

A Program
To
Encourage
Sacrificial Giving
In Your Parish

STEWARDSHIP



“For your heart will always be where your
riches are”
(Luke 12:34)

Stewardship Development Department
Diocese of Toronto
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Giving Sacrificially – A Personal Witness

For many parishes in our diocese, autumn is the time of year when activity flourishes as congregants return after their summer vacation. It is also a time of angst for many a treasurer, warden and incumbent as they grapple with ways of balancing the ledger. Often they are forced into making a desperate plea for funds in hopes of balancing the books. And yet it doesn't have to be this way.

In 2004 the Stewardship Development Committee developed a resource to specifically address concerns related to under giving in our parishes. This resource, aptly named "A Program to Encourage Sacrificial Giving in Your Parish," has been used widely in our diocese and beyond for nearly four years now. To date nearly 75 parishes in the Diocese of Toronto have used the program successfully with increases ranging from 10% to 30% in one year. It has become the single most popular stewardship program used annually in our diocese.

"Our giving is at best a response to the fact that God has already given to us. If God had not already given, we wouldn't have anything to give. We talk about how much we give and how often we give, forgetting that God is the first and greatest giver."
(William D. Watley, "Bring the Full Tithe", 1995)

One of the real strengths of the program says the Reverend Richard Miller, Incumbent for St. Luke, Dixie South, is its theological base. "Everything about sacrificial giving originates in scripture. We're not making this stuff up on the fly. Jesus spoke about giving from our substance all the time. However, over time we as a church haven't talked a lot about the importance of individual giving and the role that each one of us plays in supporting the ministry of the church. When I came to St. Luke in 2007 I found that many here had not been challenged to give proportionately and generously for some time. Many give at the same level today as they did ten or fifteen years ago even though Jesus gives abundantly all the time."

At six weeks in length the program is sufficiently intensive to focus a congregation's attention on the merits of sacrificial giving. "We did the program in the spring of 2005" explains the Rev. Andrew Sheldon, then Incumbent at Church of the Messiah in Toronto. "Our motivation was to make up for a deficit in operating costs. We had not done a focused giving campaign in some time. As a result we confirmed an additional \$30,000 in pledges."

With new parishioners coming to our parishes the key is consistency explains Mr. Sheldon. "We need to keep teaching the message of giving of our first fruits and we need to appeal to the congregation each year. I even recommend doing some sort of every member visitation every three years to connect with those not attending regularly."

Rural parishes can benefit from the program as well explains John Lawson, Deputy Rector's Warden at St. John, Craighurst north of Barrie. "For years we had been relying on our annual parish yard sale to help cover operating expenses but the demands on people's time was becoming too onerous" says Mr. Lawson.

With an average Sunday attendance of about sixty, St. John's was too dependent on special events to cover expenses. Mr. Lawson continues: "we hadn't done a giving campaign in years and little had been done to actually teach people about the need to give. Over the course of six weeks in the fall of 2005 we had guest speakers and sermons and finally a pledging Sunday. The results speak for

themselves. Not only were we able to cover off on all our operating expenses but now we can support outreach in ways had we never thought possible.”

One of the essential elements in organizing a sacrificial giving campaign is developing a narrative budget. Unlike the usual line-item budget that we are all accustomed to seeing at annual vestry meetings, the narrative budget shows the purposes and goals of the congregation and focuses attention on mission and ministry. “The narrative budget made all the difference for us”, explains the Rev. Judith Herron - Graham when St. Peter, Carleton Street did the campaign in spring, 2008. “People really get a sense of where the money goes. There is a strong emphasis on accountability and it demonstrated to people that we really were cost effective.” The response was quite positive with givings up 28% over the past year.

“I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the other contributors to the temple treasury. For they have all contributed from their surplus wealth, but she, from her poverty, has contributed all she had, her whole livelihood.”
(Mark 12:43-44)

There will always be detractors when it comes to speaking about money in church. Some even think we talk about money too much. The truth is we probably do not talk about money in the church enough. Or to be more precise, we do not speak about it in its proper context so it appears that we talk about it too much. And yet Jesus spoke about what we turn into false gods more than any other topic in scripture. Part of the problem is that stewardship is sometimes equated with begging. And we often do not make the connection between the gifts that we give and the free gift of life that we have already received from God.

The program to encourage generous giving in your parish is self-contained and user-friendly. All outlines, templates, letters and worksheets are included. We also provide bulletin announcements and quotes straight out of scripture. There are even sample sermons to give clergy ideas on what to include when they introduce stewardship to their parish. The program can be down-loaded from the diocesan website or can be ordered from the stewardship office at no charge.

As always, may God bless our clergy and church members in their ministry of service!

Peter Misiaszek, CFRE
Director of Stewardship Development

The Difference Between Sacrificial Giving and Stewardship

It is important to develop a common understanding of what we mean by the terms stewardship and sacrificial giving. Sometimes these terms are used interchangeably and without precision so we need to be clear about exactly what they mean. While the terms are inter-related – springing from our understanding of stewardship as a way of life – they generally involve different levels of obligation on the part of the committed Christian.

The classic definition of **Stewardship** is the following: “Stewardship is receiving God’s gifts gratefully, cherishing and tending them in a responsible and accountable manner, sharing them in justice and love with others, and returning them with increase to the Lord.” It is a complete lifestyle of accountability and responsibility acknowledging God as the Creator and Owner of all. Stewards, as disciples of Jesus Christ, see themselves as caretakers of all God’s gifts. Gratitude for these gifts is expressed in prayer, worship, action and offering by eagerly sharing these gifts out of love for God and for one another. In talking about stewardship the phrase “time, talent and treasure” is frequently used.

“Render to God not a tenth, not a third, not a half, but all that is God’s, be it more or less, by employing all on yourself, your household, the household of faith, and all people, in such a manner that you may give a good account for your stewardship when ye can be no longer stewards.” (John Wesley, “On the Use of Money,” 1760)

Sacrificial Giving requires that we put God’s priorities before our own, that we put the support of God’s Church and its mission before our own pleasure and comfort. Sacrificial giving involves four principles: it must be a gift, it is planned, it is proportionate and it is a sacrifice. It comes from our substance not our excess. This act can lead us into a closer relationship with God because if we are giving an amount that is truly a sacrifice we are expressing the belief that our security lies not in our material wealth but in God.

Proportionate Giving is related to Sacrificial Giving. We encourage congregants to give a proportion of their income to the ministry of the church. In the Old Testament, the tithe – or ten percent of one’s income – is the obligatory proportionate gift. In the New Testament Jesus never advocates tithing. Instead, Jesus challenges us to be generous in all that we do. In Luke’s Gospel we learn that “much is required of the person to whom much is given; much more is required from the person to whom more is given” (12:48).

We can see therefore that a hierarchy of sorts exists when we talk about stewardship and sacrificial giving. Sacrificial giving is a component of stewardship, yet for stewardship to be complete it requires additional emphasis on our gifts of time and talent. Generally speaking, no stewardship initiative gets off the ground by highlighting one element over the other let alone speaking about treasure before the other two. We have an obligation, at the same time, to teach our congregations about the merits of giving thanks, and sharing our treasure is often the easiest way to demonstrate that our thankfulness. Parishes should be able to expand on their experience with sacrificial giving to include year-round stewardship as a means of involving all the gifts that the community has to offer.

Guidelines for Giving

Many Christians support their churches and clergy with monetary contributions of one kind or another. Frequently this is called tithing whether or not it follows the ten percent rule of the Old Testament. However, as tithing was an ingrained Jewish custom by the time of Jesus, no specific command to tithe per se is found in the New Testament.

The absence of a command for tithing does not relieve Christians of the responsibility to give. Rather, Christians are held to the higher law of stewardship - acknowledging that everything we have is a gift from God (Matthew 19:21). The Bible specifies two main reasons for Christian giving.

First, Christians should provide for the needs of fellow Christians who are experiencing financial hardships. For example, while Barnabas and Saul were ministering in Antioch, there was a severe famine in Judea. Members of the community decided that each of them would send whatever they could to help their fellow believers in Judea. They collected the offerings and sent the money to the church elders by Barnabas and Saul (Acts 11:27-30).

Later in Paul's ministry, he gave instruction to other churches that they also should give to the poor in Jerusalem. He wrote: "Now, concerning what you wrote about the money to be raised to help God's people in Judea. You must do what I told the churches in Galatia to do. Every Sunday each of you must put aside some money, in proportion to what you have earned, and save it up, so that there will be no need to collect money when I come" (1Corinthians 16:1-2).

In his letter to the Romans, Paul tells of another example of generosity among believers, "Macedonia and Achaia have freely decided to give an offering to help the poor among God's people in Jerusalem" (Romans 15:26). Today's Christians are called to follow these examples and provide for the needs of our brothers and sisters in Christ who are in financial distress.

A second reason for Christian giving is to support Christian leaders. Paul wrote to the Corinthians that "those who preach the gospel should receive their living from it" (1Corinthians 9:14). To the Galatians, he wrote: "Anyone who is being taught the Christian message should share all the good things they have with their teacher" (Galatians 6:6). Note that these Christians encouraged to support those who lead them both in their local community and beyond.

The final question remains; how much should Christians give? Each Christian "should give, then, as they have decided, not with regret or out of a sense of duty; for God loves a cheerful giver" (2Corinthians 9:7). No set amount or percentage of income is dictated, rather, "if you are eager to give, God will accept your gift on the basis of what you have to give, not on what you don't have" (2Corinthians 8:12).

In summary, Christians are not restricted in their giving to the Old Testament understanding of tithing. Instead they are to be challenged by New Testament guidelines which describe giving as:

- Proportional to one's income (1Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 8:12)
- Consistent (1Corinthians 16:2)
- Sacrificial (Mark 12:43-44; 2Corinthians 8:2-3)

- Cheerful (2Corinthians 9:7)

Christians should live open-handed and generously, acknowledging that they are merely stewards of God's creation and that all things come from God

It is helpful to have some sort of clarity about a standard of giving. Those who are being introduced to sacrificial giving for the first time might consider donating one hour's pay per week to church and a similar amount to charity. Those who are retired can be encouraged to consider an hour's pay (2.5%) from their retirement income. This approach can have two very positive outcomes: First, it makes the work week and the work of our hands holy because our act of giving is intimately tied to how we earn a living. A blessing of sorts is given to our creative efforts made during the course of the week. Secondly an hour's pay is simple and profound and it may increase with time to reflect our progress in life.

Those who may be unemployed or facing serious financial burdens could consider how they might give of their time and talent to the church on a weekly basis and pray for the ministry of the Church. Everyone, regardless of income level should be encouraged to give something. Even in our hardship we experience blessing.

Why Practice Stewardship?

Our understanding of stewardship as a way of life is based in scripture. The first chapter of Genesis tells us that God created all things, and created us to be the stewards of all creation. Being good stewards involves protecting our environment, as well as being concerned about the welfare of our fellow human beings. As stewards, we recognise that everything we have is a gift from God. We are responsible to tend our gifts, to nurture them and then to share their abundance with all.

“We need to get our priorities straight and be faithful to what has been entrusted to us. We are to make sure that wealth and material possessions always remain a means of serving God and never become ends in themselves.” (The Rev. Dr. John H. Westerhoff, “Grateful and Generous Hearts,” 1997)

The Reverend Dr. John H. Westerhoff, a noted scholar and priest from Atlanta, writes: “stewardship is the way to spiritual health and maturity, but for stewardship to have a chance we must begin with a serious spiritual question: What do we owe to God for the free gift of life and its accompanying benefits? The answer, of course, is everything.”

To be true stewards we must gladly share with others our time, our talent and our treasure. The lesson of scripture is not to be viewed in isolation from our daily lives. Scripture provides a real and complete guideline to living our daily lives as followers of Jesus Christ, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength and you shall love your neighbour as yourself” (Mark 12:30-31).

Christ's teachings and life are our model for stewardship “It was for this that God called you, for Christ himself suffered for you and left you an example, so that you would follow in his steps” (1Peter 2:21). Embracing a life of Christian stewardship is the way we offer thanks to God for what God is already doing for us.

Our Baptismal Covenant

The practice of stewardship manifests itself in our daily lives through the Baptismal Covenant. In the Rite of Baptism, we profess our faith and reply affirmatively to the following statements:

- Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?
- Will you persevere in resisting evil and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?
- Will you proclaim by word and example the good news of God in Christ?
- Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbour as yourself?
- Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?

(Book of Alternative Services, p. 159)

The commitment we make at Baptism is not merely a statement of belief but is also a call to action. It recalls the teaching: "suppose there are brothers or sisters who need clothes and don't have enough to eat. What good is there in your saying to them, 'God bless you! Keep warm and eat well!' – if you don't give them the necessities of life? So it is with faith: if it is alone and includes no actions, then it is dead" (James 2:15-17).

In the breaking of bread and sharing of fellowship with one another we recognise the temporal needs of our faith community. Our response is to ensure that our parish has the human and financial resources necessary to support vibrant ministry – ensuring a sound physical structure, strong and capable volunteer leadership, outreach programs, Christian education, hospitality, youth ministry and music – in addition to providing all parish staff, including clergy, with equitable and fair compensation for their work. The practice and teaching of stewardship education becomes vital to help us understand why we give joyfully.

We resist evil by inclining our hearts to follow God's commandments and to be examples of Christ in our world today. In thought, word and action we seek justice, practice tolerance and celebrate the diversity that is found within our church and society. It means reaching out to those who are different to us and making them feel welcome at the table of Christ.

The good news as found in Holy Scripture guides and nourishes us on our faith journey. The way we live gives testimony to our belief that our God is a God of salvation and mercy. We are mindful of the need to feed the hungry, give drink to those who thirst, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, care for the sick and visit those imprisoned (Matthew 26: 35-36). As stewards, we live to give hope to others.

Loving our neighbour as ourselves acknowledges that we have a responsibility beyond our own interests. In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus challenges his followers to become "other" centred. We are a Christian community endowed with many wonderful blessings. In gratitude, our faith obliges us to share what we have received with those less fortunate and those on the margins of society.

As we strive for justice and peace among all peoples we seek to create the world as Christ himself envisioned it: a world where people freely give without expecting in return and give in abundance

because of the joy that is experienced in giving. In living the life of a joyful steward we can then proclaim that “there is more happiness in giving than in receiving” (Acts 20:35).

Stewardship as an Expression of Faith

Practicing stewardship intimately ties us to who we are as a Christian people. Stewardship is an expression of faith. It is not simply the church’s way of raising money; rather, it is a spiritual discipline that encompasses our very being as Christians. It is a radical departure from our secular understanding of charity where we give to an external need. Instead, as stewards, we are motivated to give because it is something we internally need to do; it is intrinsic to our very understanding of what it means to be fully human. Giving is not predicated on a certain act, nor is it something we do just because it is convenient. Our vocation as a Christian is that we give freely and in great generosity “for God loves a cheerful giver” (2Corinthians 9:7). Recognising that God actually gave us everything we have in trust, we, in turn, share the gifts that we have been given.

Introducing Sacrificial Giving To Your Parish

Our material goods are often the greatest barrier to our trust in God. Therefore, it is important to take the time to teach how and why we must change our attitude to wealth. It will require persistence and careful teaching to wean people away from the materialism of modern life to a true understanding of Christian generosity. We owe it to ourselves and our churches, however, to impart a correct understanding of the theology of giving. An intentional and committed program focused on the merits of sacrificial giving is a first step to transforming our congregations to ones where giving truly becomes a way of life.

Guidelines for Success: The Six-Week Program

The six week program is sufficiently intensive to focus a congregation's attention on the merits of sacrificial giving. Not limiting ourselves to the usual pledging campaign of one or two weeks that takes place in many parishes, we afford the opportunity to genuinely and thoughtfully discuss the theology behind why giving is a necessary and reasonable practice of Christian life. In addition, we have the chance to reach out to those parishioners who do not attend services on a regular basis and are usually missed in the annual pledging drive.

Week 1 – Sunday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution of Narrative Budget (p. 11) • Bulletin Insert (p. 10)
Week 2 – Sunday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bulletin Insert (p. 10) • Sermon by Incumbent • Intercession for successful campaign during Prayers of the People (p. 35)
Week 3 – Sunday – Monday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lay Witness Talk in place of Sermon (this should be done only by a parishioner that is genuinely a Sacrificial Giver) (pp. 18 & 19) • Intercession during Prayers of the People (p. 35) • Mailing #1 (Incumbent's or warden's letter with Proportional giving worksheet and intention card/PAG enrollment form) (pp. 12-14)
Week 4 – Sunday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bulletin Announcement encouraging prayerful planning of gift (p. 10) • Intercession during Prayers for the People (p. 35) • Pulpit Announcement on next week's pledge
Week 5 – Sunday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pledge/Visitation Sunday (pledge cards collected at Offertory) (see p. 13) • Sermon by Incumbent • Intercession during Prayers of the People
Week 6 – Sunday – Monday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pulpit Announcement of Result • Mailing #2 (to those not responding) (p. 15) • Mailing #3 (thank you to those who have already responded) (p. 16)

Sample Materials

Bulletin Announcements

A sacrificial giving program will soon be introduced at our parish. No gift is truly a gift unless it is feely given. God's gifts to us are given in such a manner. Sacrificial giving is really an attitude of gratitude for God's generosity.

We are called to model our giving after God's unconditional generosity to us. Our gifts become sacrificial when we give from what we feel we need; when we give something that we thought we needed for ourselves. Then we realize our security lies not in material goods but in God.

Is your gift to the work of God's Church a sacrifice or do you give what is left over after taking care of yourself? Each of us must search our own hearts to find whether we give to God first trusting that God will care for us or do we put God at the back of the line to wait for the leftovers?

A rich man died and went to heaven. St. Peter escorted him to his new home, a hut in a very poor area. Seeing the shock on this man's face, Peter explained "We only build your home up here with the material you send ahead while you are still on earth."

Joyful giving is sharing, in a planned, proportionate way, the wealth with which God has blessed us. It is a sign of our gratitude to God. It is an expression of our faith, of what we say we believe. We direct a portion of our giving through our parish because it is the body which most clearly bears witness to the meaning and values we find at the centre of our lives.

How much should I give?

Give in proportion to the goodness God has shown to you. Consider a weekly gift to your parish starting at one hour's pay. Then, with prayer and sacrifice over a period of time you may be able to increase your gift.

A king invited all his subjects to a feast and asked each one to bring a small flask of wine to be put into a large vat and served to the guests. Each one thought, "What will my small flask mean? I will bring a flask of water and no one will notice the difference." When the wine was served each guest received only water. Remember, God sees all sacrifices made, and whether large or small, knows they make a difference.

Do not store up riches for yourselves here on earth, where moths and rust destroy, and robbers break in and steal. Instead, store up riches for yourselves in heaven, where moth and rust cannot destroy and robbers cannot break in and steal. (Matthew 6:19-20)

Command those who are rich in the things of this life not to be proud, but to place their hope, not in such an uncertain thing as riches, but in God, who generously gives us everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share with others. (1 Timothy 6:17-18)

Honour the Lord with your wealth, with first fruits of all you produce; then will your barns be filled with grain, with new wine your vats will overflow. (Proverbs 3:9-10)

Narrative Budget

The vestry and stewardship committee need an effective tool for showing church members how their giving supports mission. Too often, they have only the church's line-item budget to use for this purpose. Although a line-item budget keeps track of church income and expenses, it reveals little about how a congregation's mission is funded. However, a narrative budget shows the purposes and goals of the congregation and focuses attention on mission and ministry.

A narrative budget shows what ministries were supported by the previous year's offerings and also shows how the vestry is budgeting resources to carry out the congregation's mission. It helps the vestry demonstrate its accountability to the rest of the membership so that its accountability inspires trust, and trust inspires commitment. When church members see that the ministries they make possible are continuing Christ's work in the world, offerings increase.

Also, the narrative budget reminds the congregation that the church's leaders manage the ministry resources. For example, some expenditures in church budgets – such as salaries and utilities – are commonly considered fixed, contracted expenses. Sometimes, the congregation sees these so-called fixed expenditures in the line-item budget as overhead expenses and identifies “real” ministries with expenditures for church school supplies and various social programmes. The narrative budget clarifies that every budget expenditure affects ministry. The people give offerings to support the ministries of the church. Thus, each ministry carries out the overall mission of the church.

Three great benefits are derived from a narrative budget:

- demonstrates that most congregations are very cost effective;
- identifies not just contributions of treasure, but those of time and talent as well;
- heightens awareness in the congregation of the diversity of ministry presently taking place.

Many of our parishes are already producing narrative budget's on an annual basis because they see the difference between a “line-item” budget and one that brings the ministry of the church community to life. Some individuals may make the connection between their giving and the needs of the church on their own and increase their support accordingly. However, without its presentation within the context of a sacrificial giving campaign the true potential to increase giving may be lost.

A good narrative budget should include information that reflects:

- Parish Mission Statement & Vestry Stewardship Statement
- The Big Picture!
- The Parish's Mission Priorities – Worship, Out-reach, In-reach & Christian Education
- Tells the story about how lives have been changed

Here are three web-links to narrative budgets that are currently in use:

www.theredeemer.ca/pdf/NarrativeBudget2008.pdf (Redeemer, Toronto)

www.stjohnspeterborough.ca/pdfs/2008_finance_report.pdf (St. John, Peterborough)

www.anglican.ca/Financial-Ministries/stepbystep (General Synod)

[Proportionate Giving Worksheet](#)

From the Old Testament we learn that the people were to give of their “first fruits.” The same principle applies to us today: to give the first fruits of our labours to God through the Church. We should also give in proportion to what God has given us. Some people use the “modern-day” tithe, 5% of all income, as a guide for their giving (2.5% to church and 2.5% to charity). Others use an hour’s earnings as their contribution. Each person must determine what is appropriate for them.

This worksheet offers a means of determining one’s present percentage level of pledged financial support for the local church and establishing a commitment for the coming year. It is not to be returned to the church. It is intended for personal use with prayerful consideration in the privacy of your home.

1. To find your current level of local church support, divide your pledge by your net income for the same period.

	<u>Example:</u>	<u>Your figures:</u>
A. Current Net Income	\$ 40,000	\$ _____
B. Current Pledge	\$ 400	\$ _____
C. Current Percentage Level (Divide line B by line A)	<u>1.0%</u>	_____ %

2. A financial commitment for the coming year might be based on one of the following options:

Modern Day Tithe

A. Expected Net Income	\$ 40,000	\$ _____
B. Tithe (2.5% church/2.5% charity)	<u>5%</u>	<u>5%</u>
C. New Commitment (Multiply line A by line B)	\$ 2,000	\$ _____

An Hour’s Wage

A. Net Weekly Income	\$ 800	\$ _____
B. Hours in Work Week	<u>40</u>	<u>40</u>
C. New Weekly Commitment (Divide line A by line B)	\$ 20	\$ _____

Sacrificial Giving Intention Card (to be returned to the parish envelope secretary)

This is a guide to returning the first portion of your treasure to the Lord

Annual First Portion Guide

Net Family Income	1%	2%	3%	4%	5%	10%
\$10,000	\$100	\$200	\$300	\$400	\$500	\$1,000
\$20,000	\$200	\$400	\$600	\$800	\$1,000	\$2,000
\$30,000	\$300	\$600	\$900	\$1,200	\$1,500	\$3,000
\$35,000	\$350	\$700	\$1,050	\$1,400	\$1,750	\$3,500
\$40,000	\$400	\$800	\$1,200	\$1,600	\$2,000	\$4,000
\$45,000	\$450	\$900	\$1,350	\$1,800	\$2,250	\$4,500
\$50,000	\$500	\$1,000	\$1,500	\$2,000	\$2,500	\$5,000
\$55,000	\$550	\$1,100	\$1,650	\$2,200	\$2,750	\$5,500
\$60,000	\$600	\$1,200	\$1,800	\$2,400	\$3,000	\$6,000
\$70,000	\$700	\$1,400	\$2,100	\$2,800	\$3,500	\$7,000
\$80,000	\$800	\$1,600	\$2,400	\$3,200	\$4,000	\$8,000
\$90,000	\$900	\$1,800	\$2,700	\$3,600	\$4,500	\$9,000
\$100,000	\$1,000	\$2,000	\$3,000	\$4,000	\$5,000	\$10,000

As I/we have received generously from the Lord, I/we intend to place \$ _____ in the Sunday Offertory each week in gratitude to God and in support of our parish.

-or-

As I/we have received generously from the Lord, I/we intend to commit \$ _____ on a monthly basis through Pre-Authorized Remittance in gratitude to God and in support of our parish.

(Name)

(Address)

(City)

(Postal Code)

(Phone)

No signature is required because your decision is a covenant with God and not a contract with your parish.

Sample Mailing #1

Date

X
X
X
X

“Much is required of the person to whom much is given; much more is required from the person to whom much more is given” (Luke 12:48)

Dear X,

As followers of Jesus, these words apply as much today as they did nearly two thousand years ago. We are reminded to look at all God has placed in our care. It is easy to get caught up in the materialism of today’s society, confusing our own wants as needs. It is easy to forget that Jesus calls us by our Baptism to continue the work He began on earth. It is our responsibility to ensure that we pass on the faith to the up-coming generations and to support the work of the Church here in our own community and throughout the world.

Over the last few weeks you have heard us talk in church about sacrificial giving. In considering a sacrificial gift we recognise that all our gifts, abilities and possessions come from God. We acknowledge that we live, love and work because God gave us the ability and opportunity to do so.

We realise that without God’s free gift of our lives and our physical and mental abilities, any effort on our part would be useless. In fact, our very ambition to go out and work is itself part of God’s loving gift to us of our own human nature.

Likewise, all the material possessions we have, derive from God’s continued will to allow us to keep them. The gift of free will means that God allows us to decide what we will do with our lives and our wealth. To give joyfully is our choice. God is inviting us into a complete loving relationship. Our gift will also strengthen our loving relationship with God’s people because it will help support our parish and our diocese.

I am asking you to prayerfully consider your contribution to the work of the Church, here in our own parish, in our diocese and beyond. When you have done so, use the enclosed worksheet to decide what planned proportion of the family income you wish to give to the Lord’s use and place the completed intention card in the enclosed envelope. Then place it in the collection plate next Sunday.

Thank you for your past generous support of the Church and the needs of your brothers and sisters. May God bless you and your family abundantly.

In Christ,

XXXXXXXXXXXX

Sample Mailing #2

Date

X
X
X
X

“I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the other contributors to the temple treasury. For they have all contributed from their surplus wealth, but she, from her poverty, has contributed all she had, her whole livelihood.” (Mark 12:43-44)

Dear X,

I would like to renew my invitation to you to support the caring community of _____ Parish. As you know the Parish Sacrificial Giving Program has been launched during the past six weeks and has been a great success.

A large number of people are now committing their financial support to the work of the Church in this parish. We would like to ensure that you also have the opportunity to become involved in this inspiring work. Please be assured that any sacrifice you care to make will help to continue God’s work in our caring community.

It was not for nothing that our Lord singled out the widow giving her mite. More than anyone, Jesus understood the very private nature of each person’s approach to support his work. Whatever decision you make will be appreciated and will remain confidential.

Thank you for your consideration. Remember that the story of the widow’s mite is an inspiration to all who aspire to do good works but feel their contribution will make little difference. Please prayerfully consider your support for the parish. When you have done so, use the enclosed worksheet to decide what planned proportion of the family income you wish to give to the Lord’s use and place the completed intention card in the enclosed envelope. Then place it in the collection plate next Sunday.

In Christ,

XXXXXXXXXXXX

Date

X
X
X
X

“Everyone must give according to what they have inwardly decided; not sadly, not grudgingly, for God loves a cheerful giver.” (2 Corinthians 9:7)

Dear X,

I would like to thank you and the members of your family most sincerely for your generous pledge of \$____ per week (or \$____ per month if using PAG) to the Parish Sacrificial Giving campaign. Your contribution will help all the many people who depend on _____ Parish for pastoral care and support, and will ensure the maintenance of the parish buildings.

In deciding to put God’s priorities before your own, you are following in the footsteps of the apostles. In a world filled with materialism and self-interest, it has been the sacrifices of Jesus’ followers that have illuminated His teaching and spread a faith founded in love. Thank you for continuing that tradition.

May the blessing of God almighty be amongst you and remain with you always.

In Christ,

XXXXXXXXXXXXX

Personal visiting in homes is by far the best way to run a parish pledge-gathering campaign. It will beat an effort based on only sermons and letters every time. Another way that is almost as good is to have meetings of small groups (“cottage groups”) in homes. A parish dinner can also work.

A visiting, or calling effort, by its very nature, demonstrates that there is commitment on the part of all the workers. Calling on every parish member (except those who really don’t want it), not just those who are late in getting their cards back, is important. Calling on habitual non-givers and non-attendees will sometimes touch such people, with effects that may either be prompt, or take years to surface. Put differently, it is missing the point to try to minimize the effort.

Personal calling will generally produce about 20% more money than only a sermons-plus-letters campaign. The longer it has been since there has been an every member visitation, the bigger the increase. An Every Member Canvass will also produce a wealth of people-to-people contact. You will learn what the people-out-there:

- need
- like
- want to change/would like to see
- would like to see done/do

About 20-25 %of the congregation should be callers. Somewhere between 40-70 % of the income will come from the callers’ own pledges, so that the time spent in getting them involved and training them is a very good investment. Put differently, attempting to minimize the overall effort can be very counterproductive. Make sure that the callers know to be up front about the fact that the canvass is about people as well as money. “We want to know what you think, and we invite you to be more involved in the church.”

Canvassers should be trained in what they are supposed to do, and in what they are not supposed to do. For instance, if a person has important personal problems, the caller shouldn’t try to solve them: leave the counseling to those who are trained in counseling. However, do make a report back to the parish priest, so that the problem can be dealt with. Canvassers should not know the amount pledged by the people they are calling on, and the parishioners should know that the callers won’t know. Canvassers should make their own pledges before going out to call on other people and should be willing to talk about their own general approach to giving (no more specific than they are comfortable with) but let a bit of both the struggle and the commitment show through.

It is not reasonable to expect any caller to be able to answer all possible questions that come up. However, the callers should know how to deal with questions they can’ answer; approaches for this should be dealt with in the caller training session (example: refer pastoral issues to the Rector, refer budget questions to the treasurer, etc.). Explain during the in-service announcement period what will and will not occur during a call. In doing this, *you are training the callees*, as well as the callers. It is important for the callers to know that the callees don’t have unrealistic expectations.

Canvassers should report back with brief written notes on all calls: no problems, never could find the house, said no, already mailed in, have transferred to another church, etc. Probably a few previously unknown pastoral problems will be uncovered (a relative or family member has cancer, Father lost his job, someone is in hospital, etc.). A few pledge cards may not come back until January. Don’t worry, it’s what’s on them that counts, not how quickly they come in.

As the pledges come in, and the totals mount, report them in the newsletter and/or the Sunday bulletin, and/or during the announcement period during the service. The increasing totals give the congregation the sense of a team effort, a sense of progress and then a nice success experience.

Lay Witness Talk

One of the most important parts of sacrificial giving is the stories and testimonials delivered to the entire congregation by individuals whose lives have changed as a result. These lay witnesses are necessary to the success of the parish effort. There are many reasons for this. Learning to be a generous giver is a part of the internal change of heart, or conversion process, we know so well from the Scriptures. The Old and New Testament are full of stories of real people who became aware of the need to put their faith into action.

Lay witnesses send a strong message to the faithful about giving of one's self for what God has given them. Christians throughout history have been raised to a new level of awareness by hearing how a deeper sense of spirituality has taken over the lives of people just like them.

The lay witnesses should be individuals from the parish who believe and practice the concept of sacrificial giving, for example, those who give of their time, talent and treasure in an intentional, planned and proportionate way. They should be individuals who can relate well to other parishioners, feel comfortable speaking to a group about their personal experiences, and who will be enthusiastic about their mission. A potential lay witness may say, "Yes, I believe in giving back to God in gratitude but I don't want to stand up and tell everyone what I am doing because it sounds like I'm bragging about myself."

The response to that person could be, "You are not bragging because you are unselfish in your giving. By sharing with us how you arrive at your decision to become a more generous giver, you will be inspiring others to rise to the same level of generosity."

Sample Outline

1. **Introduce Yourself.** While many of your fellow parishioners will know you, some may not. Give a description of your family, the number of years in the parish, etc.
2. **Properly Define Christian Stewardship.** It is a response we make in gratitude to God for what God has given to us. It is intentional, planned, proportionate and sacrificial.
3. **Discuss How You Began Practicing Sacrificial Giving.** When did you first become aware of the concept? Did you have reservations? Be honest about your first reactions. People will relate to any feeling of "discomfort."
4. **When Did You Begin to Experience the Benefits?** Speak of the effect that **Sacrificial Giving** has had on your faith life. Use anecdotes from your own family life if possible. Were you able to give a full tithe (10%) right away? If not, how are you working toward that goal?
5. **Urge Your Fellow Parishioners to Get Involved.** Invite the congregation to become a stewardship parish, initially through sacrificial giving. Ask them to look at all that God has given to them and make a generous response to God's many gifts.

Tips for Presenting a Lay Witness Talk

An important part of people's acceptance of the concept of sacrificial giving is the personal witness of individual testimony you provide with your presence and the manner in which you give your talk. The following are tips you should consider in preparing your comments:

- When planning your talk use language you are comfortable with. Use your own style, wording and delivery.
- Explain that sacrificial giving means giving our first fruits, not the leftovers, when making a gift to the Church.
- Show how when we give in this way, we experience deepened faith and joy. Also give a personal testimony of how you have found this to be true in your own life.
- Challenge people to reflect on their values and the importance of the Christian faith in their lives as evidenced by how they use their gifts from God. Question whether we really use these gifts to do the work of the Lord.
- Challenge them with practical questions. As they receive increases in pay for example, do they, in turn, increase their gift to the Lord? This increase enables ministry grow.
- Explain that stewardship involves not only church, but also includes the time and financial support we give to other charitable organisations.
- Do not talk in dollar amounts: "if everyone could just give an extra \$2.00 per week." Sacrificial giving is about giving proportionately. Two dollars may mean nothing so someone who is well off, but undue hardship to someone who is poor.
- Stress the role of the pledge card and emphasise that its return is a sign of participation and commitment.
- Include the following explanation to mention the completion of the pledge card in your talk:

"You will receive a pledge card this week by mail along with a work-sheet on proportional giving. Please prayerfully reflect with your family on the many blessings you have received from the Lord. In that context consider a gift that is appropriate for your situation. If you are new to sacrificial giving, consider a gift of an hour's pay – it is fair, equitable and just. Remember that everyone is important and has something to give back to our parish. Once you have completed the intention card, return it in the collection on commitment Sunday. The card is confidential and not legally binding, but helps our parish community plan for the future."

Stewardship Sermons

Clergy play an important role in supporting the stewardship process. Each incumbent should strive to give a stewardship sermon at least once every three months. This will help orient the parish into

thinking about sacrificial giving as a year-round effort and will mitigate criticism that stewardship is only equated with money. Incumbents need not speak directly about money either. Practically every Gospel message speaks about sharing and generous living.

I have included four sample sermons from clergy in our diocese that represent diversity in approaches to dealing with the theme of stewardship.

Sample #1 – Stewardship is a Way of Life

Sermon by the Venerable Michael Pollesel, General Secretary of the Anglican Church of Canada given at St. John the Evangelist Parish, Ottawa, January 25, 2004. (Reprinted with permission)

I begin by bringing you greetings from my own Diocese of Ontario, which you may be interested to know, also happens to be the ‘mother’ of the Diocese of Ottawa.

I also want to say just how pleased I am to have been invited to preach here in St. John’s. Little did I know - or even dream - back in the mid 1970’s - when I used to ride by here on the bus - on my way to St. Paul’s University - little did I know - that one day I’d be standing inside this church - preaching.

Another thing I’d like to say - before launching into my message - is a word of thanks to you - here at St. John’s - and especially to your rector and staff - for being - as your advertising clearly says - for being different. As I’m sure you many of you know and have first hand experience - being different comes at a cost. And I want to thank you for that.

Now that I’ve got all that out - where to begin?

Should I focus on the week of prayer for Christian unity - which our church calendar tells us ends today?

Should I focus on one of the three scripture passages you’ve just heard?

Should I talk about my role in the diocese of Ontario?

Like most Sundays - there's a virtual smorgasbord from which to choose.

What I propose to do this morning is spend most of my time talking about stewardship. However, by the time I’m done, I also hope to have said just a word or two about our readings, as well as about Christian unity.

And no - I don’t plan to stand here - talking at you for 25 or 30 minutes or more!

One of the things I do in my position is go around my diocese - to different parishes - offering various kinds of workshops.

Some months back I was asked by a parish to do a workshop on biblical definitions of stewardship. And so off I went - and about a dozen of us spent a productive morning - reading different Bible passages and using them as we worked on a definition of stewardship.

At the end of the morning - when we were doing a bit of evaluation - one of the participants said: (and - just as an aside - I had asked that people bring their Bibles) - this person said to me: "I didn't get the word about bringing our Bibles. I knew this was going to be a morning about stewardship. So, reaching into his pocket, he continued, "I brought my calculator."

The fact is - that over the last 40 or 50 years or so - we - in the Church - have allowed the meaning of stewardship to be defined almost strictly as money - dollars and cents - and even more narrowly - as the raising of money. I see my present task as one voice - among others - trying to expand on that meaning. I'm not really doing anything new or innovative.

I believe that people need to rediscover stewardship with a much broader - fuller - richer - kind of meaning.

Let me stop for just a minute here.

Let me ask you - if you were going to try to get people to think and talk about stewardship as meaning more than just money - where would you begin? How would you start?

I'm looking for your input here.

Now - let me tell you where I believe we need to start when talking about stewardship.

We need to start - as I heard Peter Mason - the former bishop of Ontario say once - we need to start: "in the BIG inning." Or - for non-baseball fans - "in the beginning."

Stewardship has its roots in the Book of Genesis - "in the beginning God created."

With all the other advances we've made over the years - in science - in medicine - in just about any field you'd care to mention - with ALL the advances we've made - I often wonder - if maybe today we simply pay lip service to the whole idea of a creator God.

And so - if we're going to be serious about stewardship - we really need to wrestle - we need to struggle - and that's exactly what it's going to be for most of us - a real struggle - to come to a place where we can say - "Yes, I honestly and truly - and way deep down in my gut - I believe - I accept - that God has made EVERYTHING - that God OWNS - if you want to use that word - God OWNS EVERYTHING."

God made - and God owns - my spouse - my children - my very body. God made - and God owns - the car I drive - the clothes on my back - the job I have. God made - and God owns - and we can go on - and on - and on. Because it doesn't end - does it.

And this creator God - who made - and who owns EVERYTHING - this creator God - who loves me so dearly - this creator God - has said to me - and to you -

Take care of this for me.

Take care of your body.

Take care of your relationships with others.

Take care of the material things I've given you.

Take care of this planet.

Take care of this for me.

And you know what, says this loving creator God, I'm going to make each and every one of you special - unique.

Not only am I giving you all this - as an added bonus - because I love you so dearly - because I want you to be like me - loving and giving - I'm giving each of you some gift - some characteristic - some trait - that will make you stand out - that will make you unparalleled - that will make you an original.

Take care of this gift.

Nurture it.

Help it grow.

And the more you do - the more you'll be like me - loving and giving.

I firmly believe that this is where we need to start if we hope to begin to understand what stewardship is really all about.

Do you believe that you are here - on this earth - to take care of things for God?

Do you believe that you are here - whatever your station in life - to nurture and use the gifts God has given you?

Do you believe you are here - in this parish - to join with others - in helping God's dream for the world come true?

By the way - do you know what God's dream for the world is?

If you know your Bible at all - you'll know that it's mentioned there all the time.

The Old Testament prophets refer to God's dream a lot. The Law - which we heard about in our first reading today - the Law - was one way of describing part of God's dream.

Jesus, throughout the gospels, keeps giving us glimpses into God's dream. And we've got an example of this in today's gospel, where we heard Jesus reading from Isaiah - giving us - like I said - a glimpse

into what God's dream looks like - and telling people that the dream had begun to come true with the arrival of Jesus on the scene.

Even Paul - in today's epistle - can be seen as talking about how God's dream can be lived out. And it's certainly not in the endless bickering that seems to highlight so much of the dialogue between and among different Christian denominations.

God's dream?

In a word - I believe God's dream to be shalom. Not just the narrow meaning of shalom that we often use - meaning peace.

But shalom in the sense that everything - and everyone - live in harmony. That the love which God showed - from the beginning - that this love be the foundation - that it be at the very core - of all that happens between two people - among a whole bunch of people - between we humans and the rest of the world.

God's dream.

So - do you believe that you are here - in this parish - to join with others - in helping God's dream for the world come true?

If you can say "yes" to this - then I would suggest that you already know what stewardship is.

And - if this is the case - then I would invite you to take the next step on your journey as a steward.

"The next step?" You ask.

Putting what you know and what you say into action.

Because you see - stewardship is a WAY OF LIFE - not just a set of ideas and beliefs.

Stewardship is a way of life based on seeing God's relationship to us - AND - of ACTING on it by giving testimony. Testimony not only with our lips - but perhaps more importantly - testimony with our actions - with how we live out what we say we believe.

It seems to me that if we take our baptismal promises seriously - what that means is that we have made a conscious decision to follow Christ - no matter what the cost.

Sometimes - when I used to officiate at a wedding, I would say a few words about love and about Christ's example of sacrificial love - giving his very self on the cross - to show the extent of his love.

And I'll go on to say that if the newly married couple are honest and sincere about their love for one another - then they should be prepared to carry it to the same extreme that Jesus did.

But - we all know that's not likely to happen, don't we?

We know that their love for one another will be a life-long process of give and take - an on-going process of learning and growth.

I would suggest that we can say exactly the same thing about stewardship.

It's a life-long - an ongoing - process. It's an expression of our discipleship.

Actually, it's the "lived evidence" if you will - of our decision to be followers of Jesus. You've all heard the question, I'm sure: "If you were charged with being a Christian, would there be enough evidence found to convict you?"

If we are going to be followers - disciples - of Jesus - it follows that we're also going to be stewards.

You really can't be one without being the other.

Stewardship - taking care of things for God - is nothing new.

The challenge we face - our task - our mission - our calling - is to show the world - to show our society - maybe even to show ourselves - that what we say we believe is actually how we LIVE OUT our lives.

I'm going to end with a story I heard a while back.

This story takes place on another planet. A planet that's inhabited only by ducks. And the ducks on Duck Planet are different from the ducks on our own planet in that they all waddle around and, they can all talk.

So, if you were to fly over Duck Planet, and observe what was going on below, you'd see all these ducks waddling around here and there.

And on Sunday mornings, you'd see the ducks waddling down the street and into their church.

And the duck choir waddles up the aisle, followed by the duck minister, who waddles into the pulpit.

The duck minister reads a passage from the duck bible. It's a passage that's very similar to one from our own bible, where we hear words from the prophet Isaiah, talking about "those who wait upon the Lord" having wings, and soaring like eagles.

The duck minister puts the duck bible down, and says: "Ducks, we've all got wings."

The ducks look down at themselves, and then at one another, and nod in agreement: "Yes, we've got wings."

"Ducks," says the duck minister, "our bible tells us that with wings we can fly!"

The ducks again nod in agreement, and some say, "Yes, we can fly."

“Ducks,” says the duck minister very loudly, “with wings we can SOAR LIKE EAGLES!”

“AMEN! YES! WE CAN SOAR!” respond the ducks, now all worked up.

And, at the end of the service, all the ducks get up, and waddle back out again!

What we say we believe is actually how we live out our lives!

And so I invite you - to take the next step on your stewardship journey.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

Sample #2 – Our Hopes and Expectations

Sermon by the Rev. Ann M. Smith, Incumbent, St. Francis of Assisi, Meadowvale, November 17, 2007. (Reprinted with permission)

This Sunday we wrap up our Stewardship campaign. As I reflect on the process that has been undertaken this year, I am overwhelmed by the gifts and talents that abound in this parish. We began with that wonderful presentation of our narrative budget. We had an inspiring offering by our Stewardship Chair, in which she offered the reasons that she gives sacrificially and what that has meant in her life. We have had the ongoing support of wardens and other members of the Advisory Board as we reached out with the good news of what is going on in our parish to every member on our list. And that, after all, is what Stewardship is all about.

The story of Stewardship is about what it is accomplishing in the lives of you, the people of St. Francis. And wonderful things are taking place in the lives of people in this parish. Wonderful things are happening within the life and witness of this parish. Wonderful things are happening in our Diocese and beyond. Those are the things that I want to help us celebrate on this Sunday of commitment.

As always I want to tie in my thoughts to the lections for today. And I have to say, given the readings that you just heard that is not an easy task. It is the practical side of Paul as he speaks to the people of Thessalonica that attracts my attention.

First the context! The Thessalonians to whom Paul is speaking are struggling with how to live in the end times. They believe that Jesus' return is imminent. For some of them it means an end to work. They choose to slack off and simply live what time they have left doing what pleases them. Others continue to live meticulously and diligently. Paul cautions them about living in idleness, about not contributing to society. “Brothers and sisters,” Paul says, “Do not be weary of doing what is right.” He knows that the possibility of Our Lord's return calls for nothing less than total commitment to the world in which we live, because that is our vocation as Christians. Everyone of every age, it says, should be a contributing member of the community.

And so today, brothers and sisters, I say to you, “Do not be weary of doing what is right.” It is the Christian's vocation to offer the best that we have. Only our best will do. And yes! I know that is not

an easy thing to accomplish. It is not only the Thessalonians who live in an age of uncertainty and fear about the future.

I look at our modern day world and realize that for many of us these are uncertain times. They are certainly uncertain times politically. Look at the unrest in our world. There is war. There is famine. There is hardship. These are uncertain times when it comes to the ecology. We may revel in the warmth of this past fall, but at the same time we feel that sense of unease. It is not the way things should be. We know that for our planet these are precarious times.

They are uncertain times financially as well. We cannot even presume in our present society that work is available for everyone. Canada with its high standard of living thinks that times are wonderful when there is only a five percent rate of unemployment. The truth is that there will never come a time when every person who is employable is employed. With the current minimum wage, many are better off on Social Assistance, where at least they receive some benefits. On top of that, we are an aging population with many living on fixed incomes.

These are uncertain times in the Church. Some people fear that we have become irrelevant, that we need to change the way we worship and the way we approach God. Some think that we have deviated too far from Scripture. There are many who fear that we will allow issues like Same-Sex blessing to fracture our unity.

In an age of fear many are tempted to opt out, to pursue selfish aims out of a sense of hopelessness and meaninglessness. And yet I know that as a Christian I live in great hope and expectation. That is my call as a Christian, and it has worked for me throughout my whole life. It is why I give sacrificially to support the Church and other charitable organizations.

So what does it mean to give sacrificially? Sacrificial giving is an attitude and a way of life. To give sacrificially is to give from your substance rather than your abundance. What does that mean? It means to actively follow Christ with your time, attention, talents and resources. What does that look like? Well, that is the exciting part! On the outside, a sacrificial giving parish is welcoming, warm, and bustling. Newcomers are greeted with a smile, a follow-up phone call and an invitation to dinner. Parish ministries are undertaken by many people, which makes the shared burden light. Parishioners are invigorated to be part of a lively family of faith. The operating budget of the church is effectively managed by the church offertory. The ministry of the church is able to be expanded. Outreach ministries are able to be undertaken.

Our parish isn't there yet. But I see such hope in this parish of ours. I see people, young and old, who are committed to the work of the church. I see our life of prayer growing day by day. I don't know of another parish where the prayer list means so much and is taken so seriously. We have a rich sacramental life. We represent the diversity of our community. And what a rich culture that is! People from every part of our worldwide communion! We make a difference in our community through FaithWorks, through services in nursing homes and residences, through our work with children and youth, through the Deacon's cupboard and our connection to the Food bank. And the list is as varied as the people sitting in the seats here this morning, because you are out there being the Church in your daily lives.

Can we become a sacrificial giving parish? Undoubtedly! We are already on the way. If we accept our calling, it means that our thanksgiving is accompanied always by giving – the giving of ourselves to

others in need, the giving of thanks for God's gifts to us, the giving of our talents and time to do the work of the Church, and the giving of our first fruits.

Stewardship is not about waiting for God to do something; it is about anticipating God's actions in the world. It is about being Christ in the world. It is about serving with compassion and mercy. What will you do today in anticipation of the fulfillment of God's promises? It is ultimately up to each one of us. It means commitment. That begins with putting our trust in our loving God. It continues with living our lives faithfully and prayerfully. It means especially living out God's promises in everything we do. Amen.

Sample #3 – You Can Never Out Give God

Sermon by the Rev. Faun Harriman, Incumbent of the Parish of Haliburton, September 30, 2007.
(Reprinted with permission)

“You make a living by what you get. You make a life by what you give.” *Winston Churchill*

“No person was ever honoured for what they received. Honour has been the reward for what they gave.” *Calvin Coolidge*

“Be thankful for what you have; you will end up having more. If you concentrate on what you do not have, you will never, never have enough.” *Oprah Winfrey*

“No one ever became poor by giving.” *Anne Frank*

These sayings reflect what it means to have an attitude of gratitude. Stewardship is really all about changing our attitudes. It is about making an intentional decision to live our lives for God, not for ourselves. To have an attitude of gratitude is to understand always that nothing belongs to us. Every breath we take, every sunset we enjoy, every child's prayer, every morning mist, every dollar we possess and every grace moment is from God.

In the letter to the Corinthian church, Paul expresses passionately what it means to be a believer who gives not from pressure but out of the sheer joy of God's gifts. His letter was a reminder to the Corinthian Christians to rekindle their enthusiasm for giving. It is also a reminder to us that it is in giving that we are truly blessed. It is in giving that we can express more fully our thanks for all that God gives. The passage is set against the backdrop of a fundraising campaign that Paul initiated during his third missionary journey to the churches in Macedonia, Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea. The collection was to be sent to impoverished believers in Jerusalem.

The four churches “were being tested by many troubles and they were very poor. But they were also filled with abundant joy, which overflowed in rich generosity.” They wanted to help. It was not about how much they gave; it was their attitude. They gave because they were dedicated to Christ and they had love for fellow believers. They knew the joy of helping those in need from the resources that God had given to them. It was the right and good thing to do. They knew that they had been blessed to be a blessing and they wanted to share.

Paul is reminding the church at Corinth to not forget that “it would be good for them to finish what they had started a year ago. Last year they were the first who wanted to give and they were the first to begin doing it. Now they should finish what they had started.” He does not let them off the hook but, like a good coach, he is following up on their promises and is encouraging them to improve in the area of giving. Paul acknowledges their many gifts, saying: “since you excel in so many ways – in your faith, your gifted speakers, your knowledge, your enthusiasm and your love, I want you to excel also in the gracious act of giving.”

Often giving is seen as separate from other areas of discipleship. As disciples, we want to grow spiritually, yet when it comes to growing in giving we often remain static. True discipleship is maturing in the use of our resources as well as in increased knowledge of the Word. However, to increase knowledge and not to grow in wisdom is to miss the point entirely. Paul’s challenge to the believers at Corinth is to grow beyond themselves. He says that churches in Macedonia “begged them again and again for the privilege of sharing in the gift for the believers in Jerusalem.” They saw it as an honour to give of what they had. They gave whatever they had, willingly.

God is not so much concerned about how much we give but about our motivation or intention behind the giving. Again, it is our attitude that we are called to examine. Are we cheerful about giving, do we see it as a privilege to give? Do we give out of sense of duty, all the while worrying that we will not have enough? Do we forget that God is a cheerful giver?

Consider all He has done for us. He created us in His image, pronounced it good and then waits for us to develop our God-given giving nature. God planted giving inside of us. Giving is not what we do; it is who we are. God gives us resources, talents, treasure and time to invest for Him, for His purposes, for His glory.

Paul uses the metaphor of a seed that is not to be squirreled away, buried, or thrown away but planted in order to grow more crops. He says, “For God is the one who provides the seed for the farmer and then bread to eat. In the same way He will provide and increase your resources and then produce a great harvest of generosity in you.” When we invest what God has given us in his work then He will multiply more to use in His service. “Give and it will be given to you.” Giving is the calling of a disciple.

When we make excuses for not giving then we move out of the sphere of God’s grace and bounty. We are to give out of what we do have, not out of what we do not have. In other words, sacrificial giving must be responsible. God does not expect us to give if those we are entrusted to take care of suffer unnecessarily.

We are not asked to give so that others will hurt. That is not responsible giving and it is giving that has not been prayerful or thoughtful. Paul makes this abundantly clear: “You must each decide in your heart how much to give. Moreover, do not give reluctantly or in response to pressure. For God loves a person who gives cheerfully.” Giving to others, Paul says, will cause them to “thank God.” Paul explains that their needs will be met and “they will joyfully express their thanks to God.” Paul emphasizes that giving cheerfully and generously will result in others giving glory to God and proving to them and to all believers that we are “obedient to the Good News of Christ.”

People will give thanks to God because of our sharing in the meeting of their needs and will give thanks when they see our obedience to God. Matthew reminds us to let our light shine - that glorious

harvest of generosity so that the world will see our good works and God in heaven. “No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.” The world will not praise us or give us the credit; they will give all the glory to God in heaven. We may not hear the thanksgiving chorus on earth but the saints in heaven will be shouting ‘*Amen, Glory to God in the highest*’.

Everything we have – not just our income – belongs to God, is given by God and is used by God to accomplish His work. We are enriched in everything because we share everything with Him and with others. If anyone does not believe that God is the greatest Giver of all times then here is a small sampling. God gave us love, mercy, salvation, His Son, His wisdom, His benefits, His protection, His joy, His peace, His rest, His comfort, His authority, His strength, the Holy Spirit, our life, our breath, His grace His good things, His presence, His power. He gave so that we can give. He would never ask us to do what He has not already done himself. He gave us Jesus.

I’ll share with you a story about living ‘an attitude of gratitude’. A wise woman, who was traveling in the mountains, found a precious stone in a stream. The next day she met another traveler who was hungry, and the wise woman opened her bag to share her food. The hungry traveler saw the precious stone and asked the woman to give it to him. She did so without hesitation. The traveler left, rejoicing in his good fortune. He knew the stone was worth enough to give him security for a lifetime. But a few days later, he came back to return the stone to the wise woman. “I’ve been thinking,” he said, “I know how valuable the stone is but I give it back to you in the hope that you can give me something even more precious. Give me what you have within you that enabled you to give me the stone.”

Let us pray: Lord, today we just want to say thank you. Often our prayers are full of requests because we come to You as to our Father, the loving giver. Today we just want to say thank you. Our prayers are usually full of anxiety and regret. Today we just want to say thank you. So many things, big and small given in your love, we could not possibly name them all. Lord, we just want to say thank you. You gave Your Son Jesus a precious gift so that we could truly live. Lord, You gave us the Eucharist as a continual reminder of His sacrifice for our sakes. Lord, we just want to say thank you.

Unlock your faith!

Sample #4 – Giving Our Giftedness – Our Gifts to God

Sermon by the Rev. Mary Lewis, Associate Rector, St. John’s York Mills Parish, Toronto, January 1, 2006. (Reprinted with permission)

Today here at St. John’s we are keeping the Feast of the Epiphany. Today we have heard the story of the three wise men, who were led by a star, and who brought their gifts to give to the Christ Child – their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Taking example from these wise men, I would like to focus in my sermon on us giving our giftedness – our gifts, to God, because each of us has a set of gifts that we can give to God.

What are the gifts which God has given to you? They are your talents, your aptitudes, your abilities,

events that have happened to you. These have shaped you, your family, your health, your everything. Your gifts are the sum total of all the resources that God has given to you. Your gifts are not just genetic abilities and natural aptitudes, although these are part of your gifts. Many of your most precious gifts are qualities and resources that have been developed in you over time.

It is true that God has given everyone here today an abundance of gifts. So I ask you to think right now – what are the gifts and resources that God has given you?

Mary Schramm has written a book titled “Gifts of Grace”. In her book, she suggests that there are five steps in ascertaining and using your gifts.

The first step is to discover your gifts – and you nearly always discover your gifts in relationship; you rarely discover your gifts in isolation. For example, we discover our giftedness while at work: gifts for organization, leadership, cooperation. In a good marriage, a spouse is forever helping you to discover your talents and how to use those talents more effectively, from the time you are first married until you die. You are forever growing and changing, and a good partner is one who helps you to discover yourself and what you want to do next with your life. Friends also help you to discover yourself. They know your interests and resources and the changing circumstances of your life, and they help you to discover and expand your giftedness. I believe that it is very important to keep learning about, and using, your gifts at each and every stage of your life.

The second step is to accept the gifts which God has given you. This is the art of maturity – learning to accept the gifts that God has given to you and not given to you. A key indicator is how jealous and envious you are of other people and their gifts. If you are jealous and envious of other people’s giftedness, or if you feel inferior, chances are you have not really accepted your own blend of gifts that God has given to you.

The third step is to enjoy your God-given gifts: to take pleasure in them – to appreciate what God can do through your life. For example, if you are an artistic person – a painter, a sculptor, a photographer – you get a great deal of pleasure from creating a piece of your very own artwork.

The fourth step is to develop your gifts. Like all gifts, your gifts need to be put to work, to be exercised, to be matured. Nothing in this world becomes stronger without hard work and the investment of your time and energy. Just to rely on native talent and to avoid the hard work of developing that gift will lead you nowhere.

The fifth step involves all of the steps....and it is to surrender all your gifts to God. This means to give all of your gifts to Jesus Christ. That is what was wise about the wise men in our Bible story today. Their wisdom wasn't merely giving their material gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, but it was the gift of their total selves to their journey to find the Christ Child. Their trip took a long time, and they were totally devoted to the mission of finding Jesus, making use of all of their resources to do so.

I believe that wisdom for you and for me is giving all of our gifts to Jesus Christ. If we don’t, we will use our gifts for our own benefit...just to glorify ourselves. But you and I are called instead to glorify God, and to praise God each day for all of God’s wonderful works done in and through us.

Do you realize that, when you discover your gifts, use your gifts, and surrender your gifts to Jesus,

you are doing the will of God for our life? Perhaps you have asked yourself: What is God's will for my life? Very simply, to do the will of God is to discover and use and surrender your God-given resources to make the world a better place, to be the kingdom of God in your own time and space.

Today is Epiphany Sunday. It is that Sunday in which we celebrate the gifts that the wise men brought to Jesus. And, indeed, this is when each one of us becomes wise: when we discover the unique blend of gifts that God has given to us; when we have accepted those gifts; when we enjoy those gifts, develop those gifts, and surrender those gifts to Christ.

I pray that you will find fresh joy in this New Year through the gifts you offer this Epiphany Sunday to our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: When is the best time to hold a Sacrificial Giving campaign?

A: This is dependant on the normal calendar of events in the parish although the autumn is probably the best time as it affords parishes the opportunity to budget priorities in time for their annual vestry meetings.

Q: Do we need to establish a committee?

A: Ideally every parish should have a stewardship committee tasked with organising an annual pledge drive. In their absence, two or three people should be able to put things together. All you really need is someone to develop a good narrative budget, ensure that bulletin announcements are submitted to the office secretary in time, correspondence is appropriately assembled and posted and someone (a husband and wife team if you like) from the congregation who has been identified to present a lay witness talk.

Q: How much of an increase in annual revenue will this campaign realize?

A: The results vary on the dedication to following the campaign outline although most parishes experience a 15%-30% increase in their annual offertory collection in their first year. Of course, sacrificial giving is not something that is done once and then forgotten about. It has to become part of the yearly cycle. Repetition is the key to changing old behaviours. Parishes might also consider expanding the program to include a year-round stewardship education component. Time and talent are important elements in the stewardship equation and they should not be overlooked lest we be accused with being too preoccupied with stewarding our congregation's gift of treasure.

Q: What is an appropriate standard for giving?

A: Again this varies. The key is to be proportional, sacrificial, and planned in our decision making. Only through thoughtful prayer and discussion among family members can a household determine what level is appropriate for them. It is helpful to have some sort of clarity about a standard of giving. Those who are being introduced to sacrificial giving for the first time might consider donating one hour's pay per week to church and a similar amount to charity. Those who are retired can be encouraged to consider an hour's pay (2.5%) from their retirement income. For those who are unemployed or in serious financial difficulties it is recommended that they consider how they might give of their time and talent to the church on a weekly basis and pray for the ministry of the church. Everyone, regardless of income level, should be encouraged to give something.

Q: How much do Anglicans typically give to their church?

A: Unfortunately, a proper orientation to sacrificial giving has often been avoided in our church resulting in giving levels that are comparably lower than virtually all mainstream Protestant traditions. Average annual giving levels in the Diocese of Toronto are around 1.2% of gross family income.

Q: What is the 2% solution?

A: Two percent is a benchmark that the Stewardship Development Department has established as an indication of overall financial health in a parish. Generally speaking, average annual giving of 2% represent financial freedom for most of our parishes and opens the door to incredible ministry potential. With 2%, our parishes could cover all their operating expenses and fund new and diverse ministry. The necessity for capital campaigns would be minimised because reserve funds and endowments would be so commonplace that we could make necessary repairs and capital upgrades as the need arose. The goal – though not without its challenges – is actually quite clear: an hour’s pay from each of our givers. This is why an hour’s pay is such an attractive metaphor for any sacrificial giving initiative.

Q: What is Pre-Authorized Remittance and why is it so advantageous to the church?

A: Pre-Authorized Remittance (PAR) is a simple way to make regular offerings to your parish through either your chequing account or credit card. It represents a very deliberate and planned approach to our annual giving and ensures that your parish receives the funds it needs to support ongoing ministry even when you might be absent from church. The Diocese of Toronto encourages parishes to use the Pre-Authorized Remittance program operated through the United Church of Canada. For more information call (416) 231-5931 x3050 or visit <http://www.united-church.ca/par>.

Q: How can I encourage 100% participation on PAR?

A: The greatest obstacle to giving is fear. So why not try a little test, a 90-day test. In Malachi 3:10, God invites people to “test Him” in the matter of giving. Therefore, I encourage people to try a 90-day test. After making a proportionate commitment of perhaps 2%, challenge each giver to set aside half (1%) to give through PAR and the other half (1%) through regular envelope giving. This will have the immediate impact of providing a sense of security for wardens and treasurers because they know right off the top what the minimum givings will be. And the Incumbent will probably sleep better as well. Watch and see how God works in your life. If you regret the decision, then discontinue the test. However, if you experience a deeper relationship with God by giving of your first fruits, joyfully commit the full amount through PAR.

Q: Who is the ideal candidate to give a lay witness talk?

A: Ideally someone who demonstrates a strong commitment to the mission of the church as evidenced by their actions. Identifying the most generous givers of treasure can prove daunting in some parishes. Hopefully, with time, they will become evident to you. The important thing is to identify someone who is a leader in the parish and someone who gives generously on all levels. The power of one’s peers can be enormous. People respond very positively when they are able to relate to someone who is from within their own ranks.

Q: Why is tithing considered the “gold standard” of giving?

A: Aside from the fact that tithing is biblical, as a measure of generosity it requires significant effort to achieve. Interestingly enough I hear much discussion from parish groups that tithing is an unachievable standard. I still maintain it is the trophy to be pursued although for most, increasing their current giving to an hour’s pay is a significant accomplishment.

Q: Isn’t it okay to just give time and talent?

A: The sacrifice of Jesus on the cross is the ultimate example of self sacrifice. Jesus gave everything He had for our salvation and He gave it freely. To give ourselves completely to God means offering everything we have. The parable of the widow’s mite is an awesome example of how we are to commit ourselves completely to God – to trust Him unequivocally. Ultimately, scripture does not run away from the standard that is expected. Yes, we are to give our time and our talent. But we are to give our treasure as well. Sacrificial giving is ultimately about surrender and this includes our financial wealth as well.

Q: Should I give from my net or gross salary?

A: Pray and ask God what to do. If God prompts you in your heart to give off the gross amount, go ahead and do this, trusting God with the results. If you don’t have peace about this, begin giving off the net amount for a few months and see what happens. After a few months, if you experience God’s creative care in your life, then begin to give off your gross income.

Q: What if some people don’t respond to our efforts?

A: Inevitably you will always encounter detractors who believe that the church is expecting too much from them. Jesus had many detractors, but that did not force him off course. Sacrificial giving should be encouraged precisely because you will experience detractors. If we give way to the few who object to our efforts then we are denying the broader community the opportunity to learn about true generosity. We are also limiting the opportunity to build vibrant and healthy faith communities.

Q: What can the incumbent do to keep the stewardship spirit alive year-round?

A: Each incumbent should strive to give a stewardship sermon at least once every three months. This will help orient the parish into thinking about sacrificial giving as a year-round effort and will mitigate criticism that stewardship is only equated with money. Incumbents need not speak directly about money either. Practically every Gospel message speaks about sharing and generous living.

Music

“Common Praise,” the hymn book authorized by General Synod for the Anglican in Canada, identifies a number of traditional and contemporary hymns that might be useful during the six weeks of your sacrificial giving campaign. These include (with page # in parentheses):

Creating God, Your Fingers Trace (410)
 For the Fruit of All Creation (259)
 For the Healing of the Nations (576)
 Forth in Thy Name, O Lord, I Go (467)
 God, Whose Firm Is All Creation (261)
 God, Who Giving Knows No Ending (601)
 Let Streams of Living Justice (575)
 Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service (585)
 Lord, You Give the Great Commission (433)
 O Healing River (578)
 Take My Life, and Let It Be (435)
 Take Up Your Cross, the Saviour Said (431)
 What Does the Lord Require? (171)
 You Call Us, Lord, To Be (450)

Litanies

The Episcopal Network for Stewardship has developed the following Litany of Thanksgiving for Stewardship Campaigns:

The Prayers of the People for the Fall Focus on Stewardship. A Litany for Stewardship

Leader: Let us pray for the mission of the Church, our baptismal ministries, and the Christian Stewardship by which we use all the resources God gives us to fulfill God's will and purpose for the world.

God the Father, who created us, affirm our faith in you that we may fulfill our Baptismal Vows.

The People: *With all that we are and all that we have, we honor God.*

L: God the Son, who redeemed us, keep us in the apostle's teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers, that we may fulfill our Baptismal Vows.

P: *With all that we are and all that we have, we honor God.*

L: God the Holy Spirit who empowers us, preserve us in resisting evil and whenever we fall into sin, help us to repent and return to the Lord, that we may fulfill our Baptismal Vows.

P: *With all that we are and all that we have, we honor God.*

L: Lord Jesus Christ, be known to us as Risen Lord as we proclaim by word and example the Good News of God made manifest in you, that we may fulfill our Baptismal Vows.

P: *With all that we are and all that we have, we honor God.*

L: Lord Jesus Christ, reveal your presence in those persons we seek and serve in your name, loving our unknown neighbors as we love our families and ourselves, that we may fulfill our Baptismal Vows.

P: *With all that we are and all that we have, we honor God.*

L: Lord Jesus Christ, be with us as we strive for justice and peace among all people, respecting the dignity God places in every human being, that we may fulfill our Baptismal Vows.

P: *With all that we are and all that we have, we honor God.*

L: God the Holy Spirit, deliver us from sin and death, open our hearts to grace and truth, and fill us with your holy and life-giving grace, that we may fulfill our Baptismal Vows.

P: With all that we are and all that we have, we honor God.

L: God the Holy Spirit, keep us in the faith and communion of your holy Church and teach us to love others in your power, that we may fulfill our Baptismal Vows.

P: With all that we are and all that we have, we honor God.

L: God the Holy Spirit, send us into the world to witness to your love and bring us to the fullness of your peace and glory, that we may fulfill our Baptismal Vows.

P: With all that we are and all that we have, we honor God.

See: <http://tens.org/POPs.html>

The Book of Alternative Services (1985) identifies several litanies that might be useful during the six weeks of your Sacrificial Giving campaign. These include (with page # in parentheses):

Teach us to use your creation for your greater praise, that all may share the good things you provide.
Lord, hear our prayer. (112)

We pray for one another: may we always be united in service and love.
Lord, hear and have mercy. (114)

Let us ask the Lord to teach us to love others as he has loved us.
Lord, have mercy. (117)

For the mission of the Church, that in faithful witness it may preach the gospel to the ends of the earth, we pray to you, Lord.
Lord, have mercy. (121)

That he may provide for those who lack food, work, or shelter, let us pray to the Lord.
Hear us, Lord of glory! (122)

Scripture References

Old Testament

- Deuteronomy 15:11 Always be open-handed with your brother, and with anyone in your country who is in need and poor.
- Deuteronomy 16:17 Each of you, with as much as you can, give in proportion to the blessings which the Lord God has bestowed on you.
- Proverbs 3:9-10 Honour the Lord with your wealth, with first fruits of all you produce; then will your barns be filled with grain, with new wine your vats will overflow.
- Proverbs 11:25 Those who confer benefits will be amply enriched, and those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed.
- Sirach 35:9 Give to the Most High as has been given to you, generously, according to your means.

New Testament

- Matthew 5:1-12 Blessed are the poor..... (the Beatitudes)
- Matthew 6:19-20 Do not store up riches for yourselves here on earth, where moths and rust destroy, and robbers break in and steal. Instead, store up riches for yourselves in heaven, where moth and rust destroy and robbers cannot break in and steal.
- Matthew 10:42 You can be sure that whoever gives even a drink of cold water to one of the least of my followers, will certainly receive a reward.
- Matthew 16:27 He will repay each man according to his deeds.
- Matthew 22:37 You shall love the Lord your God.... You shall love your neighbour as yourself.
- Matthew 25:40 I tell you, whenever you did this for one of the least important of my followers, you did it for me.
- Mark 10:21 Sell all you have and give the money to the poor and you will have riches in heaven.
- Mark 12:44 For the others put in what they had to spare of their riches, but she, poor as she is, put in all she had.
- Luke 3:11 Whoever has two shirts must give one to those who had none, and whoever has food must share it.

- Luke 6:38 Give to others, and God will give to you.....The measure you use for others is the one that God will use for you.
- Luke 12:34 For your heart will always be where your riches are.
- Luke 12:48 Much is required of the person to whom much is given; much more is required from the person to whom more is given.
- Luke 14:33 None of you can be my disciples unless he given up everything you have.
- Luke 16:13 You cannot serve both God and money.
- Luke 18:25 It is much harder for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God than for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle.
- John 9:4 As long as it is day, we must keep on doing the work of Him who sent me.
- John 12:26 My Father will honour anyone who serves me.
- John 15:12 Love one another, just as I have loved you.
- John 21:15-16 Jesus said “take care of my lambs.....take care of my sheep.”
- Acts 2:44 Those who believed shared all things in common.
- Acts 20:35 There is more happiness in giving than in receiving.
- 2 Corinthians 8:2 They have been severely tested by the troubles they went through; but their joy was so great that they were extremely generous in their giving, even though they are very poor.
- 2 Corinthians 9:7 Everyone must give according to what they have inwardly decided; not sadly, not grudgingly, for God loves a cheerful giver.
- 2 Corinthians 9:8 God is able to give you more than you need, so that you will always have all you need for yourselves and more than enough for every good cause.
- 1 Timothy 6:18 Command them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share with others.
- Hebrews 13:16 Do not forget to do good and to help one another, because these are the sacrifices that please God.
- James 2:15 Suppose a brother or sister who need clothes and don't have enough to eat...what good is there... if you don't give them the necessities of life?

Other Helpful Resources

The network of stewardship information is vast and ever increasing. We are fortunate therefore to be able to share with others, and they with us, resources that help support our important work. Churches of all denominations have an interest in promoting a correct understanding of our material relationship with God – it is beneficial in supporting vibrant ministry and, quite frankly, it makes us better appreciate our relationship with one another in civil society.

Below I have identified a number of links and books that should be helpful in guiding your parish in its stewardship journey:

Internet Sites - General

Anglican Stewardship Association – committed to encouraging faith-based, generous and proportionate giving by Christians of all denominations: www.asa.unet.com/index.html

Christian Stewardship Association – provides stewardship and fundraising educational resources: www.stewardship.org

The Episcopal Network for Stewardship (TENS) – contains excellent downloadable parish resources; probably the single best resource for Anglican stewards anywhere: [http:// www.tens.org](http://www.tens.org)

General Synod – lots of resources to support parish stewardship with specific emphasis on planned giving: www2.anglican.ca/Financial-Ministries

Generous Giving - a nonprofit stewardship ministry of the Evangelical Church of America that seeks to encourage givers of all income levels to experience the joy of giving and embrace a lifestyle of generosity, according to God's word: www.generousgiving.org

Moody Bible Institute – good basic information: www.moody.edu

Ontario Stewardship Network – a collaborative effort between Anglicans and Lutherans to promote stewardship: www.ontariostewardshipnetwork.ca

Presbyterian Church Resources – an excellent set of resources including downloadable clipart on stewardship topics: www.pcusa.org/stewardship

Internet Sites - Diocesan

Diocese of Canterbury – the See for the Church of England has a really good stewardship program: www.canterbury.anglican.org/stewardship/index.htm

Diocese of Niagara – excellent diocesan website with strong emphasis on year-round stewardship and planned giving: www.niagara.anglican.ca/stewardship

Diocese of Toronto – lots of downloadable resources including information on developing a narrative budget, establishing a planned giving program, setting up PAR and organizing your parish FaithWorks campaign: www.toronto.anglican.ca

Diocese of Ontario – new site with lots of great practical parish-based resources: www.ontario.anglican.ca/stewardship

Church of the Redeemer – a parish that is unapologetically committed to stewardship as a way of life: www.theredeemer.ca/pages/stewardship.html

St. John, West Toronto – one of the best examples in the diocese of stewardship lived out on a weekly basis: www.sjwt.ca

Further Reading

Bonner, The Rev. Robert H. et. al.. The Narrative Budget: Leader's Manual (New York: The Episcopal Church Center).

Clements, C. Justin. Stewardship: A Parish Handbook (Liguori, Missouri: Liguori Publications, 2000).

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Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the many parish volunteers and clergy who have used this resource and through their experience have offered their own suggestions on how to improve it. To date, over seventy-five parishes in the Diocese of Toronto have introduced sacrificial giving and/or year-round stewardship to their congregations. Across the wider church in Canada, I am delighted to hear from time to time that others have found this resource to be helpful in their stewardship efforts.

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