



Stewardship and Abundance

Enough Love to Go Around

Jimmy Bartz

While driving my truck over Teton Pass a few years ago, a conversation with friends turned to the topic of abundance. The three of us were living in Los Angeles at the time, but we came to the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem in search of Snake River Fine Spotted Cutthroat Trout and rich conversations – like this one that began with our ascent into the Tetons. Each of us, in different ways, had invested time and energy in social-emotional or spiritual growth as we began to reach midlife. And in those days in Los Angeles, you could hardly have a conversation regarding wellbeing and human flourishing without someone bringing the word *abundance* into the conversation. Whether you were making the rounds of LA’s progressive Christian circles or following the paths of secular-spiritual, self-help gurus of Southern California, the concept of “living abundantly,” almost always in contrast to “living in scarcity,” was ever present and on trend.

As we made our way around mountain curves, I listened as my pals pledged to live out their professional careers, to embody their roles as husband and father, and to be the kind of friend that lived abundantly. It felt appropriately ambitious for our context, but it was just rubbing me wrong. Something had always bothered me about the adoption of abundance thinking, especially in light of the excess that surrounded our lives in West Los Angeles. While my pals made their pledges to abundance, I remained silent. Because of my profession and role as priest, I knew the conversation was coming my way. And it did.

The problem with abundance

“Curious to know your thinking about abundance, Padre,” came the inquiry from the back seat of my truck. These two are dear friends – each successful in his chosen area of business, each committed to the process of life-long learning and spiritual growth. You just don’t befriend a priest without that kind of commitment. We’re too much trouble. I responded with, “You know (and they didn’t), you know, I’m just trying to focus on *enough*.” I told them there was something that troubled me with the idea of seeking to live abundantly when our lives were so immersed in a culture of excess.

I told them that I struggle a bit here and that I wanted to grow into a contentment with simply having enough, rather than pursuing a life of more and more and more. I told them that’s what I wanted for my children – enough educational opportunity for my younger child, enough support and structure and care for my older, disabled child. I told them that I hoped my family would always have enough money to provide for our needs and for some of our desires. I told them I hoped for enough time to develop meaningful friendships like the ones we shared. I told them that I believe what we’re really seeking in our focus on abundance is the assurance that there’s enough love to go around. (There is.) We were quiet. I hoped my friends didn’t feel criticized.

This conversation took place several years ago, and I've taken a good deal of time with the concept of *enough* since then. Each time that I've begun to feel anxious about resources – time, money, opportunity – I've asked myself a simple question: "Jimmy, do you have enough?" And each time, I've been able to respond with "yes, more than enough."

A counter-cultural idea

While I feel like this time I've had with *enough* has helped to settle me into the Kingdom, at the same time, it feels contrary to the cultural messages for striving that came toward me at every turn as a privileged, white male. There's that famous exchange between a newspaper reporter and John D. Rockefeller. "How much money is enough?" asked the reporter. Mr. Rockefeller responded, "Just a little bit more." That's the culture I grew up in. It was a blessing. And it was a curse. It was most assuredly filled with the large measure of privilege that came my way unearned, as privilege does.

So I worry a little. I worry about what we accidentally and with the best of intentions do when we profess to our beloved, family or congregation that we are built for abundance. To be sure, abundance is not lost on me. I live in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. I am surrounded by more abundant natural beauty than any of the other places on the planet I've been privileged to visit. And there's a lot of money here, too. Some have begun to call this place a "billionaire wilderness."

Contentment and generosity

But I worry that when we say abundance, you hear "more and more and more and more, and then, even more." So, I've decided to pull back toward *enough*. I can tell you that for me, the decision is sound. It feels right. It feels simple in complicated times. And, it brings a level of contentment to my own life that felt ephemeral before. Of course, it's all a practice.

No conversation with regard to *enough* is complete without acknowledging that there are those who don't have enough, who've never had enough, who if we keep going as we are, never will have enough. Surely abundance is the problem here, not scarcity. I know in my own life, as I've adopted a practice around *enough*, my comfort with and security around generosity has flourished. I feel more comfortable sharing resources – time, money, and opportunity. There's no need to hoard, because I am content, settled, grounded.

My hope is that each of us might find ourselves there, and that the growing generosity that results would begin to heal the wounds that scarcity leaves on so many of God's beloved. So, while so many are struggling with concepts of abundance and scarcity, I'm doubling down on *enough*. Join me?

The Reverend Jimmy Bartz serves as rector of St. John's Episcopal Church in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. Prior to coming to Jackson, he was the founder and priest at Thad's, an emergent Episcopal Church in Santa Monica, California, in the Diocese of Los Angeles. He has also served as the Campus Missioner at the University of Texas in Austin, at All Saints' in Austin, Texas, and All Saints' Parish in Beverly Hills, California. He is a graduate of the University of Texas at Austin and Virginia Theological Seminary. Presently, he serves as the Chair of the Board of the Episcopal Evangelism Society, and in years past has worked with Red Bull High Performance, teaching athletes spiritual disciplines and with Naval Special Warfare working to create systems for character development within special operations teams, and was a speaker at TEDx, Venice Beach. Married to Cindy and dad to Jas and Jade, the Bartz family loves to

spend time outside mountaineering, skiing, fly-fishing, hunting and surfing. Jimmy is currently writing a book on the spirituality of risk.

Resources:

- [An Audacious Spirit of Abundance](#) by Sandy Webb, Vestry Papers, September 2019
- [Ways to Live in Abundance](#) by Sandra Montes, Vestry Papers, September 2015
- [Bountiful Abundance](#) by Peter Strimer, ECF Vital Practices blog, September 7, 2012
- [Squash Tithe](#) by Nancy Moore, ECF Vital Practices tool, 2013

Prayer and Action In a Pandemic

Yesenia (Jessie) Alejandro

When we learned that COVID-19 had hit the United States and people were dying from this deadly virus, I was heartstruck. I did not understand how this came about. I leaned to the Almighty, asking for wisdom and understanding. My first thought after the initial shock was: “How can we help others in the middle of this pandemic?” I know we can pray, and we do pray a lot. But as people of God, we needed to do more than that. We needed to act.

I felt this was a time when people needed to see a familiar face. They needed to see someone who cares for them and loves them. I saw such desperation and hopelessness in people’s eyes and their fear of being infected. I went out to the streets and began asking for donations of groceries. I felt compelled to do so, because the [majority of the people we serve](#) are undocumented. Many people are receiving help from the government, but there are big gaps for the less fortunate.

A grassroots effort to provide food and necessities takes shape

We began by finding a location where we could pack up groceries and pass them out to anyone in need. While we helped everyone who called and asked for help, my heart felt particularly drawn to the homebound elderly, the undocumented, the single mothers with babies and those home in quarantine with the virus.

I started posting on social media, asking for support. And people answered my call. We began to take groceries, diapers, formula and anything that anyone would donate to serve communities in the tristate area of New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania. We had volunteer drivers take groceries to those we couldn’t get to. We were also able to get the Police Department in Norristown, Pennsylvania, involved. They helped deliver donated groceries to the elderly and people were so grateful. Seeing the police volunteering was important for the community. Every day we had new tasks and places to deliver the groceries and other items.

A month in, I received a call from a priest friend in Guatemala asking for help, and I began asking people to adopt families in that country. Thankfully, we were able to have many families adopted. We kept posting on social media – where we were going, who we were helping and the need, and we were able to assist many in these communities. It was entirely a grassroots effort, and grew to more than one hundred volunteers.

Taking prayer out to the community

After serving many people for about a month, we realized that we needed to do more. We began to pray for the communities. With a trailer and a caravan of cars, we drove to the different communities to bring hope to the hopeless. As I began praying on the trailer with a microphone and speaker, people came out of their homes with crosses in their hands. Some were crying. Some raised their hands, asking for healing. It was moving to see such desperate need, and not only for food but for hope. So many had lost jobs, and we needed to be the light in the midst of their despair. Many were afraid to come out, but I was not, because it was time to show the love of God, whether with groceries and handmade masks or by prayers for people. Everyone needs to feel love.

Generous hands and hearts provide for a vulnerable population

I spend many days preparing, getting everything together, picking up donations. I spend hours calling and texting people, asking for their help so we can help others. We have assembled a diverse team and are up early in the morning, praying and preparing. Although we are all serving, as pastor I also have to take time to listen to the many groups that come out to help. I listen to their pain and their needs. We have to make sure that our volunteers are also taken care of, because they are also in need.

We have a group that only makes masks, and they have made hundreds so far. These masks have been given to the people we see and mailed out to people all over the United States. Many people have donated money so we could buy food items on the lists that we created. Because we did not want food to go to waste, we asked the families we serve regularly to tell us what they like to eat and cook. Our groceries are packed with rice, beans, vegetables, coffee, milk, eggs, plantains, oil, sugar, cereal and everything they need to make breakfast, lunch and dinner. They are meant to last for at least two weeks. We also receive donations from supermarkets. We were given 500 boxes of diapers of all sizes by an organization and other organizations have given us baby food, toiletries and much more.

Things seem to be starting to settle down now as people start to go back to work. The first three months were nonstop. We went from serving 30 bags of groceries to hundreds every week. One Monday morning we served over 400 bags of groceries, not including boxes of fresh vegetables. We understood the need was greater in the communities we serve, because many people do not receive any government assistance. We continue to respond to calls and emails from those still living in dire need. Overall, we have served thousands of families so far, including children. We have specific bags for children, and each child picks up their own groceries and vitamins. As a grandmother, one of my most touching moments has been to see so many children coming to pick up their little bags. The joy and gratitude in their faces are a tangible and visible sign to me that God is also smiling at us, even amidst a scary and isolating pandemic.

The Rev. Yesenia (Jessie) Alejandro, founder of Mothers Mission, has been working with communities throughout Philadelphia, its surrounding counties and Puerto Rico for over 25 years. A well-known activist in the city, Jessie's passion is to help and serve the elderly, children and families. As an outreach of St. Mary's Episcopal Church Chester, donations to Mothers Mission can be made by contacting Rev. Jessie at 856-580-7174, or visiting this [link](#). Follow her on Facebook at Jessie Alejandro or Instagram at Jessie Alejandro1.

Resources:

- [A Time for Everything](#) by Linda Buskirk, ECF Vital Practices blog, March 17, 2020

- [Support Your Parish or Favorite Episcopal Charity Now](#), ECF Vital Practices tool
- [Ministry in a Global Pandemic](#) an ECF webinar presented by Joshua Rodriguez-Hobbs June 11, 2020
- [Whatever You Do Now Will Prepare You for What You Can Do in the Future](#) by Audra Abt, ECF Vital Practices blog, July 20, 2020

12 Steps to Successful Stewardship

Caroline Moomaw Chilton

How are you managing your Annual Stewardship Campaign this fall? It's one of the major program areas of the church that is significantly impacted by the new ways we are operating in the pandemic. Your campaign takes on added significance because, let's face it, your church still needs money.

In my work in church stewardship and development, I have learned that there are some key concepts for the creation and operation of a solid and successful stewardship campaign. I consider them foundational, especially in times of transition. Here they are with some ideas that I hope will help spark your creativity and planning.

1. It's all about relationships

Strong stewardship programs are built on vibrant relationships – our relationship with God, our church and each other. People give when they are connected to each other, to the mission of the church and to God. We need to nurture these relationships all year long. Don't give people the opportunity to say, "my church only calls me when they want money." Develop a plan to touch base with all your members several times a year. This can be by phone, cards, emails and in person. Say thank you, again and again, and especially immediately after receiving a pledge. Have a phone thank-a-thon for simply checking in with people and saying thank you. (Don't ask for anything.)

2. It's about prayer, individual and collective

Write a stewardship prayer for your church. Create and distribute materials that support members' prayer lives. Set up and encourage small prayer groups online. Include families with children in these efforts.

3. Cast a vision for the upcoming year

A year from now, where do you want to be? It should be vibrant and hopeful. Keep it short so that people can remember and repeat it. Splash it on all your materials, print and digital. Donors give to causes that engage them and make them feel that their money, time and talent are being well invested.

4. Design and define your program based on your unique and compelling vision, goals and need

Add information. Donors want transparency about the finances of the church. Information builds trust. Be honest and hopeful. Include a short story about a life changed, a new program you've been able to start - share some good news! Show donors that you are a vibrant church.

5. Create materials that share your vision and invite participation

These don't have to be fancy, flashy or expensive, but they do have to be well done, visually appealing

and proofed a zillion times so there are no mistakes. Use more pictures and fewer words. Ask children to draw pictures for the materials. You're building new givers when you include children and teenagers.

6. Know your people

Not all donors are the same. As much as possible, divide your members, donors and non-donors, into giving groups. For most churches this is best done by just a few people to protect privacy. For example: who makes a significant increase in pledging each year and can be asked to do so again this year? Who hasn't increased for a year or so and can be asked to increase this year? Who does not pledge but gives regularly and can be asked to continue? Who can you ask to begin giving at whatever level is possible? Always begin by thanking people for their generosity, no matter what their level of giving. Another aspect of knowing your people is that some really appreciate a personal visit at stewardship time and others want to be left alone and will mail in their pledge card. Personal visits are preferable, but not always possible. Phone calls are the next best way to reach out.

7. Preach and teach generosity without ceasing

Some of this must come from the clergy. If you are clergy and uncomfortable with this, please read the bullet point below. (You can also contact me.)

8. Here's a don't

Stop apologizing that the church needs money. How else can we hold worship services, offer Sunday school classes, have choir practice, open our soup kitchens or pay our staff? Money is a tool. If the church is embarrassed and uncomfortable asking people to give, then people are going to be uncomfortable and embarrassed giving.

9. Make it easy for people to pledge and give

Surveys continue to find that a large gap between the ways churchgoers prefer to give and the options for giving that churches offer. The question is no longer "should we offer e-giving, but what options will we provide?"

10. Put the pledge form on your website

It can be a PDF document that people can print and return, or it can be a form that is filled out and returned online.

11. If you don't have time this fall to set up e-giving , do these two things instead

One, promote and work with members to set up recurring payments through their bank. Many people already pay their bills this way. Two, set up a group of people to start the process of e-giving in your church so that it is ready by the new year.

12. Say thank you and celebrate

Maybe you can have a "Thank You" parade and drive by people's homes with smiles and a small, inexpensive gift.

Carolyn Moomaw Chilton is a leadership development coach with clergy, clergy spouses and lay employees, as well as a spiritual director. She also works as a consultant with churches and vestries in the areas of formation, development and evangelism. She can be reached at carolynchilton@episcopalevangelist.com.

Resources:

- [The True Meaning of Stewardship](#) by Sarah Townsend Leach, ECF Vital Practices blog, October 17, 2019
- [FRG Resources for Stewardship](#), ECF Vital Practices tool
- [Are you Ready? Preparing for Year-end Giving](#), by James Murphy, ECF Vital Practices blog, October 11, 2019
- [Funding Ministry During the Covid-19 Crisis](#) by Jason Smith, ECF Vital Practices blog, March 13, 2020

Abundant Love in Scarce Times

Gerlene Gordy

Indigenous peoples have always been considered stewards of God's creation. We are stewards of mother earth, father sky and all living things. Indigenous peoples worked the land; our culture and our existence are rooted in prayer. Coexisting with the physical creation and the spiritual creation is our foundation. Navajoland, located near the four corners, where Arizona, Utah, Colorado and New Mexico meet, was given to us by Creator. We consider the land within our four sacred mountains our motherland. It is said that when an infant's umbilical cord falls off shortly after birth, the parents bury it on the family land, so the child is tied to the area. When they become adults, they return to their homeland and never forget they are children of Diné Bikéyah (Navajoland).

In the cycle of life, we each experience birth, adolescence, adulthood, become elders and complete the life cycle in death. Throughout life, we go through ups and downs; we undergo learning and teaching moments and sometimes, the order of life becomes disturbed. We then need to contemplate our options to find what leads us astray. We meditate and pray. We are in a ceremony to try to restore balance in a world turned upside down.

COVID infections and deaths in Navajoland make the news

While many countries, cities, towns and villages continue to experience the global pandemic, COVID-19, Navajoland recently made national and international headlines. Not for our resilience, but for our high rates of infection and death due to the virus. We had the third-highest infection rate per capita in the country, behind New York and New Jersey.

Our reservation is about 27,000 square miles, roughly the size of Virginia. We are a sovereign nation with hospitals, clinics, a court system and police. Our land is beautiful, with never-ending blue skies and red rock formations full of our creation stories. But the area can also be unforgiving and rugged. Many homes do not have running water, electricity or Wi-Fi. Our hospitals do not have many specialty clinics. They have a handful of physicians and not enough Intensive Care Units. Our land only has 13 grocery stores, and the border towns, towns that sit at the border of the Navajo reservation, are not always friendly to our people.

Generosity and words of support, like a warm, firm hug

Many families were already experiencing food insecurity before the shelves at all local and non-local supermarkets ran dry. Many large news organizations featured our difficulties and our COVID-19 death

rate. The effect of COVID-19 on Navajoland showed the real picture of how impoverished many communities are. Soon friends from across the nation and the world began sending Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), basic needs items and donations to Navajoland, assisting us in creating a food box ministry for our communities. The generosity and words of support from individuals hundreds of miles away, experiencing the same pandemic, is nothing short of a miracle. It is love.

We have pored over the many notes on post-its, index cards, notebook and printer paper, each sharing a glimpse of donors' lives, family and home. The hands that wrote well wishes, prayers and hopes for good luck are, like ours, molded in clay by God and given the same breath of life. Sometimes we forget that we are made in God's image and share that bond as fellow stewards of the earth.

This year we share similar life journeys – this plague that has halted nations and the world, this global pandemic. What we do as individuals will and does influence the way this pandemic is won. By sharing, receiving and giving, we have become united at this moment that seems like a lifetime. And I must tell you that this unity feels like a warm, firm hug after tirelessly walking in the wilderness looking for a glimpse of hope – hope that seemed like a mirage. These mundane personal touches have been a boost to our morale. They are a testament to the relational stewardship that we have received.

Throughout the rugged red bluffs, white sandy ravines and dense forested areas of the mountains, small pockets of communities exist. These communities are filled with multi-generational families, living miles from busy city streets, paved roads, water lines and electricity. A handful of these communities have been hit hard by COVID and made to lockdown completely, as COVID spreads like wildfire. These lockdowns happen in communities that do not have grocery stores. No one can travel in or out of these quarantined communities. The whole reservation also sees nightly curfews weeknights from 8 pm to 5 am along with Navajo Nation-wide weekend lockdowns from 8 pm Friday to 5 am Monday. Violators of the curfews and lockdowns face stiff fines and possible jail time. What little jobs that were available on the reservation have closed, leaving many unemployed. Schools that are the primary providers of healthy food for children, have also closed. While the nation worked tirelessly to feed the quarantined communities, the rest of the reservation went unnoticed. How were the families already struggling before the pandemic going to continue?

In response to our struggle, numerous dioceses publicized our need for cloth masks, and the Episcopal body went to work sewing for us. We were able to distribute these handmade cloth masks to hundreds of families across Navajoland and to organizations working directly with individuals who have tested positive for COVID. The PPE we received went to four hospitals and clinics treating our people.

Love and care of so many for the people of Navajoland is an expression of faith

Two hundred fifty. That is the number of families we currently feed every two weeks in nine communities, and that number continues to grow daily with the donations sent for COVID Relief. Many clergy and laypeople work day and night, assembling and delivering much-needed food, hygiene items and diapers across hundreds of miles. It is a blessing to be able to provide these necessities to our people and all in need in and around our Navajoland communities. Clergy and laypeople go out to assess the needs of our elders, who are the carriers of our tradition, culture, and language. How we react today will determine our future.

Along with the nourishment of the body, there is also a need to nourish our spirit and soul. We send daily prayers, meditations and reflections in emails, text messages and on social media. Morning prayer

is live-streamed or prerecorded and edited. It isn't easy to stay in community when we cannot engage with our community in person. Lack of resources prevents us from communicating with all our people via zoom or social media. The in-person check-in is still needed, and ministry in Navajoland is vital. How we protect each other is an expression of our faith. Thank you for your generosity, for your prayers, for your donations, and your hands.

Gerlene Gordy (GJ) is Navajo from Coal Mine, New Mexico. Her clans are; One who walks around born into the Salt People. Edge Water is her maternal grandparents, and Mud People are her paternal grandparents. Clanship is essential to Navajo people for greeting and establishing relations. She is the Communication Director for the Episcopal Church in Navajoland (ECN) and a web developer for Cheii's Web, which was founded by ECN. She wants to help share our stories. She has a 5-year-old daughter and husband. She has worked with children for 12+ years and enjoys sweet tea on a hot New Mexico afternoon

Resources:

- [When You Can't Pass the Offering Plate...](#) by Ken Howard, ECF Vital Practices blog, April 7, 2020
- [Pleasant and Effective Stewardship](#) by Linda Buskirk, ECF Vital Practices blog, October 7, 2019
- [Navajo Millennial](#) by GJ Gordy, ECF Vital Practices blog, June 20, 2019
- [Ministry in a Global Pandemic](#) an ECF webinar presented by Joshua Rodriguez-Hobbs June 11, 2020

Oración y acción en una pandemia

Yesenia (Jessie) Alejandro

Cuando me enteré de que la COVID-19 ya estaba en EEUU y que gente estaba muriendo a causa de este virus mortífero, se me partió el corazón. No entendí cómo había pasado eso. Recurrí al Todopoderoso para obtener sabiduría y comprensión. Lo primero que me vino a la mente después del shock inicial fue: "¿Cómo puedo ayudar a otras personas en medio de esta pandemia?". Sé que podemos orar y oramos mucho. Pero como pueblo de Dios, teníamos que hacer más que eso. Teníamos que actuar. Sentí que éste era un momento en que la gente necesitaba ver una cara conocida. Necesitaban ver a alguien que se preocupaba por ellos y les amaba. Vi tanta desesperación y desesperanza en los ojos de la gente, y tanto miedo a la enfermedad. Salí a las calles y empecé a pedir donaciones de comestibles. Me sentí impulsada a hacerlo, porque la mayoría de aquellos a quienes servimos son indocumentados. Mucha gente está recibiendo ayuda del gobierno, pero hay grandes brechas para los menos afortunados.

Un esfuerzo de base para proporcionar alimentos y artículos necesarios cobra forma

Lo primero que hicimos fue encontrar un lugar para empaquetar comestibles y entregárselos a los necesitados. Si bien ayudábamos a todos los que venían pidiendo ayuda, mi corazón se volcó especialmente hacia los ancianos confinados en sus hogares, los indocumentados, las madres que criaban solas a sus bebés y los afectados por el virus en cuarentena en sus hogares.

Empecé a poner pedidos de apoyo en los medios sociales. Y la gente respondió a mi llamada. Empezaron a llegar alimentos, pañales, fórmula y muchas otras cosas que la gente donaba para asistir a los

necesitados en la zona triestatal de Nueva Jersey, Nueva York y Pensilvania. Voluntarios llevaron alimentos a los que no podíamos alcanzar. También conseguimos la participación del Departamento de Policía de Norristown, Pensilvania. Ellos ayudaron a entregar comestibles donados a los ancianos y todos estuvieron sumamente agradecidos. Ver a la policía prestando servicios voluntarios fue importante para la comunidad. Todos los días surgían nuevas tareas y lugares para entregar los alimentos y otras cosas. Al mes de haber empezado, recibí una llamada de un sacerdote amigo de Guatemala pidiéndome ayuda y empecé a pedirle a la gente que adoptara familias en ese país. Afortunadamente, logramos la adopción de muchas familias. Seguimos publicando nuestro cometido en medios sociales, a quiénes estábamos ayudando y lo que necesitaban, y pudimos ayudar a muchos en esas comunidades. Era un esfuerzo enteramente de base, que se expandió a más de cien voluntarios.

Llevar la oración a la comunidad

Después de haber servido a mucha gente por aproximadamente un mes, nos dimos cuenta de que teníamos que hacer más. Empezamos a orar por las comunidades. Con un remolque y una caravana de automóviles, fuimos a diferentes comunidades para llevar esperanzas a los desesperanzados. A medida que empecé a orar desde el remolque con un altoparlante y un micrófono, empezó a salir gente de sus hogares con cruces en las manos. Algunos estaban llorando. Otros elevaban los brazos al cielo pidiendo sanidad. Fue una escena conmovedora ver tanta escasez, no solo de alimentos sino también de esperanzas. Tantísimos de ellos habían perdido sus empleos y necesitábamos ser la luz en medio de su desesperación. Muchos tenían miedo de salir, pero yo no, porque era el momento de demostrar el amor de Dios, tanto con alimentos como con mascarillas hechas a mano o mediante oraciones por el pueblo. Todos necesitamos sentir amor.

Manos y corazones generosos proven para una población vulnerable

Paso muchos días preparando, reuniendo cosas, recogiendo donaciones. Paso horas llamando y enviando textos a gente, pidiéndoles su ayuda para que podamos ayudar a otras personas. Hemos reunido un equipo diverso y nos levantamos temprano por la mañana orando y preparando. Si bien todos estamos sirviendo, como pastora también tengo que dedicar tiempo a escuchar a los numerosos grupos que vienen pidiendo ayuda. Presto atención a su dolor y sus necesidades.

Tenemos un grupo que solo hace mascarillas y hasta ahora ha hecho cientos. Estas mascarillas se entregan a la gente que vemos en persona y se envían por correo a gente de todo Estados Unidos. Muchos donaron dinero para que podamos comprar los alimentos en las listas que creamos. Debido a que no queríamos que la comida se echara a perder, les pedimos a las familias a las que atendíamos regularmente que nos dijeran qué les gustaba comer y cocinar. Nuestras bolsas de comestibles contienen arroz, frijoles, vegetales, café, leche, huevos, plátanos, aceite, azúcar, cereal y todo lo necesario para preparar el desayuno, el almuerzo y la cena. Están diseñadas para que duren como mínimo dos semanas. También recibimos donaciones de supermercados. Una organización nos dio 500 cajas de pañales de todos los tamaños y otras nos dieron comida para bebé, artículos de tocador y mucho más.

Las cosas parecen estar tranquilizándose ahora que la gente está empezando a volver al trabajo. Los primeros tres meses fueron sin parar. Pasamos de entregar 30 bolsas de alimentos por semana a cientos todas las semanas. Un lunes por la mañana entregamos más de 400 bolsas de alimentos, sin contar las cajas de vegetales frescos. Entendimos que la necesidad era mayor en las comunidades que estábamos

asistiendo, porque mucha de esa gente no recibe ayuda del gobierno. Seguimos contestando llamadas y mensajes por correo electrónico de gente que sigue teniendo necesidades extremas.

En total, hasta el momento hemos asistido a miles de familias, muchas de ellas con niños. Tenemos bolsas especiales para niños y cada uno de ellos escoge sus propios alimentos y vitaminas. Como abuela, uno de mis momentos más conmovedores fue haber visto tantos niños recogiendo sus bolsitas. Para mí, la alegría y gratitud en sus caritas es un signo tangible y visible de que Dios también nos está sonriendo, incluso en medio de una pandemia que asusta y aísla.

La Rev. Yesenia (Jessie) Alejandro, fundadora de Mothers Mission, ha estado trabajando por más de 25 años con comunidades de toda la ciudad de Filadelfia, de los condados que la rodean y de Puerto Rico. La pasión de Jessie, una activista conocida en la ciudad, es ayudar y servir a ancianos, niños y familias. Como una extensión de St. Mary's Episcopal Church Chester, para realizar donaciones a Mothers Mission contactar a la Rev. Jessie en el 856-580-7174 o visitar este enlace. Sígala en Facebook: Jessie Alejandro o en Instagram: Jessie Alejandro1.

Recursos:

- [Sí, juntos podemos](#) por Jesse Velásquez y Vidal Rivas, Vestry Papers, julio 2016
- [Un espíritu audaz de abundancia](#) por Sandy Webb, Vestry Papers, septiembre 2019
- [Campaña de Generosidad](#) por Victor Conrado, Vestry Papers, septiembre 2015
- [El Ministerio con trabajadores agrícolas – el Discipulado en acción](#) por Juan Carabaña, Vestry Papers, mayo 2017

Stewardship and Abundance During a Pandemic

Mark McKone-Sweet and Demetreus Gregg

Many churches, across not only the Episcopal Church but all denominations, have felt the emotional and financial stresses brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. Ours is no exception.

COVID-19 came at an interesting time for our parish. It led us to ask some serious and impactful questions: Could we close the final \$1.1 million of our \$8 million capital campaign? Would we see a dip in the annual pledging needed to allow us to minister in real and tangible ways to people at home? With our campus closed, how could we continue to meaningfully engage people in the life of the church? Could we pivot and remain relevant? These were tough but important questions. They moved us to work in ways that honor and celebrate the steadfast love of our community.

Our financial strength has been rooted in God and in confidence that our mission and vision, as well as our strategic plan – our response to God's urgent cry to spread the Good News – were front and center. That is, we trusted that God would provide. When our natural instincts were to get stuck in the doldrums of the pandemic and the resulting economic downturn, to question whether we could quickly adjust to an online world, we simply needed to invite people into faithful generosity.

Successful appeals focus on the fundamentals of why we do church

In March 2020, we launched two appeals for the Rector's Discretionary Fund. The first was in anticipation of the governor and bishop's decisions to close the state and all houses of worship. We invited a few families to fund \$74,000 for technology improvements needed for livestreaming and remote work for staff. A few weeks later, we identified more than 20 additional families to offset lost pledge income, pay our preschool staff while the school was closed (and no tuition coming in) and begin to assist families in financial stress. We raised another \$85,000.

This was a time when so many were hurting, and as a community of faith, we felt that it was our Christian duty to be available to help. These appeals allowed us to realize some powerful results. We were able to:

- Purchase laptops (eight in total), including one for a partner church so that they could effectively livestream services for their parishioners
- Invest in audiovisual infrastructure to help us engage digitally, not only during the pandemic but in the future, when we are able to return to in-person worship
- Purchase computers and internet service for our own parishioners, so they could stay digitally connected with us in a meaningful way
- Provide support to members of our community who were suffering financial hardship, enabling them to retain the services essential to their livelihoods
- Assist members who were concerned about meeting their financial obligation to the church
- Provide significant financial support for diocesan relief efforts to smaller parishes

This display of generosity is a compelling witness to the parish's faith, hope and commitment to our mission and vision. It also attests to the inherent values of community that are so important, now more than ever. It would have been easy to resign ourselves to a negative outlook, but the grace and generosity of God's people shone through and through.

Lessons learned

Thankfully, we have secured 95% of our \$8 million campaign goal to date and are still receiving commitments. Families continue to step forward to cover lost pledge revenue through increased giving. Parishioners have begun and engaged in new ministries to keep people connected. In essence, we returned to the fundamentals of why we do church, gratefully realizing that it is God through whom all blessings flow.

It is worth noting that these can be difficult and emotional pastoral conversations, but they taught us some fundamental lessons:

- The act of intentional listening is crucial, especially in times of stress and anxiety
- Focusing on building incremental generosity allowed our community to lean deeper into its faith while accomplishing impactful outcomes
- Leaving space for people to peacefully and gracefully say no is important. A good "no" is much better than a weak "yes"
- Never make assumptions about a person's ability to give at any given point
- Build generosity and capacity for sacrificial giving
- Aligning funding priorities with a 'new normal' sometimes requires a mid-year revision of the annual budget"

Only as strong as our relationships and our faith

Since closing the campus, we have exponentially increased our pastoral care capacity to connect with nearly every family. We spent early summer reaching out to parishioners to check in on their wellbeing as well as to begin conversations about whether they would be able to honor their 2020 financial commitment to the church. We were prepared to tell people it was okay to place a hold or stop their 2020 pledge and to assure them other families would be able to step in.

We are only as strong as our relationships and our faith in the need to be transformed, both individually and as a church. These are two critical elements of success.

Stewardship and giving remain strong, even in light of a pandemic. Our congregants have created new ways of staying connected to the life of the church. When we, as leaders, leaned into the faithfulness and thoughtful generosity of our parishioners, they heeded the call of sacrificial giving to further God's work.

There were certainly times when it seemed like there was nothing left to give, and the abundance that we had long enjoyed was quickly disappearing. The fact is, that abundance never disappeared at all. It took a new form and helped us have a real impact, not only on our church and community but our neighbors, as well. The abundance is there and always will be – we just have to know where to prayerfully look for it.

*The Reverend **Mark C. McKone-Sweet** has served as Rector at St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church since 2014. His ministry in for profit, nonprofit and church settings has realized his true calling – to build community seven days a week; to turn around parishes/organizations in decline; to embrace the joy of sacrificial generosity of time, talent and treasure; and to make the Good News real and tangible to others, no exceptions. Mark and his family live in San Diego County. He has served on the Standing Committees in the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts and presently in the Episcopal Diocese of San Diego, and is a member of Gathering of Leaders. Mark earned his Masters in Divinity from EDS (Cambridge, MA) and a Masters in Business Administration from Northeastern University (Boston, MA).*

***Demetreus Gregg** currently serves as the Congregational Development Director at St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, Poway. In this role, Demetreus oversees fundraising, communications, engagement and newcomer programs. A native of Baltimore, he served most recently in fundraising positions with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and the Baltimore Community Foundation. In Baltimore, he was also junior warden and later treasurer for Emmanuel Episcopal Church, where he has been a member since 2012.*

Resources:

- [A Time for Everything](#) by Linda Buskirk, ECF Vital Practices blog, March 17, 2020
- [Wholehearted Stewardship](#) by Erin Weber-Johnson, Vestry Papers, September 2013
- [Because God Always Gives](#) by Rhonda Rogers, Vestry Papers, September 2018
- [Do Not Give Money to God!](#) by Sandra Swan, Vestry Papers, September 2014

Four Ideas for Stewardship Recruitment

Linda Buskirk

“No one wants to do this.”

That lament prevents many churches from developing a vibrant stewardship ministry. Even before all the questions about what to do, when to start and what to say, the team recruiting issue is often the juggernaut. Here are four ways to recruit volunteers.

1. Help them see it as a ministry

Stop calling it a task. Stewardship is a *ministry*. It helps people spiritually as it teaches them to contemplate their priorities and their level of trust in God to provide. Fear, self-preservation and comfort are human traits that get in the way of a close relationship with Jesus. No wonder he talked about money and possessions so much. Re-read those scriptures to better understand how the ministry of stewardship can deepen the faith formation of your fellow parishioners.

Stewardship as ministry moves the emphasis away from the dreaded “asking people for money,” to helping people see the gracious hand of God in their life and the life of their faith community. Rejoicing in those blessings, everyone may glorify Christ as grateful stewards of the talents and treasure God has given them. Wow, sign me up for that!

2. Take advantage of outside resources

Use a proven resource to help you plan your annual giving campaign. It is much easier to recruit people if they know they do not have to think up what to do and say. There are many great resources available, including two especially for Episcopal faith communities:

- TENS, The Episcopal Network for Stewardship (www.tens.org) offers members a fresh theme and materials each year for their annual giving campaigns. While your congregation can join TENS, check with your diocese first. Many dioceses purchase a membership that gives all parishes access to the "members only" section of the TENS website. There you will find campaign materials and an abundance of how-to information. This year, TENS campaign materials are offered for both in-church and virtual-church application.
- The Episcopal Church’s [United Thank Offering](#) also provides an annual theme and a packet that “contains all you need to lead a stewardship campaign built on the foundation of gratitude”.

3. Have some fun

Proclaim fun in stewardship! Even when using a prescribed methodology, your church can add its own creative, joyful flair. St. Anne’s Episcopal Church in Warsaw, Indiana, which utilizes TENS materials, wraps up their annual giving campaign with an “Open Mic Night Stewardship Celebration.” Folks put their talents on display, and the rector, like a radio host, reads “commercials” in between acts, as Stewardship Chairperson Brenda Rigdon explains:

Those commercials are thank you messages to all of our various church volunteers who do great things – Sunday School and Bible School Teachers, Altar Guild members, hospitality hosts, etc. Each ministry gets a thank you from the mic. This also helps remind folks what their pledges accomplish over the course of a calendar year.

At the end of the evening, St. Anne’s reminds everyone to turn in their pledge cards at the Ingathering service the following Sunday.

4. Be clear about the help you need

Be specific. It is often easier to recruit a volunteer if you ask him/her to do one specific thing. Here are some examples:

- “Susan, we are going to be using TENS campaign materials this year. Would you help us by making sure the church office has the weekly message provided by TENS to use in our E-newsletter every week?”
- “Mike, I know how involved you are in Sunday School. Would you please ask three families to each record a short video in which their kids talk about what they love about our church? Make sure the families are okay with posting the video on our Facebook page.”
- “Pat, would you please use your artistic talent to design a thank you card to be sent to everyone who makes a pledge during our annual giving campaign?”

Susan, Mike, Pat and others you recruit for specific activities are now part of the Stewardship Ministry. Invite them to attend a few planning meetings to make sure that everyone can contribute to the plan and efforts are coordinated.

Don't leave out the clergy and keep the momentum going

Include at least one clergy person in your Stewardship Ministry. You may think that goes without saying, but sometimes even the ordained need a nudge. A robust campaign requires coordinated communications and actions. Your priest should be part of the planning, spiritual emphasis and implementation.

Once folks realize they are building faith and having fun, keep the meetings going. Host a post-campaign review to determine what worked well and what lessons were learned. Kick around ideas for next year's campaign and brainstorm what can be done to keep an attitude of gratitude going in the months ahead. Review the status of your church's planned giving program or lack thereof. How can the Stewardship Ministry begin/revive/improve planned giving?

Now your recruits are engaged to keep Stewardship Ministry alive all year, not just in the fall. They are having fun, making an impact, and helping their faith community thrive.

Of course people want to do this!

Linda Buskirk is a congregational and not-for-profit consultant specializing in capital campaigns and strategic planning with an appreciative approach. She began her career as a journalist and still enjoys writing, particularly being “on the beat” for Vital Practices, sharing ministry stories from around the Episcopal Church and beyond. Linda began serving Episcopal congregations in 2009 as an Episcopal Church Foundation consultant, and most recently as a partner in Core Capital Campaigns, a collaboration with two other ECF-experienced consultants. She is active in stewardship and other ministries of the Episcopal Diocese of Northern Indiana. Linda lives in Fort Wayne, Indiana, where she and husband Ron are members of Trinity Episcopal Church.

Resources:

- [Year Round Stewardship: Talking About Money](#), an ECF webinar presented by Chris Harris, February 11, 2014
- [Spirituality of Fundraising](#) by Anne Ditzler, ECF Vital Practices blog, May 25, 2011

- [FRG Resources for Stewardship](#), an ECF Vital Practices tool
- [Planning and Recruiting for Stewardship](#), an ECF webinar presented by Erin Weber Johnson, May 06, 2015

A Native Sense of Stewardship

Forrest Cuch and Michael Carney

Michael: For more than a hundred years, St. Elizabeth’s Episcopal Church has served the people of the Uintah and Ouray Ute Reservation in Whiterocks, Utah. After I had been the vicar for a year, it seemed like time for a fall stewardship campaign. Since there hadn’t been one the year before, I made some simple pledge cards and showed them to one of the elders.

“Indians don’t sign papers like that,” he said, so I put them away. What wasn’t clear to me was that those cards were not necessary in this congregation.

We all learn about stewardship before we’re old enough to use a word like that. We pick up messages from the adults around us about what’s abundant and what’s scarce. We observe the power and status that come from having money or what’s it’s like when we don’t have it. We internalize the values of our culture, and as a white priest called to serve a Native congregation, many of the assumptions I brought with me needed to be reconsidered.

Forrest: *I have seen that for white people, a gift is when a wealthy person gives what’s left over. For Native people, every new day is a gift and whatever comes with it. In our culture wealth is measured by what’s given away. Generosity is our number one shared value. All of God’s creation is sacred, and all things are interrelated.*

Lunch program grows, sustained by an outbreak of generosity

Michael: When the pandemic struck, St. Elizabeth’s popular Art Empowers program had to shut down. One day dozens of kids and teens were making art, playing games and eating dinner together, and the next they were all stuck at home. Because of our close connections with them, we wondered whether they were getting enough to eat. School lunches were still being provided, but there were no buses and the school is ten miles away.



Our youth leader, Becca Gardner, went grocery shopping, picked up her three nieces and came to the parish hall to make sack lunches. They dropped them off with the families who live nearby, but 30 lunches weren’t enough. There were grandmothers and younger siblings in every house – 75 meals a day was more like it. Sometimes art supplies or paperback books were included for the cooped-up kids.

After five hundred lunches had been prepared, our Bishop’s Committee realized how costly the program was. “We can’t stop,” the lunch makers said, and so we didn’t.

Word got out in the congregation, and half a dozen people put \$100 bills in the offering plate. Checks came in from friends who read about the lunches in our newsletter. We didn't appeal for donations, but by the end of the summer we'd made 2,000 lunches and all the expenses had been covered, an outbreak of generosity in our little church. *(Photo credit: Lunch Makers - Rev Michael Carney)*

Connected to the Creator throughout loss and displacement

Was that just a caring response to the pandemic or an expression of deeply-rooted values? Consider how the Utes dealt with the loss of their once-abundant land. For years without number they'd lived in the rugged and beautiful mountains stretching from Colorado Springs to Salt Lake City. Then waves of white settlers encroached upon them, treaties were broken and they were forced onto a reservation in the high sagebrush desert of northeast Utah.

Even after being displaced to a new land, the Utes remained deeply connected with the Creator, celebrating that relationship through daily prayer and seasonal ceremonies. They were not farmers, but among the free-flowing rivers at the foot of the Uintah Mountains they were able to hunt, fish and gather the food they needed. "Progress" wouldn't leave them alone, however, and their communal land was broken up into allotments. "Excess" land was given to white homesteaders, and today less than one-third of the original reservation remains with the Ute Indian Tribe.

Abundance and gratitude

Forrest: *Despite all that happened, I was taught that the earth, like the spirit within us, was a gift from God. My mother told me that abundance is the consequence of our gratitude, not the value of our possessions. "Appreciate what you have," she said, "and you'll have more of what you need."*

Her uncle Billy Champoos Sr., Wapenas, was a beloved grandfather to me and a deeply spiritual man. He was a community leader, a prominent singer and fire keeper for the Sun Dance. Because he saw the land as a gift, Wapenas guarded his allotment and treated it with reverence. In a simple outbuilding he and his friends gathered with their drum, practicing songs (prayers) for the Bear Dance, Sun Dance, Pow Wow and other occasions. The land and the prayers and their relationship with the Creator were inseparable. In the midst of the assaults on our culture, that place remained an oasis of the sacred which I was grateful to inherit.



(Photo credit: Uncle Billy Champoos and friends-Leo Thorne, Leo Thorne Collection, Vernal, Utah)

Time has brought me a lot of personal growth and healing, and the land played a big part in that. Now that I'm retired, I get to share the gifts that have come to me. When people visit my horses or camp on the land, when foxes or sandhill cranes or elk pass by, when my friends join together in the sweat lodge, I feel Uncle Billy's spirit with us. Fifty years after the end of his life, when my son and grandchildren are here, I know that the cycles of Creation are continuing.

Michael: So often clergy have come to Native communities carrying the values and assumptions of the dominant culture. Not only has harm been done, but opportunities for learning and growth have been

lost. It was illuminating for me to discover that a “possession” as modest as Wapenas’ allotment is so deeply infused with prayer.

Being immersed in another culture and hearing the wisdom of its elders has opened up new possibilities for spiritual growth. It’s not all rosy – the problems the Utes deal with can be devastating. But Forrest and others have made it clear how much my people have to learn about stewardship. Listening to their stories and trusting more in the Creator than in our wealth are good places to begin. I’m thankful for those insights, and for the church that has brought us together.

Forrest S. Cuch is an enrolled member of the Ute Indian Tribe. He was born in 1951 and raised on the Uintah and Ouray Ute Indian Reservation in northeastern Utah. In 1973, he graduated from Westminster College with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in the Behavioral Sciences. During his 38-year career, Forrest has held many challenging directorships in both tribal and state governments. He is currently engaged in working with spiritual leaders throughout the Western Hemisphere to usher in the new shift in feminine consciousness known of as the New Earth and calling attention to Climate Change and harm to Mother Earth.

The Reverend **Michael Carney** is a white priest who’s served for the past four years at St. Elizabeth’s Episcopal Church on the Uintah and Ouray Ute Reservation in northeast Utah. He’s an active member of the Episcopal Indigenous Ministries community and coordinates the Mountains and Deserts ministry coalition. A husband, stepfather and grandfather, Michael enjoys hiking, gardening, reading and music.

Resources:

- [Model Intentional Giving](#) by Laurel Johnston, Vestry Papers, September 2010
- [Cosi, Cosi, Iyaphela](#) by Lisa Meeder Turnbull, Vestry Papers, September 2012
- [Good morning, Steward!](#) By Lisa G. Fischbeck, ECF Vital Practices blog, September 25, 2020
- [Bring Me a Morsel](#) by Lisa Meeder Turnbull, ECF Vital Practices blog, November 16, 2012

Creating Year-round Stewardship with Holy Currencies

Bill Cruse

In the beginning God created everything. And God saw that it all was good. And it *is* good! It’s stunning that God created it all *ex nihilo* – out of nothing. I wonder how often we who draft and pitch the annual stewardship campaign feel as if we’re trying to create something out of nothing.

We struggle with stewardship campaigns, and many see the fall as that dreaded time of year. No one wants to lead the campaign, and most probably don’t plan ahead. Few of us dance and sing like Miriam after crossing the Red Sea when we receive the letter, phone call or personal visit that invites us to pledge. Most of us probably feel we’re giving all we can and can’t create any more. Parish teams strive for increased stewardship results every year – more pledges, more money or more increased pledges. The focus tends to be only on the money.

Money is not the only currency sustaining our faith communities

Yes, God has blessed us with this currency, some more or less than others. We are each invited to give within our abilities – even to tithe 10 percent of our income. And now we find ourselves in the midst of a

global pandemic, an economic crisis, racial and political divisions that harm our wellbeing and ecological disasters. There are five other currencies that God has blessed us with: Gracious Leadership, Relationship, Truth, Time and Place and Wellness. We neglect to reap the blessings from them.

In *Holy Currencies: Six Blessings for Sustainable Missional Ministries*, Eric H.F. Law illuminates and helps us see the five other essential currencies. *Gracious Leadership* is the ability to use skills, tools, models and processes to create gracious environments among existing members and externally with non members. *Currency of Time and Place* is the paid and volunteer time that leaders/members offer to the church/ministry and the properties from which a church/ministry operates, along with other properties owned or accessed by the church/ministry. *Currency of Relationship* means the internal and external networks of mutually respectful connections that leaders/members of a church/ministry have. *Currency of Truth* is the ability to articulate individually and corporately the global/wholistic truth, both internally (church/denomination) and externally (neighborhood/town/nation). *Currency of Wellness* is the state of being healthy physically, socially, economically, ecologically and spiritually within a church/ministry, the neighborhood, the town/city, nation or the earth, especially as the result of deliberate effort. When these currencies flow, regenerate and recirculate, we build sustainable missional ministry.

Tunnel vision leads to the scarcity trap

Many church leaders, now more than ever, focus much of our attention on finances, the building, and the pastor. We wonder, “Are we going to meet our budget? If the church’s income is not on target, how can we get people to give more during the second half of the year?” We also wonder how to make capital improvements, particularly in emergencies. This is a kind of tunnel vision.

Tunnel vision on money and the building can lead to ignoring other currencies that may help church leaders make wise decisions for long-term sustainability. This is how churches fall into the scarcity trap: The more they obsess over money and the building, the more the focus is narrowed and other opportunities and options are ignored. We make decisions without the full benefit of the currencies of truth, relationship, wellness and gracious leadership. These decisions, in turn, may cause the church’s financial picture to worsen as all the currencies aren’t flowing and recirculating. If they don’t flow, they stagnate and turn rotten. In this way, the cycle of scarcity continues.

Stewardship of *all* God’s currencies is important for sustainable mission and ministry

One of the biblical images of our role within God’s creation is that of a steward put in charge of the household while the owner is away. (Mark 13:33-37) Because we don’t know when the owner will return, we are challenged, as stewards, to stay alert. At any moment, we might need to account for that which has been put in our charge. This alertness should not be limited to a particular time of the year. We should avoid focusing only on the currency of money, which can reinforce the tunnel effect. Try reminding your community to be good stewards of all of God’s currencies – time, place, gracious leadership, relationship, truth and wellness.

So, we have a choice in what we do with the resources over which we have control. We can choose to hold on to them and let them turn rotten or use them to further divisive and destructive causes, *or* we can choose to let them flow in life-giving, truth-telling, relationship-building, community-enhancing ways. It’s the flowing of these currencies that gives them value. All six need to flow for ministry to be sustainable and missional. The flowing of the currencies must recirculate to replenish what was spent, so that the ministry can be regenerative.

Holy Currencies 365 days a year can move us to see God's abundance, even in these times

In the [Holy Currencies: Stewardship365 Curriculum](#), there are exercises for all the Holy Currencies that can be employed to keep stewardship going throughout the year. Use them to interrupt whatever tunneling your church members might be preoccupied with and remind them of what is important – the flowing of truth, the exercising of gracious leadership, the networking of relationships, the fostering of wellness, the sharing of our places and the investment of our time. Use the various congregational engagements, perhaps once a month, to remind everyone that they can choose to nurture these currencies toward the holy and toward creating a sustainable community through all the days of our lives.¹

Stewardship365 enables congregations to discover year-round time and talent and disrupt a tunnel-focus on treasure, that stuff we're storing up here on earth, that we are holding onto, that we think we've earned. This is living in a mindset of scarcity.

We can live differently. We can give and receive differently. We can turn our mindset on its end – upside down like the money changers' tables in the Temple – and live in and with God's abundance. We can live differently, if we look around and notice how lucky we are to be co-creating with God – right now, even with a pandemic, economic crisis, ecological disaster and political divisiveness.

Bill Cruse is an Episcopal priest, currently in the Diocese of Newark, New Jersey. He is Senior Associate and Eastern Regional Director with the Kaleidoscope Institute. Originally from Ohio, he now splits his time between the NYC metro area and the White Mountains of New Hampshire. His vocation includes cultivating sustainable missional ministries and anti-racism training and intercultural competency development.

To learn about living and flowing the abundance with which God has blessed us, visit the [Kaleidoscope Institute's Stewardship365 web page](#).

Resources:

- [Beyond Three T's](#) by Lisa Meeder Turnbull, ECF Vital Practices blog, January 27, 2012
- [Recipe for Spiritual Growth](#) by Doreen Rice, Vestry Papers, September 2012
- [Reframing Stewardship](#) by Greg Syler, Vestry Papers, September 2012
- [Doing More with Less](#) by Eric H.F. Law, Vestry Papers, September 2013

[1] (Modified excerpt from Chapter 1 of *Holy Currencies: Six Blessings for Sustainable Missional Ministries* and Chapter 8 of *Holy Currency Exchange*, both by Eric H. F. Law)

Creación de mayordomía durante todo el año con intercambios sagrados

Bill Cruse

En el principio Dios creó todo. Y Dios vio que todo era bueno. ¡Y es bueno! Es increíble que Dios creó todo *ex nihilo*: de la nada. Me pregunto con cuánta frecuencia nosotros los que redactamos y

publicitamos la campaña anual de mayordomía nos sentimos como que estamos tratando de crear algo de la nada.

Luchamos con las campañas de mayordomía y muchos consideran que el otoño es una época del año temible. Nadie quiere liderar la campaña y la mayoría probablemente no planifica con anticipación. Pocos de nosotros cantamos y bailamos como Miriam después de haber cruzado el mar Rojo cuando recibimos la carta, la llamada telefónica o la visita personal que nos invita a donar. La mayoría de nosotros probablemente piensa que está donando todo lo que puede y que no puede crear más. Equipos de parroquias se esfuerzan en obtener mayores resultados de mayordomía todos los años: más promesas de donaciones, más dinero o promesas de mayores donaciones. La concentración tiende a estar solamente en el dinero.

El dinero no es la única moneda que sostiene a nuestras comunidades de fe

Sí, Dios nos bendijo con esta moneda, algunos más o menos que a otros. Todos estamos invitados a donar dentro de nuestras habilidades, incluso hasta donar el 10 por ciento de nuestros ingresos. Y ahora nos encontramos en medio de una pandemia mundial, una crisis económica, divisiones raciales y políticas que dañan nuestro bienestar, y como si eso fuera poco, desastres ecológicos. Dios nos ha bendecido con: el Liderazgo con Gentileza, las Relaciones, la Verdad, el Tiempo y Lugar y el Bienestar, pero por lo general no cosechamos las bendiciones de ellas.

En Holy Currencies: Six Blessings for Sustainable Missional Ministries (Intercambios sagrados: Seis bendiciones para los ministerios misioneros sustentables), Eric H.F. Law ilumina y nos ayuda a ver los otros cinco intercambios sagrados. El liderazgo con gentileza es la habilidad de emplear destrezas, herramientas, modelos y procesos para crear entornos amables entre miembros existentes y externamente con no miembros. El intercambio de tiempo y lugar es el tiempo remunerado y voluntario que los líderes ofrecen al ministerio de la Iglesia, y las propiedades desde las que opera el ministerio eclesiástico, junto con otras propiedades del ministerio eclesiástico o a las que se tiene acceso. El intercambio de relaciones significa las redes internas y externas de conexiones mutuamente respetuosas que tienen los líderes y miembros de una iglesia o de un ministerio eclesiástico. El intercambio de la verdad es la habilidad de expresar individual y corporativamente la verdad global/holística, tanto internamente (denominación eclesiástica) como externamente (vecindario/localidad/nación). El intercambio del bienestar es el estado de estar sano física, social, económica, ecológica y espiritualmente dentro de un ministerio eclesiástico, del vecindario, la localidad/ciudad la nación o la tierra, especialmente como resultado de un esfuerzo deliberado. Cuando estos intercambios fluyen, se regeneran y recirculan, formamos un ministerio misionero sustentable.

La estrechez de mira conduce a la trampa de escasez

Muchos líderes eclesiásticos, ahora más que nunca, concentramos una gran parte de nuestra atención en las finanzas, en el edificio y el pastor. Nos preguntamos: “¿Vamos a poder cumplir con nuestro presupuesto?” Si el ingreso de nuestra iglesia no cumple con el objetivo, “¿cómo podemos hacer que la gente done más durante la segunda mitad del año?”. También nos preguntamos cómo hacer mejoras de capital, especialmente en emergencias. Este es un tipo de estrechez de mira.

La estrechez de mira en el dinero y el edificio puede conducir a que se ignoren otras monedas que puedan ayudar a los líderes de las iglesias a tomar decisiones acertadas para la sustentabilidad a largo plazo. Así es como las iglesias caen en la trampa de la escasez: cuando más se obsesionan por el dinero y

el edificio, más se estrecha el punto de mira y más se ignoran las opciones. Tomamos decisiones sin el beneficio pleno de las monedas de verdad, relaciones, bienestar y liderazgo con gentileza. Estas decisiones, a su vez, pueden causar que el panorama financiero de la iglesia empeore porque todas las monedas no están fluyendo y recirculando. Si no fluyen, se estacan y pudren, de esta manera, el ciclo de escasez continúa.

La mayordomía de *todos* los intercambios de Dios es importante para la misión y el ministerio sustentable

Una de las imágenes bíblicas de nuestro papel en la creación de Dios es la de un mayordomo a quien pusieron a cargo de la casa. (Marcos 12;33-37). Debido a que no sabemos cuándo regresará el dueño, estamos obligados, como mayordomos, a permanecer alertas. En cualquier momento podremos tener que rendir cuentas sobre lo que se puso a nuestro cargo. Este estado de alerta no debe estar limitado a una época del año específica. Debemos evitar centrarnos solamente en el dinero, porque hacerlo puede reforzar nuestra estrechez de mira. Trate de recordarle a los miembros de su comunidad que sean buenos mayordomos de todo lo que Dios nos ha dado: tiempo, lugar, liderazgo con gentileza, relaciones, verdad y bienestar.

Así que tenemos una opción sobre lo que hacemos con los recursos sobre los que tenemos control. Podemos optar por aferrarnos a ellos y dejar que se pudran o emplearlos en causas todavía más divisivas y destructivas o podemos optar por dejarlas fluir de maneras vivificantes, decidoras de la verdad, formadoras de relaciones y mejoradoras de la comunidad. Es la circulación de estas monedas lo que les confiere valor. Las seis deben fluir para que un ministerio sea sustentable y misionero. La circulación de las monedas se debe repetir para reabastecer lo que se gastó, para que el ministerio pueda ser regenerativo.

Intercambios sagrados los 365 días del año nos pueden mover a ver la abundancia de Dios, incluso en estos tiempos

En el [*Holy Currencies: Stewardship365 Curriculum*](#) (*el curriculum Intercambios Sagrados: Plan de Mayordomía365*) hay ejercicios para todas los intercambios sagrados que se pueden emplear para mantener la mayordomía activa durante todo el año. Úselos para interrumpir la estrechez de mira que perturba a los miembros y recuérdelos lo que es importante: dejar fluir la verdad, ejercitar el liderazgo con gentileza, formar redes de relaciones, fomentar el bienestar, compartir nuestros espacios e invertir nuestro tiempo. Emplee diversas actividades en las que pueda participar la feligresía, tal vez una vez por mes, para recordarles a todos que pueden optar por cultivar estas monedas hacia lo santo y hacia crear una comunidad sustentable todos los días de nuestras vidas.¹

Mayordomía365 permite que las feligresías descubran tiempo y talento todo el año y que se interrumpa la estrechez de mira en el tesoro, las cosas que estamos almacenando aquí en la tierra, a las que nos estamos aferrando, que pensamos nos las hemos ganado. Eso es vivir con una actitud mental de escasez.

Podemos vivir de otra forma. Podemos dar y recibir de otra forma. Podemos cambiar nuestra actitud mental, poniéndola patas arriba como las mesas de los cambistas en el Templo y vivir en y con la abundancia de Dios. Podemos vivir de otra manera si miramos a nuestro alrededor y notamos lo afortunados que somos en crear conjuntamente con Dios, ahora mismo, incluso en medio de una pandemia, una crisis económica, un desastre ecológico y divisiones políticas.

Bill Cruse es un sacerdote episcopal que se desempeña actualmente en la Diócesis de Newark, Nueva Jersey. Es Asociado Senior y Director Regional Oriental del Kaleidoscope Institute. Originariamente de Ohio, ahora divide su tiempo entre la zona metropolitana de la Ciudad de Nueva York y las Montañas Blancas de New Hampshire. Su vocación incluye cultivar ministerios misioneros sustentables, capacitar contra el racismo y desarrollar competencia intercultural.

Para obtener información sobre vivir y hacer fluir la abundancia con la que nos bendijo Dios, visite [Kaleidoscope Institute's Stewardship365 web page](#).

Recursos:

- [Una Nueva Manera de Encarar la Mayordomía](#) por Greg Syler, Vestry Papers, septiembre 2012
- [Un espíritu audaz de abundancia](#) por Sandy Webb, Vestry Papers, septiembre 2019
- [Mayordomía Incondicional](#) por Erin Weber-Johnson, Vestry Papers, septiembre 2013
- [La mayordomía Cristiana](#) por Sandra T. Montes, Vestry Papers, septiembre 2017

[1] (Pasaje modificado del Capítulo 1 de *Holy Currencies: Six Blessings for Sustainable Missional Ministries* y el Capítulo 8 de *Holy Currency Exchange*, ambos redactados por Eric H. F. Law)