

Una de las maneras en que ayudan a la gente es enseñándoles a crear un presupuesto familiar y a ahorrar. Por ejemplo, mi mami me contó un secreto muy bueno para ahorrar sin pensar que estamos ahorrando. Mi mami dice que ella va a la tienda (o al restaurante o a la gasolinera, dondequiera que vaya a gastar dinero) con un presupuesto en mente. Digamos que piensa que va a gastar \$80. Cuando va, hay ofertas o bajaron los precios y sólo tiene que gastar \$57. Como ella ya había presupuesto \$80, ve los \$23 (a veces hay que usar una calculadora) que le sobran como ya gastados y los guarda al llegar a casa en un lugar secreto. En otras ocasiones ella había pensado gastar dinero en algo, digamos una falda, porque le encantan, y alguien le regaló una. Entonces hace lo mismo: guarda el dinero que iba a usar. Al final del mes termina habiendo ahorrado una buena cantidad. Esto se lo enseña a sus conocidos y muchos ya están empleando este método de ahorrar, que realmente fun-

ciona.

Otro gran ejemplo: mi papi tiene una fórmula para tener un presupuesto estable y una vida en abundancia. La llama 10-10-60-20 y la ha usado por muchos años. No es un número telefónico, pero sí responde a nuestras necesidades económicas. Estos números son porcentajes. El primer 10% es para Dios, por supuesto: “Traigan su diezmo al tesoro del templo. Pónganme a prueba en eso, a ver si no les abro las ventanas del cielo para vaciar sobre ustedes la más rica bendición”. (Malaquías 3:10) Mi familia es un gran testimonio de esto. Damos nuestro diezmo y ofrendas porque estamos agradecido/as por Su generosidad. Mis padres siempre nos han dicho que es una manera de alabar a Dios y de agradecerle Su gran fidelidad. No es fácil comenzar si no estás acostumbrado/a, pero te aseguro que si pones a prueba a Dios con esto verás Su gloria. El siguiente 10% es para los ahorros “...asegura su comida en el verano, la almacena durante la cosecha”. (Proverbios 6:8) A veces puede parecer aburrido ahorrar (o no gastar dinero a cada rato), pero cuando disfrutamos

los beneficios del ahorro, con viajes, comidas, tecnología, lo que uno desee, es muy divertido. El 60% es para todos los gastos del mes: casa, automóvil, comida, luz, gas. “Por lo tanto, mi Dios les dará a ustedes todo lo que les falte, conforme a las gloriosas riquezas que tiene en Cristo Jesús”. (Filipenses 4:19) El último 20% es para los imprevistos: se nos malogra el carro, se nos enferma un hijo, se tiene que viajar; como dice Santiago en 4:14, “¿Acaso saben qué sucederá mañana?”. Y en vez de estar sorprendido/as estamos listo/as. Este presupuesto los ayudará a tener un plan para su presente y futuro. Recuerden lo que dice Proverbios 21:5: “Los planes bien meditados dan buen resultado; los que se hacen a la ligera causan la ruina”.

En este video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fpWzsSezrHM&feature=youtu.be>) podrán ver lo que nos aconsejan el Rvdo. Alejandro y Laura Montes para vivir una vida llena de bendiciones, como bueno/as administradore/as. Antes que todo nos dicen que para poderle dar a Dios primero tienes que darte tú mismo/a a Dios. 2 Corintios 8:5 nos explica “... se ofrendaron a sí mismos, primero al Señor y luego a nosotros, conforme a la voluntad de Dios”. Yo he visto con mucho asombro cómo viven

esto mi mami y papi y cómo Dios les ha bendecido, bendice y bendecirá. Lo que he visto es lo que dice Mateo 25:23: El jefe (en este caso, Dios) le dijo (les dice a mis padres): “Muy bien, eres un empleado (mayordomo/a, administrador/a) bueno y fiel; ya que fuiste fiel en lo poco (si supieran su testimonio de lo maravilloso que ha sido Dios...), te pondré a cargo de mucho más. Entra y alégrate conmigo”.

Seamos fieles en lo poco, sirviendo a Dios y a Su Pueblo y siendo bueno/as administradore/as de Sus bendiciones para la gloria de Su reino y veremos cómo se manifiesta en nuestra vida.

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. Es docente a tiempo completa y está estudiando para obtener su doctorado.

Pruebe lo siguiente

¿Necesita cambiar la manera en que maneja su dinero personal? Considere adoptar uno de los métodos que practica la familia Montes, o ambos.

1. Incrementar sus ahorros: Laura Montes presupuesta dinero para cosas específicas, incluyendo su compra semanal y otras cosas necesarias. Si halla que gastó menos que lo que había presupuestado, añade el saldo a sus ahorros.

2. Adoptar el presupuesto 10-10-60-20:

10% para Dios
10% para ahorros
60% para gastos mensuales
20% para gastos imprevistos

¿Ve alguna diferencia en sus finanzas a los tres meses? ¿Seis? ¿Un año?

Recursos

■ Bendecidos para ser una bendición: una serie para reflexionar sobre la mayordomía <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/es/page/bendecidos-para-ser-una-bendici%C3%B3n>

- “Caminando el Camino” por Edith Medina <https://www.facebook.com/latinoepiscopales/posts/846082165426631>
- Librito sobre lo que es la mayordomía Cristiana ofrecido por la Diócesis de la República Dominicana https://iglepidom.org/?page_id=984
- Las mejores prácticas de la mayordomía por las oficinas del Ministerio Latino y la de Mayordomía del Centro de la Iglesia Episcopal <http://www.ecfvp.org/tools/las-mejores-prcticas-de-la-mayordoma/>
- ¿Qué nos dice la Biblia sobre el diezmo, y cuál es la enseñanza de Jesús? por Ray Garcia <http://www.episcopaleslatinos.org/biblia/jesudiezmo.htm>
- Vean los vídeos para oír de los logros, los retos y las ideas que pueden ayudarles en sus ministerios especialmente con la mayordomía.
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL2aHXsg3WpN1o7L6GrHWaSH1nD113cU69>

¡No se pierda ningún número de Papeles de la Junta Parroquial! Inscríbese aquí para recibirlos sin cargo. <http://www.ecfvp.org/account/register>

Ways to Live in Abundance

BY SANDRA MONTES

Stewardship. Sometimes we see it as a dirty word because it is related to an issue that many of us would like to forget: money. But stewardship does not refer only to the treasure (or money, bread, or whatever you call it), but also to time and to talent. In the Bible there are many examples of ways in which the People of God have used their time, talents, and treasure. Look to 1 Peter 4:10 for an example of what God asks from God's children, "As every person hath received the gift, even so, minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." Stewardship has a lot to do with the good management of what God has given us: time, talent, and treasure.

In my life, the examples of good stewards have been my mom and dad, Laura and Reverend Alejandro Montes. What I learned about God, the Church, work, education, and life was through their examples, more than from their advice. I saw how they managed their time to allow for study, to take good care of our family and have an energetic ministry. I also saw how they managed their money, contributed their tithe, and gave to our family and

to people in need. I saw how they developed their musical and writing talents, continued their educations, and spent hours learning about ways to help people around them.

One of the ways in which they've helped people is by teaching how to make a family budget and to save. Here's one of my mother's best saving secrets: My mom always goes to the store (or restaurant, gas station, or wherever she is planning to spend money) with a budget in mind. Let us say that she plans to spend \$80. When she arrives at the store, she notices that they have a sale, or that the price went down, and she spends only \$57. Since she had already budgeted \$80, she sees the \$23 (sometimes one has to use a calculator) left over as already spent, so when she gets home she puts the \$23 away in a secret place. On other occasions, she may plan to spend money on something, let's say a skirt that she's been eyeing, but then somebody gives her one, so she puts that money away too. She teaches this simple practice to people she knows, and many of them have found that her method really works.

Another great example comes from my dad; he has a formula for creating an adequate budget while living an abundant life. He calls it 10-10-60-20 and he has been using it for many years. It is not a telephone number, but it answers our financial needs. These numbers are percentages. The first 10% is, of course, for God: "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it." (Malachi 3:10) My family is living proof of this. We give out tithes and offering because we are grateful for God's generosity. My parents have always said that it is a way to praise God and thank God for God's faithfulness. It is not easy to start tithing if you are not used to it, but I assure you that if you test God with this offering you will see God's glory. The next 10% is for savings "... provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest." (Proverbs 6:8) Sometimes it may seem boring to save, but when we enjoy the benefits of saving with travel, meals, technology, whatever we may desire, it's a lot of fun. The 60% is

for all of our monthly expenses: house, car, food, electricity, and gas. “But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Jesus Christ.” (Philippians 4:19) The last 20% is for the unexpected: Our car is not running, one of our children is sick, we have to travel; look to James 4:14, “Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow.” This budget will help you have a plan for your present and future. Remember what Proverbs 21:5 says: The thoughts of the diligent tend only to plenteousness; but of every one that is hasty only to want.”

In this (Link here on “this Spanish language video” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fpWzsSezrHM&feature=youtu.be>) Spanish language video you can hear Reverend Alejandro and Laura Montes advice on how to live a life full of blessings as a result of being good administrators. To be able to give to God, they tell us, first we have to give ourselves to God. 2 Corinthians 8:5 explains to us “... first they gave their own selves to the Lord and unto us by the will of God.” I have seen with a great deal of wonder how my mom and dad have lived this, and how God has blessed, blesses, and will bless them for their efforts. What I have seen is what Matthew says in 25:23: The master (in this case, God) told him (and tells my

parents): “Well done, good and faithful steward, thou hast been faithful of these few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou onto the joy of thy Lord.”

Let us be faithful over few things, serving God and His People and being administrators of His blessing for the glory of His kingdom, and in turn we will also see how it manifests in our lives.

Sandra Montes is ECF's Spanish Language Resource Consultant. Born in Perú, Sandra grew up in Guatemala and settled in Texas as soon as she could. Her passions are God, family (especially her son), music, education, and writing. She has been developing original bilingual resources for her church, school, and others for years. Sandra has been volunteering and working in the Episcopal Church since she was welcomed into Her in 1986. She serves as musician, translator, speaker, consultant, and writer. She is a full-time teacher and doctoral student.

Try This

Could your personal money management system use a makeover? Consider adopting one or both of the approaches practiced by the Montes family.

■ Building up your savings: Laura Montes budgets money for specific items including her weekly groceries or other essentials. If she finds that she spends less than what she budgeted, the balance is added to her savings.

■ Adopting the 10-10-60-20 budget:

- 10% for God
- 10% for savings
- 60% for your monthly expenses
- 20% for unforeseen expenses

Do you see any difference in your finances after three months? Six? A year?

Resources

- “A Stewardship Bible Study” prepared by Angela Emerson, Laurel Johnston, and Bruce Rockwell, a resource from The Episcopal Network for Stewardship <http://www.tens.org/resources/free-resources/free-resources-blog/a-stewardship-bible-study>
- “And Forgive Us Our Debts...” by Erin Weber-Johnson, ECF Vital Practices’ Vital Post <http://www.ecfvp.org/posts/and-forgive-us-our-debts/>

- COMPASS: Navigating Faith and Finances, a resource from Ecumenical Stewardship Center <https://www.stewardshipresources.org/COMPASS>
- “Living Wi\$ely: A four part personal finance and budget counseling ministry” a resource from The Episcopal Network for Stewardship <http://www.tens.org/resources/free-resources/free-resources-blog/living-wiely>
- “My Annual Spiritual Checkup” by Bruce Rockwell, a resource from The Episcopal Network for Stewardship <http://www.tens.org/resources/free-resources/free-resources-blog/my-annual-spiritual-checkup>
- “Our ‘Money Life’” by Davis Fisher, ECF Vital Practices http://www.ecfvp.org/files/uploads/Our_Money_Life.pdf

Don't miss an issue of Vestry Papers! Sign up for your free subscription here. <http://www.ecfvp.org/account/register>

More than an Annual Campaign

BY NANCY DAVIDGE AND SUSAN ELLIOTT

We don't know if Jesus worried about money. We do know he saw the hunger of a great gathering of people who had come to hear him, that he fed them with five loaves and two fish, and afterward still had leftovers. That's a tricky gospel for vestry members, responsible for managing and developing their church's resources. It's the disciples who make sense here. It's late, and this is a desolate place. Send the people away so they can find food.

But Jesus is always focused on his mission, confident that God will provide. Jesus uses what the people have given, and it is more than enough.

This is a good stewardship message for vestries—a reminder that God will use the gifts of the people in our faith communities to do “more than all we can ask or imagine” (Ephesians 3:20). Your task as a vestry is to focus on your mission and vision. Be diligent in managing the property and resources in your care. Trust God and your congregation to provide the means to move toward the hopeful future you have discerned together.

Patterns for giving change as society changes so it is not surprising that we see significant generational differences in commitment to stewardship. People born before 1942 are likely to give to their congregations from a sense of duty, but succeeding generations (from Baby Boomers to Millennials) bring new needs, experiences, and expectations to the church's stewardship efforts. Some expect transparency about finances and need to hear how their contributions make a difference. Others want to know that the church is a caring community and that giving is not an obligation. Still others are technology-savvy and looking for ways to be involved and to be heard.

Economic anxiety cuts across all generations, making stewardship one more item in the long list of demands on one's time and money.

Christians also understand practicing intentional stewardship can bring joy. Congregations find that when they see stewardship as a life practice rather than an obligation—as focused opportunity to grow as Christians—giving is transformed. And so are congregations,

families, individuals, and the world.

Year-round stewardship formation

When stewardship is understood as the right use of the resources God has given us, it touches all aspects of our lives. Forming good stewards becomes an integral part of the congregation's worship, education, community life, and mission. Relegating it to the annual pledge campaign means your leadership team misses rich opportunities to build stewardship formation into the church's life and programs throughout the year.

Here are some ways to help your congregation grow into faithful and generous stewards:

- Preach and teach stewardship as a Christian practice through sermons, book studies, rector's forums, Sunday school classes, and new member classes.
- Offer classes on managing finances and time to help members understand those issues in the context of their faith.

- Create opportunities for clergy, leaders, and others to share their stories about stewardship—how it undergirds our faith and attitudes toward giving.
- Provide clear, straightforward financial information and invite the congregation’s ideas and questions on budget planning. Show how giving supports your congregation’s internal and external ministries.
- Plan events and projects through the year where people can give time, talent, or financial support. Celebrate their efforts.
- Thank people often for their gifts of time and talent and money. Gratitude is the heart of stewardship.

Vestry stewardship statement

The Episcopal Network for Stewardship (TENS) www.tens.org recommends congregations establish the practice of drafting an annual vestry stewardship statement. Trinity Episcopal Church in Swanton, Vermont, presents theirs in the form of a collect:

[We believe that] God, who is the giver of every good gift, you are ever present in our lives and in

the world. You act through us, your people, to care for and provide for everyone.

[We invite] We pray for the courage to break out of our insecurity and fear around money as we deepen our understanding of our relationship to you and how we use our financial resources to do your work in the world.

[We commit] We pray these things that we might know you better, that you will increase our desire and ability to give and help others through ministry and friendship and to gratefully commit ourselves to the work you have given us to do. Amen.

Being generous with thank you

Thanking the congregation for their gifts is a critical (and frequently missing) element in stewardship planning. A thank you letter is not enough. Sunday announcements, sermons, personal expressions of gratitude, newsletter articles, and special celebratory events are among the many meaningful ways to thank the members of your faith community for their expressions of stewardship. You might include a photo of a well-loved ministry or a beautifully designed card tucked into the quarterly pledge statement with a note of thanks, add a listing at the end of annual

report with the names of everyone who has given time to each of your church’s ministries, or host a party for volunteers—these are simple ways to thank people (personally and privately) for the ways they support your church’s mission and vision.

Do it your way

Stewardship formation needs to be shaped to fit your faith community. In large churches, program planning for stewardship formation is often a clergy/staff function. In other congregations, the vestry might create a stewardship formation committee to coordinate programming throughout the year. Or your leadership team might make a start with a special committee, charged to find ways to recognize and celebrate stewards through the year. Encourage the committee to be creative. There are many ways to cultivate a culture that teaches, demonstrates, and celebrates faithful stewardship. Make a start and see what happens.

*This article is an excerpt from the 2015 edition of the Vestry Resource Guide, an ECF publication by **Nancy Davidge**, ECF associate program director and editor, ECF Vital Practices and church communications writer and consultant **Susan Elliott**. The Vestry*

Resource Guide *helps vestry members and clergy work together to become an effective, even transformational leadership team. With information and recommendations for congregations of all shapes and sizes, this is an essential tool to help vestries focus on what God is calling them to do in the world. Available in English or Spanish, and in both print and eBook formats.*

<http://www.episcopalfoundation.org/programs/ecf-publications/vestry-resource-guide>

<http://www.forwardmovement.org/Products/1951/the-vestry-resource-guide.aspx>

<http://www.forwardmovement.org/Products/1773/guacuttea-de-recursos.aspx>

Try This

Saying thank you in a variety of ways throughout the year is a great way to show appreciation for volunteers' time and also educate donors about how their funds are being used. The United Way's rule of thumb is thanking folks seven times throughout the year.

What might happen in your congregation if you were to adopt a discipline of gratitude? To get you thinking, here's some of what happened when St. John's Episcopal Church in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan adopted a discipline of gratitude:

- Members of the vestry meet with each of the ministry committees, bringing them pastries/cookies and a heartfelt word of thanks for their gifts to the parish.
- One member, who manages the local deli, was taken by this approach and now includes a "Round Robin Thank you" in his weekly meeting with deli staff. Each week a staff member is invited to share a story of gratitude about their work.
- Another member is a social worker; she was surprised to receive a heartfelt thank you from her boss for her work. This was her first note of thanks in four years of service to her community.
- The Faith and Money Network www.faithandmoneynetwork.org
- A Spirituality of Fundraising by Henri Nouwen, Upper Room, 2011. ISBN 10 083-581-0445.
- Transforming Stewardship by C.K. Robertson, Church Publishing, 2009. ISBN-13: 978-0-89869-607-3
- "What if Everyone Practiced Gratitude Year Round?" by Erin Weber-Johnson, ECF Vital Practices' Vital Post <http://www.ecfvp.org/posts/what-if-everyone-practiced-gratitude-year-round/>

Don't miss an issue of Vestry Papers! Sign up for your free subscription here. <http://www.ecfvp.org/account/register>

Resources

- "Creating a Culture of Giving" by Angela Emerson, ECF Vital Practices' Vital Post <http://www.ecfvp.org/posts/creating-a-culture-of-giving/>
- Good Sense Movement www.goodsensemovement.org/
- The Episcopal Network for Stewardship (TENS) www.tens.org

Raising Disciples, Generous Givers

BY GREG SYLER

Year after year, at the kickoff to the annual pledge campaign, we'd run up against the same basic things. Despite the fact that our community was growing and participation was increasing in worship and ministry, relatively few people turned in their pledge cards in a timely manner. And, instead of sparking some energy for change, the tasks of assembling giving estimates, mailing pledge letters, and putting together the budget were done with the same spirit as someone checking groceries off their shopping list. After all, our expenses were kept in line, and we guessed giving could be bumped up a little bit, here or there. I wouldn't say our approach was optimistic, but it was certainly cautious.

At the same time, there were other realities and these were causes for celebration and rejoicing. Overall giving was up and our reliance on fundraising income – often a primary source of volunteer burnout – was way down. More people were joining the St. George Valley Lee community and young families and children were filling up the parish hall and Sunday school. Ministry initiatives were growing, and targeted financial giving to ministries

– now set apart from the operating budget (<http://www.ecfvp.org/vestrypapers/practicing-generosity/reframing-stewardship/>) – was growing by leaps and bounds. Youth group, for instance, never really had much funding via the old operating budget but new enthusiasm, new leadership, and celebratory events sparked a huge increase in targeted giving to youth ministry. Outreach, too, went from a few thousand dollars to tens of thousands in giving, and giving away. All of this growth, both numerical and spiritual, was because we shifted our attention from programs to lives, from commitment to community, from institution to people.

Meeting institutional needs

But all our talk about moving away from institutional thinking doesn't actually mean ignoring the needs of the institution itself. Even though we'd trimmed our operating budget years ago to the bare essentials (salaries, utilities, office expenses, and insurance), we still had those expenses, which were helping build up the ministries and people-to-people engagements driving the community's overall success. We're

all ministers, of course, but some of us are compensated to do the work and coordinate the ministries, while most of our other ministers work at their day jobs. The parish administrator's salary, for instance, isn't just a number on paper: it's an investment in paying a specific person to act on the community's behalf in carrying out what the community discerns God is calling us to do. The institution still needs funding, and relatively significant and robust financial resources at that.

Which brings us back 'round to the initial challenge: how do you lift up ministry, participation, and engagement as the primary mission of the church and, at the same time, raise awareness and money for the institution called church?

Why we changed our approach

Our answer, some years back, was to ditch the traditional pledge drive system. (<http://www.ecfvp.org/posts/rethinking-the-pledge-part-2-a-new-way/>) Over time, we had noticed that the number of signed pledge cards was getting smaller and smaller, even though the amount of total dollars given,

especially through plate contributions, was getting larger and larger. The obvious fact was that people simply weren't signing their cards and mailing them back. We wondered if the amount of energy spent on hounding folks to sign and return their cards would actually return a more robust result. What if we were witnessing the early days of a larger trend away from institutional thinking and toward event-driven, people-to-people encounters with Christian community and God in Christ? So, instead of hounding people to sign and return pledge cards, we opted to send boxes of envelopes to all active members of the congregation and community.

I've written plenty about this process before, and I won't go into too many of those details because you can read about it – including the details and specifics – in my earlier writing, links to which are provided at the end of this article. In sum, overall giving grew (though modestly); expenses were kept in line, and what we once called the 'Open Pledge Campaign' worked, and works. At St. George's, we went from receiving roughly 70 signed pledge cards to distributing nearly 140 envelopes.

Overall, more people are using the envelopes from the boxes than were returning signed pledge cards. A significant benefit to this

approach is the ability to track box numbers without necessarily associating the number with a name.

Opportunity for greater participation

The Open Pledge Campaign gave us the opportunity to give everyone a goal for giving; we simply did the math for them: total budgeted expenses divided by total number of boxes mailed out equals someone's share.

This new campaign helped us get over a perennial obstacle to growth, namely, including everyone, even those who are new to the community and those who might have ideas that may challenge the way we've always done it. Through this campaign, everyone is included, and everyone is invited to full inclusion. Once a newcomer fills out a welcome card, which we specifically say on Sunday mornings is a more than sufficient offering for someone who's spent a few weeks checking us out, they get a welcome letter and a box of envelopes and an invitation to fully join. It may seem counterintuitive to say 'Welcome!' by handing someone a bill, but that welcome is nothing more than surface-level pleasantries if someone's invited to sip coffee but not have full access to the money and power and structure-

stuff. Real welcome means full inclusion, emphasis on the *full*.

Forming Disciples of Christ

A few years into this program what we're now learning is that we also need to be bolder in raising the standards of giving and membership. It's not that the Open Pledge Campaign failed us in this effort; it did not. It's just that this kind of campaign is more *descriptive* than *prescriptive*. It's enabled us to welcome and invite; it has not, however, helped us to raise the bar and teach, or form Disciples of Christ.

At St. George's, then, we're moving this year into a subtle, though we hope impactful, transformation of this program. No longer will we call it the Open Pledge Campaign, it's now the Generous Giver Campaign. People are still going to receive boxes of envelopes, but we're going to do a lot more teaching and a lot more norming. We believe that discipleship moves people toward generosity, and we also believe, in turn, that generosity can be an effective teaching tool for Christian discipleship. A timeless principle of Christian stewardship affirms that the reason the church asks people to give their time, talent, and treasure is because the church is teaching the gift of generosity. Generosity is, itself, an invaluable

life lesson and discipleship skill; disciples of Jesus give, and give without strings. That's what the cross is all about, after all, and the reason why Jesus didn't want people to know he was the Messiah until after the Passion. You could say St. George's new focus is actually in keeping with our other shifts, for this is moving away from institutional self-preservation (*...we need x amount of dollars*) to teaching and raising up disciples of Jesus (*God gave you x amount of dollars and only asks you to give 10% away*).

Raising the bar

The question I get asked most often by newcomers and those interested in working on their faith life as a part of this Christian community is "What do I need to do to become a member?" Sadly, the only thing I've been able to tell them so far is a paraphrase of our church's ridiculously low standards: "Well, come at least three times in the calendar year and give at least something in the offering plate and make sure the treasurer knows about it." Our shift from ditching the pledge to raising generous givers and disciples of Jesus is all about a shift away from maintenance and toward engagement, which carries with it standards, and increasing standards at that, and norms around how we use and deploy

our time, talent and, yes, treasure.

To that end, the Generous Giver Campaign is also about raising the bar. Our vestry recently affirmed that the church's standard of giving is the biblical standard of the tithe, which is giving 10 percent of one's income. They also passed a resolution establishing a new metric, the 'Fair Share,' which is a dollar amount determined by dividing the church's total budgeted expenses for the current year by the number of active giving envelopes for the previous year. If the tithe is the ceiling, the Fair Share is the floor. The reason we're doing this is because we've noticed, now with the benefit of being able to track patterns and practices of giving, that even long-time established members are not contributing as fully as needed, even though we suspect they have the means and the resources to do so. Given the ways in which ongoing giving does not meet ongoing expenses, we know people are not fully investing in the model of church they think they enjoy. Perhaps that model itself needs to change, and that is one thing we are actively pursuing, even as we're having this other conversation about increasing generosity and stepping up commitment.

Moving toward a Generous Giver Campaign means we, the church leadership, need to do a lot more

teaching. Ditching the pledge drive a few years back helped us welcome more and encourage greater participation, but, now, the challenge for us is to build upon that welcome and raise the standard, not just for those who are new among the faithful but for all who claim membership in this Christian community. We do this of course in prayer, above all, asking the Holy Spirit to do a whole lot more *formation* around generosity and practices of sacrificial giving, all of which are a part of discipleship.

Greg Syler is the rector of St. George's Episcopal Church <http://www.stgeorgesvalleylee.org> in Valley Lee, Maryland, the oldest continuous Anglican parish in Maryland and, today, a vibrant, historic congregation in the Diocese of Washington. Greg has served on Diocesan Council, convenes the Region 6 Clericus, is a member of the Southern Maryland Steering Committee, and a leader in collaborative Episcopal ministries in southern Maryland. He also helped envision and create and, together with others, runs Camp EDOW -- the diocese's first ever summer camp for kids and youth.

Try This

Other people's ideas or processes can be a valuable starting point for congregations looking to make a change. As Anna Olson writes in "Other People's Ideas" <http://www.ecfvp.org/posts/other-peoples-ideas/>, the experiences of other congregations can serve as a starting point for conversations. Here's how she describes the process:

"What if we read to understand their discernment process? How did they get from 'we've always done it...' to 'let's try...?' What wasn't working? How could they tell? What did they figure out about why it wasn't working? What gave them courage to ditch the "always done it" way? How did they work with people's doubts about change? How does what they decided to try reflect what they figured out about their people, their place, their strengths and weaknesses?"

"Now you've got something you can use, even if your context looks very different from the one you are reading about. What isn't working in your place? What would it take to change it? What is it about your particular place that makes this thing not work? What are your

people good at? What makes them feel able to give of themselves? How might you use that knowledge to come up with a new idea of your own?"

"Someone else's *Something* may not work for you. What can you learn from someone else's effective discernment to make your own effective as well?"

What might your congregation learn from the experience of St. George's Episcopal Church?

Resources

- A Spirituality of Fundraising by Henri J.M. Nouwen <http://www.amazon.com/Spirituality-Fundraising-Henri-Nouwen/dp/0835810445>
- All Saints' Mad-lib Pledge Card, ECF Vital Practices' Your Turn offering <http://www.ecfvp.org/yourturn/all-saints-mad-lib-pledge-card/>
- "Become What You Receive" by Greg Syler, ECF Vital Practices' Vestry Papers, September 2014, <http://www.ecfvp.org/vestry-papers/sharing-our-gifts/become-what-you-receive/>
- "Measuring an Open

Contribution Giving Campaign" by Greg Syler, ECF Vital Practices, April 9, 2014 <http://www.ecfvp.org/posts/measuring-an-open-contribution-giving-campaign/>

- "Reframing Stewardship" by Greg Syler, ECF Vital Practices' Vestry Papers, September 2012 <http://www.ecfvp.org/vestry-papers/practicing-generosity/reframing-stewardship/>
- "Rethinking the Pledge, Part 1: It's Not Stewardship" by Greg Syler, ECF Vital Practices' Vital Post, October 9, 2013 <http://www.ecfvp.org/posts/rethinking-the-pledge-part-1-its-not-stewardship/>
- "Rethinking the Pledge, Part 2: A New Way" by Greg Syler, ECF Vital Practices' Vital Post, October 23, 2013 <http://www.ecfvp.org/posts/rethinking-the-pledge-part-2-a-new-way/>

Don't miss an issue of Vestry Papers! Sign up for your free subscription here. <http://www.ecfvp.org/account/register>

The 2% Campaign

BY CARLA E. ROLAND GUZMÁN

Many churchgoers have heard of the biblical and spiritual tenet of tithing or giving/returning 10 percent to God through the church. In some contexts the tithe is called a pledge or promise because it is a pledge to God given to the church. The stewardship materials used by congregations may reference the biblical foundations of tithing. Even so, many congregational leaders do not know where or how to start working toward the biblical and spiritual practice of tithing. The proposal here is that you start with a minimum of 2 percent.

I consider the first barrier to contributing at the 2 percent level or higher, to be the lack of knowledge or awareness of the relationship between what a person or family puts in the offering plate or envelope and the financial resources of that same person or family. For most, if giving is based on what is in your wallet Sunday morning, it will not be tithing.

Almsgiving, offerings, tithes

The second barrier in progressing toward the biblical and spiritual practice of tithing has to do with a lack of understanding of the differ-

ence between almsgiving, offerings, and tithes.

The following illustration may make the difference more apparent. Look at the contents of your wallet; imagine that you have \$57, two twenty dollar bills, one ten dollar bill, one five dollar bill, and two singles.

1) Scenario A: Help: you are walking down the street and someone asks you for money and you feel moved to give that person money. Look at your wallet, how much would you give? In my experience, the majority of times it is the one dollar bill. That \$1 will most likely not make a difference in your finances, but you feel good that you gave it away. *This is almsgiving.*

2) Scenario B: Thanksgiving: You attend a special service at your church or are a visitor at another church. In thanksgiving for the service, the occasion, or the designation of the funds of the offering plate, you feel moved to contribute something. Look at your wallet, how much would you give? In my experience, I believe that it is very reasonable to think about giving \$10, \$20,

\$30 or even more. You are able to do so, because it is not a recurring expense, it is something that you do in response to the benefit or joy that you have received. I sometimes think of it in terms of entertainment – how much am I willing to spend on a movie, a concert, a museum, or one-time contributions to a nonprofit organization. For purposes of this illustration, let's say that you felt moved to contribute \$30. *This is an offering.*

3) Scenario C: Pledge from the whole: You've had a great week, you gave alms to the needy and attended a special event, now it is Sunday morning and you look in your wallet and you decide to give and even tithe. You have \$26 left in your wallet, so your tithe would be \$2.60. But your income is not only \$26. We can immediately see that what you carry in your wallet does not correlate with the total of your resources and the decision-making process that goes into giving. Furthermore, it would not look great for a person to dig into the offering plate to get change so they can give their \$2.60 tithe.

So in scenario C, you have thought about your weekly/monthly income and have come ready to church with your check for the amount of giving you have promised. *This is a tithe or a pledge.*

Determining giving level

Now that we are aware of the difference between almsgiving, offerings, and tithes, there are two more barriers to overcome.

1) The churchgoer needs to be given the tools and information to determine what the best level of giving they can afford (and fulfill) is. This means educating about giving, but also providing them with worksheets (with examples) that may help in the determination.

2) Even without knowing or asking how much people make, clergy and stewardship-committee members need to be bold in their asking and set the minimum levels of giving for the congregation.

So some tidbits may be helpful:

- Why 2 percent? The average giving for mainline church Christians in the US is around 2 percent, so why not start by beating the average!

■ Those who come from Roman Catholic backgrounds are used to almsgiving, since there is not always a correlation between what they put in the plate and the functioning of the parish and the salaries of the clergy. In some ways this is the beauty of our Episcopal tradition: people can contribute to the very work and ministry of the congregation they attend; they literally have ownership through their giving.

■ The minimum Social Security/SSI benefit is about \$900 per month. A tithe from this would be \$90, 2 percent is \$18 per month or between \$4 and \$4.50 per week. So if we use this most basic safety net in our society as a barometer, there should not be any pledges in our congregations that are less than \$4 per week.

This chart shows giving amounts at 2 percent, 5 percent, and a full 10 percent tithe, based on monthly income:

If your monthly income is \$900:

Tithing 10% per month/per year = \$90/\$1,080

5% per month/per year = \$45/\$540

2% per month/per year =

\$18/\$204

If your monthly income is \$2,000:

Tithing 10% per month/per year = \$200/\$2,400

5% per month/per year = \$100/\$1,200

2% per month/per year = \$40/\$480

If your monthly income is \$5,000

Tithing 10% per month/per year = \$5000/\$6,000

5% per month/per year = \$250/\$3,000

2% per month/per year = \$100/\$1,200

Once people are in the habit of starting from a minimum standard (2 percent), it is incumbent on those who are doing the asking to make sure to adjust year after year for at least a cost of living adjustment (COLA), and help everyone progress toward the biblical and spiritual practice of tithing.

In short, starting at 2 percent and growing to 10 percent is doable if we know the basis of our giving. Everyone in the congregation can

do this; everyone can participate according to their means.

Carla E. Roland Guzmán is rector of the Episcopal Church of Saint Matthew and Saint Timothy (www.smstchurch.org), a bilingual congregation in New York City. She was ordained in the Diocese of Puerto Rico and has served for 12 years in the Diocese of New York. She currently serves as co-chair of the Faith, Family & Equality Latin@ Roundtable (<http://fefamiliaigualdad.org/about/staff/>) that develops materials for Latin@ Congregations and Families to understand and accept members of the LGBTQ Community (www.clgs.org).

Try This

How might you adapt this practice to your congregation?

Resources

- Lessons from an Annual Giving Campaign, ECF Vital Practices' Vestry Papers <http://www.ecfvp.org/vestrypapers/pledging/lessons-from-an-annual-giving-campaign/>

Don't miss an issue of Vestry Papers! Sign up for your free subscription here. <http://www.ecfvp.org/account/register>

- Episcopal Church of Saint Matthew and Saint Timothy www.smstchurch.org
- "How much should I give worksheet" a resource from Episcopal Church of Saint Matthew and Saint Timothy - see online article for link to the pdf of this worksheet

La Campaña del 2%

POR CARLA E. ROLAND GUZMÁN

La mayoría de las personas que asisten a la iglesia han oído sobre el principio bíblico y espiritual del diezmo o de dar o devolver a Dios el 10% mediante la iglesia. Los materiales de mayordomía que emplean las feligresías pueden mencionar los fundamentos bíblicos del diezmo. Aun así, muchos/as líderes de feligresías no saben ni dónde ni cómo empezar a avanzar hacia la práctica bíblica y espiritual del diezmo. Lo que se propone en el presente es empezar con un mínimo del 2%.

En mi opinión, lo que más impide que la gente contribuya a un nivel del 2% o más es la falta de conocimiento de la relación entre lo que se pone en el plato o el sobre de ofrenda y los recursos financieros de ellos o de sus familias. Para la mayoría de los feligreses, por no decir todos, lo que dan todos los domingos depende de lo que tienen en su billetera, pero eso no es un diezmo.

Limosnas, ofrendas y diezmos (promesas)

El segundo impedimento de progresar hacia la práctica bíblica y espiritual del diezmo se debe a la

falta de entendimiento de la diferencia entre limosnas, ofrendas y diezmos.

La siguiente ilustración puede ayudar a aclarar la diferencia. Mire el contenido de su cartera o bolsillo. Digamos que tiene \$57, dos billetes de \$20, un billete de \$10, un billete de \$5 y dos billetes de \$1.

1) Situación No. 1 - AYUDAR: Está caminando por la calle y alguien le pide dinero. La persona le da lástima y se lo da. Mire en su cartera, ¿cuánto le daría? En mi experiencia, la mayoría de las veces es un billete de \$1. Lo más probable es que ese billete de \$1 no altere sus finanzas, pero se siente bien en darlo. *Esto es una limosna.*

2) Situación No. 2 - ACCIÓN DE GRACIAS: Va a un servicio especial en su iglesia o visita otra iglesia. En acción de gracias por ese servicio religioso, decide contribuir dinero a esa iglesia. Mire en su cartera, ¿cuánto daría? En mi experiencia, creo que es muy razonable dar \$10, \$20, \$30 o aún más. Usted puede dar esa cantidad porque no es un gasto que se va a repetir. A veces comparo

esto con lo que se gasta en esparcimiento. ¿Cuánto estoy dispuesta a gastar en el cine, un concierto, un museo o una contribución (no recurrente) a una organización sin fines de lucro? Para efectos de este ejemplo, digamos que la contribución es de \$30. *Esto es una ofrenda.*

3) Situación No. 3 - PROMESA DEL TODO: Ha tenido una gran semana, dio limosnas al necesitado y fue a un evento especial; ahora es domingo, busca en su cartera y decide dar a la iglesia, inclusive dar el diezmo. Le quedan \$26 en su cartera, por lo tanto su diezmo es de \$2.60. Pero sus ingresos no son sólo de \$26. Puede ver inmediatamente que lo que lleva en la cartera no tiene correlación alguna con el total de sus recursos ni con el proceso de toma de decisiones que debería seguir al determinar su promesa o contribución a la iglesia. Aún más, no quedaría bien poner monedas en el plato de ofrendas para poder dar sus \$2.60. Por lo tanto, en la situación No. 3 pensó en sus ingresos semanales o mensuales y fue a la iglesia con un cheque con la cantidad que prometió. *Esto es un*

un diezmo o una promesa.

Determinación del nivel de donativo

Ingreso mensual = \$900

Diezmo (10%) por mes/por año = \$90/\$1,020

5% por mes/por año = \$45/\$510

2% por mes/por año = \$18/\$204

Ingreso mensual = \$2,000

Diezmo (10%) por mes/por año = \$200/\$2,400

5% por mes/por año = \$100/\$1,200

2% por mes/por año = \$40/\$480

Ingreso mensual = \$5,000

Diezmo (10%) por mes/por año = \$500/\$6,000

5% por mes/por año = \$250/\$3,000

2% por mes/por año = \$100/\$1,200

Ahora que estamos conscientes de la diferencia entre las limosnas, las ofrendas y el diezmo, hay otras

dos barreras que sobrepasar.

1) Se debe proporcionar a los que asisten a la iglesia las herramientas e información necesarias para determinar cuál es la mejor cantidad de contribución que pueden prometer y cumplir. Esto requiere instrucción sobre generosidad y hojas de ejercicio para hacer los cálculos necesarios (con ejemplos).

2) Incluso sin saber o preguntar cuánto gana una persona o familia, los/as miembros/as del sacerdocio y del comité de mayordomía deben ser audaces en su pedir y establecer cantidades mínimas de diezmos y promesas en sus feligresías.

Otros datos que pueden ayudar:

- ¿Por qué el 2%? Tradicionalmente, el promedio de contribuciones a iglesias en EE UU ha sido de alrededor del 2%, entonces ¿por qué no empezar sobrepasando ese promedio?
- Los/as que provienen de la tradición católica romana están acostumbrados a la limosna, ya que no siempre existe una correlación entre lo que se pone en el plato y el funcionamiento de la parroquia y los salarios del clero. En cierto modo este es uno de los aspectos más bellos

de nuestra tradición episcopal: los/as contribuyen al trabajo y ministerio de la feligresía a la que asisten son dueños/as mediante su generosidad.

- La prestación mínima del Seguro Social o SSI es de alrededor de \$900 por mes. Un diezmo sería de \$90, el 2% sería \$18 por mes o de \$4 a \$4.50 por semana. Por lo tanto, si empleamos la cantidad mínima del seguro social, las promesas en nuestras feligresías no deber ser de menos de \$4 por semana.

Una vez que la gente adquiere el hábito de comenzar desde un punto mínimo (2%), los/as que están a cargo de las campañas anuales de aportes a las iglesias deben ajustar esa cantidad, teniendo en consideración el aumento del costo de vida y ayudar a los feligreses/as a progresar hacia la práctica bíblica y espiritual del diezmo.

En resumen, empezando por el 2% se puede aumentar al 10% si estamos conscientes del fundamento de nuestros donativos. Todos/as pueden participar según sus recursos.

Carla E. Roland Guzmán es rectora de Episcopal Church of Saint Matthew and Saint Timothy (www.smstchurch.org), una feligresía en la Ciudad de Nueva York. Fue ordenada en la Diócesis de Puerto Rico y ha servido por 12 años en la Diócesis de Nueva York. Es copresidenta de Fe, Familia, Igualdad: La Mesa Redonda Latin@ (<http://fefamiliaigualdad.org/es/sobrenosotros/mesa-redonda-latinoa/>) que elabora materiales para que las feligresías y familias latinas entiendan y acepten a los miembros de la comunidad LGBTQ.

Recursos

- Episcopal Church of Saint Matthew and Saint Timothy www.smstchurch.org
- “¿Cuánto debo dar” una recursos de la Episcopal Church of Saint Matthew and Saint Timothy
- Lecciones de una Campaña Anual de Donativos <http://www.ecfvp.org/vestrypapers/pledging/lecciones-de-una-campaa-anual-de-donativos/>

¡No se pierda ningún número de Artículos de la Junta Parroquial! Inscríbese aquí para recibirlos sin cargo. <http://www.ecfvp.org/account/register>

Antidote to Anxiety (About Raising \$)

BY LESLIE PENDLETON

That subject has come up again at your vestry meeting. You thought you were done talking about it: *It's the wrong time, it makes people nervous, wait for the new vestry, the need isn't that great, people just don't have the deep pockets, we aren't even meeting our annual budget needs, people will leave the church if we ask for more, we are here to do God's work - not keep our buildings pretty.*

Does this sound familiar? Have you had some of these same thoughts when the subject of a capital campaign is raised at your church? When speaking with other capital campaign consultants the conversation inevitably turns to the ever-present ANXIETY experienced by vestries, clergy, and committees when considering a campaign or in the midst of one. Anxiety, *an extreme uneasiness of mind or brooding fear about some contingency* (Merriam-Webster), is a huge impediment to churches that need to raise money for deferred maintenance, debt repayment, new buildings, or other extraordinary projects. A major task of a capital campaign consultant is to find ways to calm the fears of church leaders.

My hunch is that there has always been an element of worry associated with raising money for our churches, yet when reading church histories about how people came together to build a church in the midst of the Great Depression in the 1930s or in barely established towns, I am struck by how the burden of raising the money is not documented. The motivating factors seem to have been community and the future. Perhaps when our historic churches were built, there were greater things to fear than failure.

For those in our current culture who choose to belong to a church community, it is difficult to drown out the voices of doom. *Our denomination is shrinking- we can't maintain these old buildings- we need to outdo all the other guys in town- where are all the young families?* It is especially difficult to ignore those voices when we are asking people to invest in the future of the church. But this is exactly what a successful capital campaign can do. It can turn down the volume on doom and focus the conversation on the future, God's plan for us, and what part we play in the plan.

The key word here is "successful," and it does not only mean reaching the monetary goal. The money is the means to allowing a congregation to engage in a common vision. New classrooms for more children, paid off debt to allow more money from the budget to be put toward ministry, air-conditioning to maximize the usage of a building for outreach or community use. If people in the pews are not invited to dream about the possibilities for the future, anxiety wins. *Fear* of the future wins, instead of *excitement* for the future.

One of my consultant colleagues actually writes "freak-outs" into the campaign plan because experience tells her when the highs and lows will occur. She says, "leadership secretly worries that they'll be tarred by the failure of the campaign; certain parishioners not-so-secretly worry that no one else will 'step up' to the same level as they have; and other parishioners worry that they have been led into an insane financial folly by that intransigent Old Guard." Until you get them to the finish line.

The antidote for anxiety:

- The opportunity for all voices and ideas to be heard
- Time for consensus to form around a common vision
- Constant communications and updates
- Continual engagement of new volunteers
- Financial transparency
- All projects linked to future ministry

Once a congregation is engaged with the need for a campaign, a feasibility study is the next step of reassurance. Formally surveying the congregation provides the final information necessary for success. It establishes a realistic goal, project priorities, and is a vehicle for detailed comments of support or concern. It is often the case that once a feasibility report is delivered to the congregation, the first sigh of relief is heard, and voices of doom begin to fade. The voices get louder again before all the pledges are in, but fade out with the celebration and thanksgiving for a successful campaign.

Leslie Pendleton is associate program director and capital campaign consultant for ECF. She has worked with a diversity of congregations,

enthusiastically guiding them through the communal process of a capital campaign.

Previously Leslie directed the Bishops' Fund for Children in the Diocese of Connecticut where she was responsible for all fund raising, board development, donor relations, and writing of marketing and appeal materials. With her perspective as a clergy spouse, Leslie has in-depth knowledge of the day-to-day joys and challenges parishes face today, and she is passionate about helping congregations identify and embrace their missions for future ministry.

Try This

Is your congregation riddled with anxiety over finances? Acknowledging individual fears and concerns by providing a forum for naming and addressing concerns can be a healthy first step. How might you create time – and a safe space – where members of the congregation can air their questions, concerns, and fears and participate in an open and honest dialogue?

Resources

- “From Scarcity to Generosity” by Mary MacGregor, ECF Vital Practices’ Vestry Papers <http://www.ecfvp.org/vestrypapers/rethinking-stewardship/from-scarcity-to-generosity/>

www.ecfvp.org/vestrypapers/rethinking-stewardship/from-scarcity-to-generosity/

- “The Truth Will Have To Do” by Erin Weber-Johnson, ECF Vital Practices’ Vital Post <http://www.ecfvp.org/posts/the-truth-will-have-to-do/>
- “Transformational Side Effects of Capital Campaigns” an ECF webinar presented by Leslie Pendleton <http://www.ecfvp.org/webinars/transformational-side-effects-of-capital-campaigns/>

Don't miss an issue of Vestry Papers! Sign up for your free subscription at www.ecfvp.org.

Campaña de Generosidad

POR VÍCTOR H. CONRADO

Nuestra experiencia en la Iglesia Episcopal de San Marcos de Glen Ellyn, una iglesia bilingüe y multiétnica, ha sido muy interesante desde el punto de vista de las relaciones. Nos relacionamos con Dios, con los/as demás, con el medio ambiente y con nosotros/as mismos/as.

Mi experiencia con la mayordomía ha sido transformadora. Llamamos nuestra campaña de mayordomía Campaña de Generosidad: todos/as tenemos TALENTOS, TIEMPO y TESORO. Muchos de nuestros/as parroquianos/as no estaban familiarizados/as con el término mayordomía. Tras realizar una encuesta al respecto en nuestra parroquia, decidimos que emplearíamos la palabra *Stewardship* en inglés y Generosidad en español, porque muchos hispanos se identificaban más fácilmente con este último término.

La experiencia ha sido mixta. En general, nuestros/as parroquianos/as participan en nuestra campaña anual, pero es frustrante ver que tienden a valorar el tesoro y a no valorar suficientemente los otros dones que ellos mismos nos

brindan: tiempo y talento.

¿Qué nos ha funcionado?

Nuestra Campaña de Generosidad se realiza principalmente durante el mes de octubre. Hablamos sobre ella en las homilías, invitamos a parroquianos/as y a miembros/as de la comunidad que beneficiaron del trabajo de la parroquia a que narren sus experiencias, enviamos correspondencia a los hogares y entregamos volantes sobre la generosidad durante y después de la eucaristía. El día de Todos/as los Santos/as se entregan tarjetas de promesa de donaciones (son tarjetas grandes, de color llamativo y claras en las que se indica que se puede contribuir en línea o con los sobres). Se circulan listas en las que la gente se puede inscribir para donar su tiempo o talento. El objetivo es que todas las familias y todos/as los parroquianos/as llenen una tarjeta. Animamos las promesas simbólicas. Los/as sacerdotes también llenan visiblemente la tarjeta. Durante ese mes se celebra la generosidad de los/as miembros/as de la iglesia durante el año.

Estamos en contacto constante con los/as parroquianos/as durante el año. Contamos con un comité permanente de Generosidad que se reúne cuatro veces por año. El comité está compuesto de manera tal que refleja nuestra realidad bilingüe y multiétnica. Visitamos los hogares de las familias, realizamos llamadas telefónicas, enviamos mensajes de texto y empleamos Facebook. El cuarto domingo de cada mes celebramos la Generosidad. Un domingo durante la formación de adultos/as tenemos un foro para hablar de la Generosidad y ayudar a la gente nueva a entender el tema y los/as invitamos durante todo el año a realizar su promesa de donativos.

Fijamos metas de promesas. Este año nos fijamos la meta de 300 promesas y ya tenemos 312... y esperamos obtener más.

Se estimula que se organicen eventos para apoyar a la parroquia. Estos eventos, cuatro máximos durante el año, se organizan alrededor de festividades y celebraciones culturales.

Transparencia. Nuestros/as parroquianos/as reciben su estado de cuenta tres veces por año. Nuestros informes financieros figuran en nuestra página web e invitamos a la gente a que los vean. Una vez por mes publicamos un informe financiero sencillo en nuestra página web y después de todas las eucaristías exhibimos el nombre de un/a integrante del comité de finanzas como contacto.

No se cobra por los sacramentos. Esto nos permite hablar más sobre la generosidad que se confiere y la responsabilidad con el sitio.

Los salones de la parroquia se pueden utilizar sin costo. Se piden donaciones para cubrir los gastos. Hablamos sobre deberes y derechos.

¿Qué no nos ha funcionado?

- El término mayordomía.
- La gente a veces no trae los sobres a la iglesia, pero siempre tenemos más a mano por si no los tienen.
- Todavía no hemos podido crear un sistema electrónico de donativos que la gente use. Tenemos uno, pero muy pocos/as lo usan.

- Enviar correspondencia por correo. Decidimos emplear este método únicamente para los/as parroquianos/as “anglos/as” y para algunos hispanos/as-latinos/as. Hemos visto que la mayoría de los/as parroquianos/as hispanos/as no entran en contacto con esta clase de correspondencia. Además, algunos/as parroquianos/as hispanos/as no nos dan su dirección.

- Entrar en diálogo con la mentalidad de limosna de la Iglesia Católica Romana. No ha sido fácil esta transición.

- Tener preconcepciones y suposiciones sobre los hispanos/as-latinos/as. Se supone a menudo que los/as parroquianos/as hispanos/as-latinos/as no emplean medios electrónicos para hacer sus promesas de donativos. Es importante tener más documentación e información en inglés y en español en la página web y en otros medios. Nos estamos esforzando en crear un sitio bilingüe para realizar promesas de donativos en línea. Estamos realizando una encuesta para determinar qué piensa la gente al respecto. La encuesta es informal, simplemente les preguntamos a los parroquianos hispanos/as-latinos/as cuál es la probabilidad de que

realicen sus promesas de donativos electrónicamente. Hasta el momento la mayoría dijo que era poco probable.

Entendemos la generosidad como un aprendizaje continuo. No tememos errar en nuestros métodos y tácticas. Al contrario, siempre intentamos aprender de nuestros fallos para mejorar nuestra campaña.

Para nosotros/as siempre ha sido importante pensar que todos/as los parroquianos/as pueden ser parte de esta campaña. Por lo general, los/as líderes latinos/as, tanto del sacerdocio como del laicado, tienden a pensar que los/as hispanos/as son pobres. Esta actitud hace que sea difícil ayudar a nuestros/as hermanos y hermanas a ser parte activa de la comunidad de la iglesia. No hablamos sólo del tesoro. También hablamos del tiempo y del talento, y aprendimos que es importante crear un espacio para que la gente sienta que aportar tiempo y talento a la campaña de generosidad también cuenta. En San Marcos nos esforzamos para hacer que todos/as encuentren una manera de participar en esta campaña.

Sabemos que no es fácil y es por eso que damos mucha importancia al contacto directo con la

persona y su familia, así como con la comunidad en general. No tememos pedir a la gente cuando se ha creado un sentido de generosidad que abarca talento, tiempo y tesoro. Estamos en constante relación con Dios, con los/as demás, con el medio ambiente y con nosotros/as mismas. Es por eso que todos tenemos algo que aportar. Esta invitación es ilimitada.

*Antes de ser llamado a servir como párroco adjunto de San Marcos, en octubre de 2011, **Víctor H. Conrado** se desempeñó por 11 años como sacerdote misionero de la Iglesia Católica Romana en Kenia, África. Víctor está casado con Lucía, directora de finanzas y operaciones de la Catedral St. James, en Chicago. Tienen dos hijos, David Antonio y Daniel Santiago. Víctor es presidente del Comité de Asuntos Hispanos/Latinos de la Diócesis de Chicago.*

sanmarcos.
glenellyn?pnref=story

- Videos sobre la mayordomía
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL2aHXsg3WpN1o7L6GrHWaSH1nD113cU69>
- Cómo tener una actitud de gratitud al dar <http://www.ecfvp.org/vestrypapers/sharing-our-gifts/actitud-de-gratitud/>
- Cómo ver al dinero como una práctica espiritual <http://www.stjohnsonthegreen.org/?p=31>

¡No se pierda ningún número de Artículos de la Junta Parroquial! Inscríbese aquí para recibirlos sin cargo. <http://www.ecfvp.org/account/register>

Recurson

- La Iglesia Episcopal de San Marcos les da la bienvenida <http://www.stmarksglenellyn.org/horario-durante-la-semana/>
- Página de Facebook de la Iglesia Episcopal de San Marcos <https://www.facebook.com/>

Campaign of Generosity

BY VÍCTOR H. CONRADO

Our experience at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, a bilingual and multiethnic church in Glen Ellyn, Illinois, has been very interesting from the point of view of relationships. We have a relationship with God, with others, with the environment, and with ourselves.

At the same time, my experience with stewardship has been transformative. At St. Mark's we call our stewardship campaign *Campaña de Generosidad* (Campaign of Generosity), as we believe that all of us have talents, time and treasure. We chose this name as many of our parishioners were not familiar with the term stewardship. After doing an informal survey about it in our parish, we decided to use the word *Stewardship* for our "Anglo" parishioners and *Generosity* for our Hispanic/Latino ones, because it was easier for many Hispanics to identify with the latter term.

Our results have been mixed. In general, our parishioners participate in our annual pledge drive, but it is frustrating to see that they tend to value the treasure much more than they value the other gifts that they freely bestow on us:

time and talent.

What has worked for us?

Our *Campaña de Generosidad* takes place mainly during the month of October. We talk about it in the homilies, we invite members of the parish and of the community who benefitted from the parish's work to share their experiences, we send mail to members' homes, and we distribute flyers about generosity during and after the Eucharist. Throughout the month, we celebrate the generosity the members of the church exhibited throughout the previous year. On All Saints Day we distribute pledge cards (the cards are large and brightly colored, and clearly explain that pledges can be fulfilled online or with the envelopes.) Lists, inviting people to add their names to donate their time or talent, are also circulated. Our goal is to have every family and every parishioner fill out a card and/or donate time or talent. We also encourage symbolic pledges. Clergy also fill out the cards, very visibly.

We stay in touch with the parishioners throughout the year. Our *Generosidad* standing committee,

whose membership reflects our bilingual and multiethnic reality, meets four times a year. Our approach includes home visits to our parishioner families, making phone calls, sending text messages, and communicating through Facebook. The fourth Sunday of every month we celebrate our parishioners' generosity. One Sunday during adult education we have a forum to talk about generosity and help new people understand the issue, and we invite them throughout the year to fulfill their pledges.

We set pledging goals. Our 2015 goal was 300 pledges and we already have 312... and counting.

We encourage our members to organize events to support our parish. These events, a maximum of four during the year, are organized around cultural festivities and celebrations.

Practicing transparency. Our parishioners receive personal account statements three times a year. We also remind members regularly (often in the announcements made during a worship service) that the congregation's

financial reports are posted on our website and encourage them to look at “St. Mark’s Financials at-a-Glance,” a feature in our monthly newsletter, as well as to contact the treasurer or member of the finance committee with questions.

We do not charge members for sacraments. This enables us to talk even more about the generosity they receive and their responsibility towards the site.

Members can use the parish halls free of charge. We ask for donations to cover expenses and we talk about rights and duties.

What has not worked for us?

- The term stewardship in Spanish (mayordomía.)
- Sometimes people forget to bring their envelopes to the church, so we always keep some handy.
- So far we have been unable to create an electronic means for pledging that people will actually use. We have one, but very few parishioners use it.
- Mailing materials to parishioners’ homes. We decided to use this method only with Anglo parishioners and some Hispanic/Latinos. It has been

our experience that the majority of the Hispanic parishioners do not respond to this type of correspondence. Also, some Hispanic parishioners do not give us their physical address.

- Attempting to integrate our campaign with the focus on almsgiving of the Roman Catholic Church. This transition has not been easy.
- Having preconceptions and assumptions about Hispanics/Latinos. It is often assumed that Hispanic/Latino parishioners do not use electronic media to pledge. It is important to have documentation in English and Spanish in the website and other media. We are working on building a bilingual site to pledge on line. Right now we surveying people to find out what they think about it. It is an informal survey, we just ask the parishioners how likely they are to pledge electronically. So far the majority said it was not likely.

A constant learning process

We understand generosity as a constant learning process. We are not afraid of erring in our methods and tactics. Instead, we try to learn from our mistakes to improve our pledge drive.

At St. Mark’s we try to find a way for everybody to participate in the pledge drive. In general, Latino leaders, from the clergy as well as the laity, tend to think that Hispanics are poor. This attitude makes it hard for us to help our brothers and sisters be an active part of the community of the church. We do not talk only about the treasure. We also talk about time and talent, and we learned that it is important to create a space for people to feel that donating their time and talent to the generosity drive also counts.

We know this is not easy work, and that is why we think that it is so important to personally contact individuals and families, as well as members of the community at large. We are not afraid to ask people when a sense of generosity that encompasses talent, time and treasure has been created. We have a permanent relationship with God, with others, with the environment, and with ourselves. That is why every single one of us has something to contribute. This invitation is unlimited.

Before being called to serve as associate rector at St. Mark's in October 2011, **Victor H. Conrado** was a Roman Catholic missionary priest who worked for 11 years in Kenya, Africa. Victor is married to Lucia, finance and operations director at St James Cathedral, Chicago. They have two sons, David Antonio and Daniel Santiago. Victor is the president of the Hispanic/Latino Affairs Commission of the Diocese of Chicago.

- "What is a Pledge?" A resource from St. Mark's Episcopal Church <http://www.stmarksglenellyn.org/what-is-a-pledge/>

Don't miss an issue of Vestry Papers! Sign up for your free subscription at www.ecfvp.org.

Resources

- "Giving is Growing in Faith?" A resource from St. Mark's Episcopal Church <http://www.stmarksglenellyn.org/giving-is-growing-in-faith/>
- "How Does St. Mark's Make You Feel?" video <http://www.stmarksglenellyn.org/giving-is-growing-in-faith/>
- "Model Intentional Giving" by Laurel Johnston, ECF Vital Practices' Vestry Papers <http://www.ecfvp.org/vestrypapers/pledging/model-intentional-giving/>
- St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Glen Ellyn, Illinois <http://www.stmarksglenellyn.org>