Stewardship Pledge Campaign Manual

A year-round, gimmick-free plan and resource collection for spiritual formation in the congregation, encouragement of mission in the stewardship committee and campaign planning for leadership in small, medium and large churches.

The pledge campaign and the formation which precedes and follows it is a ministry which helps people to place their money and possessions in the context of their spiritual lives. This program is a merging of theology and praxis and is meant to be used as a united program for encouraging conversion-of-life, assisting church management and facilitating annual pledge-based fund-raising.

Raising money to fund the church’s mission is a byproduct of this ministry.

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The annual stewardship training in the Diocese of New Hampshire is in March and is called “The Stewardship Institute” to which all are welcome by online registration.

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• Contents

  • Chapter I: Introduction........................................................................................................... 4
    Manual Organization ............................................................................................................. 4
    Why do we need to do anything special about stewardship? ................................................ 4
    What makes a successful stewardship program? ................................................................. 5
    Understanding why this is important in our country and in our time ..................................... 6
    Planning for the generational shift ....................................................................................... 6
    Common excuses for why we should not encourage pledging: ............................................ 7
    Why a year-round program rather than just raising some money for a budget in the fall? ...... 7
    Issues of church size and how to use this program for the right fit ...................................... 7

  • Chapter II: The Pledge Campaign ....................................................................................... 9
    A Theology of the Stewardship of Money ............................................................................. 9
    A Spirituality of the Stewardship of Money ......................................................................... 9
    Why this is about Jesus and not about money .................................................................... 10
    A word about the Puppy Syndrome (resistance) .................................................................. 10
    A word about the Ostrich Syndrome (avoidance) ............................................................... 10
    The Dynamics of Philanthropy (loving humans) ................................................................... 10
    Grumpy with-holders ............................................................................................................ 11

  • Chapter III: Planning Phase (usually Spring) ................................................................. 12
    Strategic Planning ................................................................................................................ 12
    They ten keys to strategic campaign planning ..................................................................... 12
    Roles of Campaign Leadership ........................................................................................... 12
    Campaign Pre-planning ........................................................................................................ 15

  • Chapter IV: Pledge Campaign-Stages One through Seven ............................................. 18
    Step One: Discernment of Call and Strategic Planning (January – March) ....................... 18
    Step Two: Forming an Annual Pledge Campaign from Budgetary Needs (April) ........... 21
    Step Three: Communications Strategy for the Campaign (May – August) ...................... 22
    Step Four: Campaign Design (March – August) ................................................................. 23
    Step Five: Stewardship Campaign Kick-off Sunday ........................................................... 23
    Step Six: The Stewardship Annual Pledge Campaign Management .................................. 25
    Step Seven: The Stewardship Campaign Follow-up ........................................................... 27

  • Chapter V: Generationally-sensitive Fund Raising in the Church ................................... 29
    The changing face of giving: ............................................................................................... 29
    Giving in church history – “game over” .............................................................................. 29
    Giving as biological choice: ................................................................................................ 32
    Leadership by resistance and avoidance = failure: .............................................................. 33
    What we face is a massive shift in which churches will change or die: ............................... 33
    What these changes mean to giving for younger generations: .......................................... 34
    The future of giving and pledging in the church ................................................................. 34
    Generalities about younger donors to our churches: ......................................................... 36
    The Church Philanthropy Turning (CPT) ........................................................................... 36
    Things to know about younger donors: .............................................................................. 38
    Donor-mission driven gifts .................................................................................................. 39
    Meeting generational needs of donors: ............................................................................... 42
    The GI Generation (now well into their eighties in age): ..................................................... 42
    The GI Generation in fund raising: .................................................................................... 43
The Silent Generation (now in their 70-85): ................................................................. 43
The Silent Generation in fund raising: ............................................................................. 44
Baby Boomers (Now aged fifty and into their late sixties): ................................................ 44
The Baby Boomer Generation in fund raising: ................................................................. 45
Generation X (now in their late twenties through their forties): ..................................... 46
Gen X in fund raising: ....................................................................................................... 48
Generation Y or Millennials (now 6-25): ........................................................................ 50
Gen Y in fund raising: ....................................................................................................... 51

- Appendices .................................................................................................................... 53
  Appendix 1: Prayers for Use in Stewardship and Discernment ..................................... 53
  Appendix 2: Leadership Roles in Stewardship of Finances .......................................... 55
  Appendix 3: Campaign Planning Checklist .................................................................... 58
  Appendix 4: Planning Calendar Template ....................................................................... 60
  Appendix 5: A Model Outline for an Adult Forum on Money ....................................... 62
  Appendix 6: Case-for-support Development Survey Sample ....................................... 63
  Appendix 7: Best Practices in Annual Campaign Leadership ....................................... 64
  Appendix 8: SAMPLE PLEDGE FORM ...................................................................... 66
  Appendix 9: Weekly Flyer Sample ................................................................................ 67
  Appendix 10: Summer Campaign Preparation: .............................................................. 68
  Appendix 11: A Family Meditation About Money, Prayer and Giving ......................... 70
  Appendix 12: Spiritual Formation of Children ............................................................... 71
  Appendix 13: Children’s Spiritual Formation ............................................................... 73
  Appendix 14: LYBUNT Script ~ .................................................................................... 76
  Appendix 15: PYBUNT Script ~ .................................................................................... 78
  Appendix 16: Two Sample Stewardship Sermons ......................................................... 80
  Appendix 17: The Spirituality of Fundraising and Stewardship .................................... 86
  Appendix 18: On facing resistance to fund raising in the church ................................ 95
  Appendix 19: Ten things to do to raise money in an economic downturn: ................. 96
  Appendix 20: Campaign Recognition Suggestions ....................................................... 98
  Appendix 21: Article Samples on the Spiritual Underpinnings of Generosity ............. 99
  Appendix 22: Retreat Menu .......................................................................................... 112
  Appendix 23: Workshop Menu ..................................................................................... 118
Chapter I: Introduction:

Manual Organization

This manual is designed to assist clergy and lay people in the management of issues around annual pledge campaigns (often called “stewardship campaigns” or “pledge campaigns” or “annual intended gift campaigns”). This is a resource manual. It does not pretend to have all the answers nor does it assume that the reader will abandon all other stewardship strategies and influences of the Holy Spirit. But this is a tried and true way to both consider the spiritual underpinnings of annual pledging to the mission of a church as well as attend to the logistical and strategic functions which must be done in order to assist people with their making of their pledge. Both spiritual depth around provision and gratitude, as well effective tools to raise money, need to be held in a creative balance. One without the other will lead either to soul-less fund raising or to spiritualized campaign failure.

Were one to peruse the entire manual, one would see that there is an emphasis on the stewardship of finances. This emphasis does not in any way insinuate that other aspects of stewardship, such as stewardship of the environment and stewardship of time are less important to the spiritual well-being of the steward. Rather, the emphasis on the stewardship of finances (annual fund raising in a church) is simply indicative of our culture’s tendency to shy away from conversations in which there is an overlap between church and money or between spirituality and temporal decision-making.

Why do we need to do anything special about stewardship?

The United States of America in the 21st century is endowed with enormous resources. Its people are the wealthiest people in the history of our globe. An NPR news article in February 2011 reported that people in the United States currently own more possessions than all other human beings currently alive on this planet and all human beings who have ever lived on this planet combined. The ministry of helping people in our parishes to consider the material and financial bounty of their lives is not the same as a logistical ministry to raise money for budgets. Church fund raising is a pastoral ministry with logistical implications and NOT a logistical effort with spiritual implications.

People are scared and their money is often the last stop-gap in their fear of life. To raise money well is to help people in the deepening of their assurance that they are loved by God and a reduction in their fear of life’s vulnerabilities. Just as diplomacy is a gentle balance between strategy and communications, church fund raising is a gentle balance between spiritual depth and campaign management.

The urgency of helping people to manage a right relationship with their money and their God cannot be underestimated in a place and time of such unprecedented wealth. Wealth is always relative. There are those in our parishes who have much more than they need to put bread, clean water and a little protein on their tables each day and others who have little or no money left when the bills are paid and the food is on the table. This program considers stewardship (annual church fundraising) to be good management of right-relationship with
all that God gives us, whether it is more than we need or whether it is just barely what we need. This ministry of stewardship is about expressing gratitude and combating scarcity as ways of life and as life-perspectives.

Stewardship programs are not just programs for wealthy parishes. Stewardship programs which help us to deal with our money, our time, and our land are vital for the spiritual well-being of every person in every pew. Indeed, it could be argued that the small, financially fragile church needs most to be attentive to good campaign planning.

There will always be those who are upset by talk about money in church. It is important for the leadership of every parish to realize that the spiritual well-being of the many with regard to our stewardship is more important than keeping everyone happy. There will be the occasional person who is outraged that the church would allow spirituality and personal finances to touch each other. That is OK. We have to let the occasional person have their tantrum. We will not allow one or two people to hold hostage an entire congregation which seeks spiritual depth with regard to money and finances.

It will take considerable courage on the part of vestries, wardens and clergy to raise the subject of our money in church and to deal with it openly and effectively through campaign management as effective as the one outlined herein. However, not to do so abandons the people who need help to give their money away and abandons the mission of the church which needs and deserves funding.

It could also be a great temptation to use the size of one parish as an excuse not to do a full stewardship program. While it is true that a full-blooded stewardship program will need to be modified for a parish with less than an average Sunday attendance of twenty people, it is also true that every step encouraged in this program can be used in our smallest churches if the desire for success is encouraged by the clergy and wardens.

What makes a successful stewardship program?

A successful stewardship program involves the following:

1. Clergy committed to helping the people of their parish deal with their money in the context of their relationship with God.
2. Wardens willing to support their clergy as they help with the spiritual formation of the people in their church regarding their money and their relationship with God.
3. A program of stewardship which participates in the formation of baptized persons year round.
4. A specific program for the annual pledge campaign that has a specific beginning, a six to eight week period of discernment and case-communication for the congregation, and a specific ending. The days of stewardship programs which involve the sending of a letter and hoping for the best are over. Just as we would not send a letter to people asking them to have a holy Lent, and hoping for the best; so too we will not send a letter about pledging and simply sit back and hope for the best. It is as much a responsibility for the church to ask as it is for the parishioner to give.
5. Having a specific period of time for prayer and open conversation about money and our relationship with God around money is essential. Managing specific programs of education and spiritual formation, will support, and indeed be the only possible way, to help the people of the church grapple with the subject of their money.

Understanding why this is important in our country and in our time.

Most Americans watch an average of three hours of television every day. And every day most of us are exposed to hundreds or thousands of advertisements from newspapers, internet and radio. Most of the messages that the people of our churches are exposed to on a daily basis are advertisements encouraging them to spend their money. Although advertisements are not bad, the sheer magnitude, quantity and manipulation of the advertising are having a terrible effect on the psyche of the people in our pews. The stewardship of their finances is being managed by the very expensive advertising which has its base in a message of fear or envy. Most advertising starts by establishing that the listener does not have something that they need. Then advertising goes on to show why not having this thing is bad. Fear-based advertising is simultaneously encourages low self-esteem and encourages purchasing things that are simply unnecessary.

The church cannot stand by silently while its people are being inundated by advertising that is harming their souls and driving them into debt. The ministry of stewardship is a call not simply to encourage people to give to the church, but is also a pastoral ministry to a people who are being bludgeoned by advertising rooted in fear.

Planning for the generational shift

Beginning in 2015 and progressing beyond, The Baby Boomer generation will begin to age out and will start to hand over both involvement and pledging in our churches to the next generations which include Gen X and Gen Y. For the past 1700 years since the reign of Constantine, the church has enjoyed a season in which giving was the result either of fear, manipulation, taxation or affiliation. The World War Two Generation (adults during the Second World War) and the Silent Generation (people born during and soon after the Second World War) were the last two generations to give to the church out of affiliation (I.e.: Boomers said “I pledge because my parents did and because it is the church in which I was raised and to which I belong.”)

Gen X (people in their 30’s and early 40’s) will be the first generation of Episcopalians for whom church attending, church involvement and church pledging will not be a “given.” In other words, churches which do not start NOW to improve how they plan their mission, how they communicate their mission and how they ask for pledges to support their mission will find their budgets decimated and their churches closed within two to three decades.

Unlike their parents and past generations, Gen X-ers and Gen Y-ers have many options on the internet for social and spiritual connection and philanthropy, making it all the more
essential that churches involve them in leadership, include them in decisions about mission and ask them boldly and clearly for financial investment.

Common excuses for why we should not encourage pledging:

1. “Our people do not want to talk about money”
2. “Our church is different…we are very quiet about giving here. We do not want to offend anyone.”
3. “We don’t have time to do what it takes to raise money and to help people discuss money and relationship with God”
4. “Our church is too small for a stewardship program so we send a letter and hope for the best”
5. “It is embarrassing to discuss money”
6. “Jesus did not talk about tithing (i.e.: giving 10%) so why should we!?” (Jesus said to give away ALL of our money to the poor and marginalized. Giving a tithe of 10% was a Jewish norm.)
7. “It’s my money and I will spend it as I please. Let God spend God’s money, but this is mine…I worked for it!”
8. “Money and church should not touch each other.” (This is fine for a two-year-old who does not want his peas to touch his carrots, but is not an adult way to manage one’s life in God’s bounty.)

Why a year-round program rather than just raising some money for a budget in the fall?

In order to live, we must have food, water, clothing, warmth, time for rest and play and land on which to live and raise our families and our crops. Alternatively, we must be able to do the work that raises the money we use to buy the food others raise. The stewardship of time, money and land is something with which we grapple every day, all year round. It follows then that treating the issues of stewardship year round is a basic foundation for helping the people of our parishes deal with the spirituality of being given so much about which to make daily decisions.

Leaving Stewardship of Finances (the pledge campaign) to something “we do in the fall” is ridiculous when managing our time and money is something we do all year round. The Stewardship Campaign is not about raising money for the budget. The Stewardship Campaign is the culmination of spiritual formation around the subject of the bounty God has given us.

Issues of church size and how to use this program for the right fit.

NOTHING in this program is impossible to do with a small church. Everything herein has been tested in large and small churches. There may not be the energy or the will to do these things, but the techniques and activities all work in small parishes. This has been proven in
more than 30 churches with ASA of less than 60 people. We must fight against the temptation to fall prey to that small, emaciated voice which says “we can’t do this…it’s too hard.”

This work of talking about and raising money in our culture is indeed hard, but that is why it is also vital!
Chapter II: The Pledge Campaign

A Theology of the Stewardship of Money

God has modeled a behavior of generosity to humanity by having given the gift of a world and its resources to us to care for. God also gave God’s own self away on the cross as a symbol of detachment and self-offering. What we have was given to us to use and to give away. God is creator, lover and giver. We are made in the image of God. We are made to be creators, lovers and givers. The extent to which we are all three is the extent to which we are living into our true image and God’s hope for our becoming who we were created to become. Not to help people robustly with this work of creating, loving and giving is not just a matter of not doing the job. Rather it is a failing to do the work of ministry in the lives of the people in our churches and further, is a failure to raise the resources for the mission of the church as the Body of Christ.

A Spirituality of the Stewardship of Money

Humanity is in a relationship with a God who gives to us all that we have. God asks us simply to give a part of it back so that it is clear that we understand that everything we have is a gift from God. The foundation of our hesitancy to give a portion of our income to God through the church may not be based in greed, but rather in fear. We are afraid that we will not have enough and so we hold back when we pledge.

The healing of our stewardship (pledge) programs will be based solely on our awareness that God loves us and that all we have is from God. Our pledge is merely a symbol of that awareness. People need help to pay their taxes to the government or they might fail in their civic duty to contribute to the wellbeing of the nation and the world even if some of the money spent is not to their liking. Similarly, people need help to make their church pledge, given so many other things we are being asked to spend our money on.

Our job is to help people to be involved, to tell people how the money is being used, to spend the money well and to do those things we need to do to raise that money. Jesus’ ministry, we are told in Luke’s Gospel, was funded by women. Asking for and giving money was a reality for Jesus and it remains a reality for our ministries which are done in Jesus’ name as His hands and feet.
Why this is about Jesus and not about money

The work we do in stewardship is not primarily about funding the budget of a church. Rather the work is about helping people have an open relationship with Christ, which does not have guilt as its shadow. Guilt comes from not having given a pledge. God rejoices in our enjoyment of most of our money and simply asks that a portion be returned as a symbol. Just as a large or long-maintained financial debt with a close friend can get in the way of the friendship and joy of relationship, so too the stinginess (dare I even say “theft”) of holding back on our pledge to God’s ministry through our churches will get in the way of our relationship to God.

A word about the Puppy Syndrome (resistance)

Too often the Puppy Syndrome kicks in and we race around putting together a badly managed and shallow stewardship program just so we can say we got it done. Although it is OK to acknowledge our anxiety about having to manage the conversation about money in church, it is not OK to leave the people with a shallow and poorly managed stewardship program simply because the topic is not to our liking.

A word about the Ostrich Syndrome (avoidance)

Similarly, we can put our heads in the sand and simply spend the year avoiding the subject of money in church. The problem with avoidance is that the budget of a parish simply must be funded. The conversation simply must be had for the spiritual well-being of people of the church and for its mission. By avoiding this conversation, we not only do an injustice to our budgets, we also do an injustice to our souls.

The Dynamics of Philanthropy (loving humans)

The word philanthropy comes from the Greek word “to love humanity” and so we never forget that a part of giving our money to our parish’s mission is making it possible for the church to reach out to humanity in Christ’s name. Many in our congregants argue that they would rather give their money directly to people in need rather than allow their parish to do so with part of their pledge. The problem with that philosophy of giving is that we Christians are not individuals but rather are part of a community. As part of a community we give to the community and the community decides how to disperse funds. This model of giving is directly from the book of Acts. The demand that we be able to control all of our money even after we have given it away is a decidedly American idea, but it is not a Biblical or even Christian idea. If one were a member of a YMCA, and used the facilities every day, but chose to give their membership fees to “other local agencies that also do fitness” then the YMCA would have a financial crisis on their hands not unlike the one under which the church currently labors. We give to the parish, in part, because that is our community of choice. When we give something away, we let go of it and trust in leadership and in God to do with it what needs to be done.
Grumpy with-holders

There will sometimes be people in your congregation who will state specific grudges as reasons why they are not pledging. Some will even pledge but direct their gift to specific budget line items. They might say “I don’t give because of that gay person in leadership.” Or they might say “I don’t give because I do not like how the Rector managed the Spring Fair this year.” Or they might say “I don’t pledge because in 1943, my great aunt Zelda was not thanked for the Point Seta Plant she donated to the church at Christmas!”

The reality is that that level of narcissism is simply a way to get out of making a gift to God which is God’s gift. The analogy to be made here is that when one goes to a dinner party and brings a bottle of wine for the host, the bringer of the wine does not place a post-it note on the bottle listing the people to whom the host may serve the wine! The gift is either a celebration of gratitude or it is not.

The work of the church is to help grumpy with-holders to see that the gift is NOT to the church or to the Rector or to the Vestry. The pledge and its resulting gift are to God.
Chapter III: Planning Phase (usually Spring)

Strategic Planning

Scripture says that where there is no vision, the people perish (Prov 29:18.) To avoid effective strategic planning is to avoid getting the job done well. Often people avoid the planning as a way to get out of having to do the work.

There is nothing particularly spiritual about avoiding strategic planning. This stewardship program has as its foundation the notion that when we plan a program over the course of a year with specific dates and specific responsibilities assigned to specific people, the job gets done better.

They ten keys to strategic campaign planning

1. Look hard at what was done in the past.
2. Analyze last and previous year’s numbers.
3. Look at what needs to be done this year.
4. Make a list of the things that need to be done to get the job done well.
5. Assign goals and measurable objectives to the task of accomplishing the pledge campaign.
6. Assign people to each measurable objective with dates due and quantities to be accomplished.
7. Check monthly or even more regularly to see that work is being done and tasks are being accomplished so that there is no back-log of work.
8. Bring each goal and objective to conclusion.
9. Report regularly to leadership (Vestry, Bishop’s Committee) on status (every month, the Vestry should be hearing a stewardship Report!).
10. Celebrate victories and analyze the campaign so that mistakes are not repeated year after year.

Roles of Campaign Leadership

Leadership is essential and should not be left to those who volunteer for positions. These jobs require effective leadership and the ramifications of not getting the job done can be so debilitating to a church that the risk of casual recruitment is far too dangerous.

This is not a time to ask for hands at a vestry meeting. Regardless of a congregation of 30 or 3,000, the Rector’s and Warden’s co-creative job is to look hard at the human resources in the congregation and ask clearly and boldly for the help needed. The rector or warden managing the stewardship/annual pledge campaign work by default is ill-advised.
Each job done by a key leader-volunteer in the campaign needs a job description with clearly defined, measurable tasks and clear ending term limits and these may be based on the descriptions below.

In a small church with few leaders available, simply choose one person who is known to get a job done and relieve them of other responsibilities while they are planning and managing the campaign.

**The Bishop** is responsible for the ministry of the Diocese and the care of the clergy. Part of this responsibility is for finances that make programs and ministries possible. The stewardship of the people of the Diocese as well as the stewardship of diocesan funds is of utmost importance to the Bishop. Failure of stewardship formation and church pledging is the failure of the Bishop with whom the buck stops. The responsibility of the Bishop is to put staff and systems in place to assist the Diocese with the vitally important and life-giving work of raising money for the ministry of the diocese just as Jesus did for his ministry and that of his disciples. The Bishop should be personally speaking to each parochial clergy person to relay his or her expectations regarding the work of annual, capital, major gift and planned giving work in that parish as well as to relay diocesan opportunities for training and macro stewardship services.

**The Canon for Stewardship (Congregational Life, Congregational Development, etc.)** provides, on behalf of the Bishop, resources that help the Rector and Wardens and Vestry of each parish manage the spiritual and logistical responsibility around the conversation of money and relationship with God.

**The Rector (Vicar, Priest-in-charge)** is responsible for knowing and loving the people in his or her parish enough to help them boldly have the difficult conversation about faith and money. The Rector needs to strive towards the biblical tithe as a model of right relationship with money and God. The Rector needs to know of the bounty or scarcity in the lives of parishioners including bounty of love, bounty of grace, and bounty of resources. We do not separate money from other aspects of human life. **The Rector is responsible for knowing what people pledge and if people pay their pledge.**

The Rector is responsible for a budget that is so infused with resources that profound ministry may occur. The rector cannot be made responsible for a budget; and at the same time remain blind to the resources which fund that budget. It is as much the responsibility of the Rector, Wardens and Vestry to ask boldly for the money needed to fund a vibrant budget as it is the responsibility of the people of the church to fund that budget with a portion of their gifts from God.

The Rector who worries that knowing the pledge amount of a congregant will have an effect on their relationship with that congregant or on how they treat that congregant is a clergy person in the wrong profession and should do their utmost to find other employment.

If knowing the pledge of a person in the congregation will cause a clergy person to change their view of or behavior towards that congregant then so too knowing the intimate details of their lives as they unfold in the Confession or in pastoral care will also affect the view and behavior towards that congregant. IN either case, a new vocation is the only answer. People
in our churches need help with their spiritual and temporal lives as regards money and the clergy and laity charged with pastoral care are responsible for helping them with that work.

**The Wardens** have the primary responsibility of seeing to it that the people of the parish fund a budget that makes possible a vibrant ministry and that the ministry and mission of the parish be worthy of the gifts being pledged. The Wardens need to strive towards the biblical tithe as a model of right relationship with money and God. Priests will come and priests will go. The parish is the parish of the people and the people must take the responsibility of funding a vibrant and courageous parish budget. It is the responsibility of the wardens to make this happen and the responsibility of the clergy to see to it that the Vestry and Wardens do their job.

**The Vestry/Bishop’s Committee** has the responsibility of making bold, leadership pledges to the Stewardship Program so as to set an example. The Vestry needs to strive towards the biblical tithe as a model of right relationship with money and God. The Vestry needs to make their pledge (with the staff) early and to publically process with their pledges to the altar as a symbol to the congregation that they are leading by example. Vestry members who do not pledge should be invited clearly and firmly to find other lay ministries within the church.

**The Pledge Campaign Ministry Committee Chairperson** has the responsibility of developing a strategic plan that charts the course for the stewardship campaign and the funding of a robust budget. The chairperson also must be sure that the money being raised is for a worthy cause and that the mission of the church is worthy of the pledges being made. And the chair must articulate and find creative ways to articulate why the money is needed and why it should be pledged (this is called the “Case for support”). The committee chair needs to strive towards the biblical tithe as a model of right relationship with money and God.

**The Pledge Campaign Ministry Committee** has the responsibility of managing the strategic plan of the Stewardship Pledge Campaign Program. This is not a quick-fix work done in haste in August and September. This is a year-round planning and strategy ministry. The committee members need to strive towards the biblical tithe as a model of right relationship with money and God. Committees should meet monthly and report in writing to the Vestry monthly with their status on their strategic plan from January through to the beginning of the active campaign and then should meet weekly to analyze the campaign’s status and make needed adjustments for momentum and effectiveness. Each Chair and Committee Member should have a written job description with a term limit not to exceed six years.

**Administrative or secretarial staff** (if you have one) supports the Wardens, Vestry and Stewardship Committee work.
Campaign Pre-planning

The Calendar (i.e.: the evils of procrastination)
It is essential that the work of the stewardship committee be planned out in such a way that a 12-month calendar exists with deadlines and specific people made responsible for getting specific tasks accomplished on time. Procrastination is the primary enemy to stewardship programs.

The calendar should be a part of a larger strategic plan with measurable objectives. The plan should be done in 12-month cycles and needs to be evaluated as the last step prior to establishing a new strategic plan.

The Campaign Ministry Plan
The Campaign Ministry Plan works out of the calendar (see above) and sets out in writing what is to be done, at what time, and by whom. The smallest parishes as well as the largest parishes need a campaign plan even if the contents vary due to limitations in resources. A plan can be begun with a worksheet like that found in the appendices which sets out the basics and then serves as a resource when building the larger plan.

Setting the goal and building the budget: a theology and praxis.

Please be clear about one thing: the success of the annual pledge campaign of a church is based on the firm foundations of a mission worthy of being funded. In the past, the World War Two Generation, the Silent Generation and the older two-thirds of the Baby Boomers were willing to follow the last dozen generations in their giving to their church based on social and geographic affiliation. But Generations X and Y will change all that forever. Beginning in 2015, when Baby Boomers begin to hand over giving and pledging to Generation X, pledges to the church will, for the first time in 1,700 years (i.e: since the church became imperially endorsed by Constantine) need to be deserved. What does that mean?

Generational Changes effecting giving:

In the past, churches could simply set a budget in a back room and tell the congregation to fund it. Those days are over. Now, Generations X and Y are able to click a button on their key-pad and send a contribution or pledge to any of millions of charitable institutions through the web. This will change pledging forever and, perhaps, for the better. It will mean that churches whose mission is profoundly impacting will be funded and those which are little more than clubs for the liturgically like-minded will not be funded. It is essential that the response to this news be a response not so much of fear but of attentive reorganization towards a deeper and more valuable mission to the world and the work of unveiling the Kingdom of God.
The case-for-support:

In fund-raising terms, “why we are raising the money” is called the “case for support.” This “case for support” is the description (in print, video, sermon, presentation at a church meeting, etc.) of what the church is doing to change the world. In small churches, in which the salary of a clergy person and a set of building expenses form the bulk of the budget, the case for support simply needs to translate that set of numbers into ministry which can be imagined by the donor who is considering their pledge.

The case for support needs to so move the donor that they decide to fund this vision rather than funding the many other cases presented by other agencies such as the United Way, the YMCA, the Red Cross, University alma maters, local hospitals which have been busy saving lives and international agencies busy feeding millions.

The case for support need not be long nor complex. In fact it is best if it is neither. It simply states in a few paragraphs, what is being accomplished with the money being asked for and why the donor should give (make an investment) in this church. Please do not so over-spiritualize your church or its mission to such an extent that you convince yourself that you are “above” this hard work of communicating your case to the donor. At the end of the day, people have a finite amount of money to pledge to those entities they love and which are doing work they want their money to be doing.

Your church is just another non-profit agency (though perhaps much beloved indeed) and while you preach a theology of giving out of gratitude and spiritual responsibility, you must match your conversion-oriented preaching with the managerial responsibility of helping the donor to make a choice which includes your ministry because it is worthy of funding and not just holy. The days of people giving out of guilt, manipulation, fear, coercion and affiliation are over. Today, the church has no choice but then to deserve the money it is working to raise through a skilled combination of deep spirituality and effective fund-raising – combined.

For courses on developing a case-for-support please contact the Episcopal Diocese of New Hampshire’s Stewardship Web site or call for information on the next workshop.

Discernment of a vision which is compelling to the donor:

Ideally, the budget of a parish is set through prayer and other hard work based on a vision of what needs to be accomplished in the life of the parish. The Holy Spirit has a hope for your parish. The work of the Clergy and Vestry is to discern what the Hope of the Holy Spirit is and to make a budget which reflects that hope with courage. The budget should not be limited to “what we absolutely have to get done,” but should rather be reflective of the great optimism of life in God as we all say “thy Kingdom come.”

The problem with first raising money in the Stewardship Program and then setting the budget to match what has come in from pledges is that this way of giving precludes the exciting vision of the powerful work God is doing in our lives and parishes.
The best, most successful strategy is (1) to establish what wonderful things need to be done by your parish, (2) to communicate that vision to the people of the parish (long before you ask them for their pledges) and then (3) to ask them to fund the vision.

The Campaign Notebook

It is recommended that the Chairperson keep a notebook with samples, handouts, all minutes of meetings, notes, commentary on activities, and notations for how the program can be improved next year. This notebook is then passed on to the rising Chair when leadership changes hands. There is no sense in each person having to reinvent the wheel.
Chapter IV: Pledge Campaign-Steps One through Seven

Step One: Discernment of Call and Strategic Planning (January – March)

It is quite often the case that a parish’s leadership will complain about a lack of financial support by parishioners. Parish leaders may be tempted to say “our parishioners are not investing in this parish and yet we know them to be generous givers in other places.” Occasionally the problem is that parishioners are not pledging to the parish because the parish does not have a powerful vision in which to invest money. Any non-profit, including the church, must actually deserve the money being raised. People are wise and wealthy people are strategic with their money as well as faithful. If the church is using the money being raised poorly or without benefit to the poor and the marginalized, then the congregation will often sense that and divert funding to other, more effective agencies.

The bedrock of raising money in the church is based on two things:

1. The spiritual depth of the congregation and their integration of spirituality within choice-making such as philanthropy.
2. The integrity of the case-for-support (i.e.: what the money is being used for) and the effective communication of that case to the donors.

Do one well and not the other and the church will not effectively and efficiently raise annual funds.

In the end, the parish may simply not deserve the money that they wish they had, because they have not done the hard work of discerning and planning to make and fund a bold vision or have not spoken it well to the congregation.

It is too often the case in both the general nonprofit sector and in church leadership that the plan is simply to do what we did last year but with perhaps higher numbers. That is not a plan. And it is certainly not a vision. The people of a parish need to see that the leadership has taken time to intentionally pray about the future ministries of a parish. They also need to see that due time and consideration have been given over to self-study and demographic study. Having done this planning, the Vestry can develop a powerful vision for ministries that respond directly to the needs of one’s town or city. For example, a church budget that envisions the renovation of unused space to become used for child care in a town into which young families are moving could be something that inspires one to make a pledge.

Too often we raise the money first and then set the budget to match whatever money has been pledged for the next fiscal year. We often do not see how narrow and flaccid such management is. The Holy Spirit has a vision for each parish and that vision must be prayerfully discerned before raising financial support. The old days of sending out a letter asking for pledges, hoping for the best, and then setting the budget based on what is raised is not only uninspired but it is also irresponsible to the power of the vision God has for God’s Kingdom on earth nor does it respect the donor. Gone are the days in which people were simply expected to give because “this is the church.” Today giving can be done with a click
on a computer as can research by donors into the effective use of their money. The gig is up. Today a church must deserve its funding or be de-funded.

All stewardship of time, talent, land, and especially finances involves as much advance work in creating the vision as there is in the follow-up work of funding the vision. We recommend that prayer and planning for the budget of the parish occur long before the money is raised to support it so that the people making their pledges will be making pledges in response to a powerful vision.

Here is a sample January – January calendar summary for budget planning discernment and fund-raising:

1. The 2012 budget has been passed and is being managed with funds raised in fall of 2011—January 2012
2. The discernment for the 2013 budget begins the next month (February)
3. The case-for-support for the raising of 2013 money in the fall of 2012 begins (March, 2012)
4. The case is communicated to the congregation as money is being raised (September, 2012)
5. Money is raised in the Fall of 2012 for the 2013 budget year (October, 2012)
6. The 2013 budget is set to be in keeping with money pledged in fall 2012 for spending in 2013 (late-November-December)
7. The cycle begins again.

What follows is a possible three month strategic plan for the development of program and budget:

January: The Vestry divides up the ministries of the church that deal with mission and outreach, each taking one or more outreach issues. In a small parish, where there may be fewer ministries, the Vestry may need to break up into small groups with each group taking on the self-study of the ministry.

The questions that need to apply to each outreach and in reach ministry might include the following:

1. What is currently being accomplished in the lives of the people who need this ministry, who is providing the ministry, and how much is this costing from the budget?
2. What more could we be doing in this area? What unmet needs exist and what would meeting those needs cost?
3. What do recipients of this ministry say about how they are being ministered to? What do we sense in prayer about what God may be calling us to do?
4. What do non-churched people (the corner gas station attendant on the edge of town) think about our church? What is our reputation? A place of division? A place of welcome? A place which serves human need regardless of creed? A place which exchanges food for conversion? A community of kind people? A community of rich people? A community just seeking to remain a club? A community which reflects Jesus’ love to the world?
The Vestry may then choose to send one or two people to visit local town or city agencies (social services, etc) to meet with officials and ask what changing trends and demographics are occurring in our geographic parish. They might be shown the answers to the four questions above and asked what different things or what more the parish could be doing to meet basic human need.

**February**: One document would then be assembled as an executive summary for the Vestry as they plan for the following year’s budget. This discernment work is always being done a year in advance of setting and passing the budget and then raising the money. The document would provide the results of the outreach ministry self-study and the interviews with local service providers and city or town social service agencies. Since February usually includes part of Lent, this is an especially good month in which to intentionally pray. Include what the parish is doing, how the parish is spending its money, and to what extent more could be done to meet basic human needs as parishioners in your geographic parish serve with the hands and feet of Christ.

**March**: Parishes are very much encouraged to go beyond asking only civic leaders and social service professionals for their perspective on the outreach and ministries of your specific parish.

It is also recommended that the people in the pews, who will be making pledges to fund the budget currently under discernment, be given the opportunity to provide input as to what they see are important ministries to maintain and what additional ministries perhaps should be provided.

People give to what they have formed. Gone are the days that a bunch of old white men in a back room with cigars make decisions and then deliver them to the donors in the pews. That worked for the World War Two generation and for many of the Silent Generation but will not work for young Baby Boomers or Generation X, both of which are today’s rising population of donors in churches.

This exercise of inviting the input of the congregation on budgets and funding of mission may not only bring new and exciting ideas to the awareness of the Vestry and Clergy, but will also accomplish the very important task of allowing those people who pledge to the budget feel that their voice has been heard. See the appendix for a sample survey.

By actively listening to the parish and to the Holy Spirit long before setting next year’s program and budget, and before raising the time and money for each, the leadership of the parish will benefit from the creativity and perspectives of the people who populate the pews. Leadership will also communicate to the parish that the congregation’s input is valuable and that their mark has been made in planning the program budget.

It cannot be overstated how important it is for people who give their time or their money to feel that their input has been asked for and heard. When raising either money or time and talent, the primary reason that people do not give is that they do not feel personally involved. The second reason people do not give either time or money is simply because they are not inspired enough by the vision and mission of the organization to make their pledge. The reality is that no matter how inspiring the mission and vision of a parish is, if the people are
not included in the process so that they become aware of the power behind the mission and vision, their financial investment through their pledge will be minimal.

Step Two: Forming an Annual Pledge Campaign from Budgetary Needs (April)

The primary enemy of any stewardship program, especially the Annual Pledge Campaign, is procrastination. It is very important that the stewardship campaign develop an effective discernment program revolving around parish programs and parish budget. It benefits no one to force the Holy Spirit into a corner by simply raising money in October, November and December and then in January, enforcing a budget based solely on pledges. Ideally, the Finance Committee and the Stewardship Committee should meet in tandem at least during the season in which the stewardship campaign is not fully active and the budgetary planning process is fully active.

If a parish desires to run the six week Stewardship Program from mid-October through Thanksgiving (which is the suggested timeframe), then the committee must begin its planning in April and May. Printed materials and the recruitment of speakers must happen well in advance of the September rush to which most parishes are accustomed.

Activities in April regarding the Stewardship of Finances Annual Pledge Campaign planning may include the following:

- Recruitment and confirmation of committee membership
- Definition of responsibilities
- Dialog with Finance Committee regarding budget, mission and vision
- Consider who, if any, are to be asked for major gifts
- Draft a Stewardship of Finances timetable (May – December)
- Discernment of who will be asked to speak to the congregation as part of the ministry minutes program
- Recruitment of ministry minute speakers
- Draft a campaign brochure and pledge card for printing during the summer
- Recruitment of and directions to special events group that will design and implement the kickoff dinner and the ending event.

Regarding discerning the potential of a community to pledge under the best circumstances:

A valuable exercise is to determine the average family income of the parish, multiply it by 5% and multiply the resulting number by the number of attending households. The resulting number is a powerful indication of what the parish could use for God’s ministry if congregants gave only half of what God has asked them to give (10%) as a symbol of gratitude for all God has given us.

Formula: Income X .05 X # of families = half the potential and usually twice the actual amount available.
Step Three: Communications Strategy for the Campaign (May – August)

Communication is as important to stewardship programs as rain is important to a garden. Often the largest disconnect between a congregation and a stewardship program involves poor communication. In a small church of less than 20 congregants communications may be as simple as a leaflet and a series of presentations and bulletin inserts while for a larger church an entire plan with multiple communications sources will be designed. The important thing is that there be a plan and that it is worked on schedule to communicate to the donors what the money is being raised for and why they are being asked to fund that mission. Jesus came to us as the “word” not as the “idea.” We need to use words to communicate why people are being asked to give and we need to try to be as effective in doing so as so many other local non-profits around us in our neighborhoods.

If it is possible, we suggest that one person on the Stewardship of Finances Committee be responsible for communications. Ideally that person should have some background in the area of strategic communications either professionally or as a volunteer.

Issues of communication will inevitably be sprinkled throughout any effective Stewardship of Finances strategic plan. Of course, any communication that requires photocopying, printing or mailing will need special consideration due to the inevitable fact that these activities take money and volunteer time, and therefore need to be set up in advance.

There will be those who object, or who are even outraged by the use of a printed or photocopied brochure, insisting it is too slick and professional for use in a parish. The first answer to this thinking is the reality that these days, a one-page brochure folded twice can be done on an average personal computer by a person with average design skills in less than an hour and can be photocopied for a few dollars. The second answer is that, whether we like it or not, the church is not the only institution to which people are being asked to give money. Other organizations such as schools, hospitals, YMCA’s, museums, and other nonprofits are busy providing effective and moving literature through which pledges are requested. The church can neither afford to stick its head in the sand and pretend that these other organizations are using ineffective communications nor can the church set itself above other organizations and say it is too spiritual to have to communicate well.

Some of the communications tools that are valuable over the course of the spring, summer and fall for encouraging pledging during the Stewardship of Finances Annual Pledge Campaign may include:

1. A standard campaign brochure
2. Signed statement of tithing by Clergy and Vestry
3. New and innovative mission and outreach initiatives
4. Photos and statements from the people speaking in the “ministry minutes” programs
5. A letter from the Vestry outlining the campaign
6. One or more photographs
7. A Collect that will help the congregation to pray about their pledge
8. An attractive announcement about the final event of the campaign so it is clear that the campaign has an ending date by which pledges are expected
9. A perforated panel for use as the pledge card  
10. Web site inclusion for pledging on-line  
11. Newsletter Articles  
13. Posters  
14. Sermon or sermon series  
15. Reminder notices  
16. Campaign status Announcements  
17. Letters for gift acknowledgement and event promotion  
18. Invitations and save-the-date cards  
19. Campaign reports, pledge cards, etc.

Step Four: Campaign Design (March - August)

Select a Stewardship of Finances Annual Pledge Campaign Chairperson

Characteristics of a good choice for Chair of Stewardship Campaign (This is a very important choice.):

1. An able person with proven leadership skills who attends Sunday services regularly and exhibits those charisms that scripture promises will emerge from the life of a person of prayer, love and balance.
2. A person who gives generously and consistently to the parish and who is either a person from a family who tithes or is working towards a tithe.
3. A person who is well-known to the congregation and who both likes and has a good relationship with the clergy and vestry.
4. Note: Please do not use co-chairs! The Buck needs to stop somewhere!.

Recruit Stewardship Committee consisting of 8 – 12 people who:

1. are business-savvy doers of the word and not hearers only, with positive attitudes, who pray, give, and gets things done
2. WHO WILL FOLLOW THROUGH with kindness
3. are a cross-section of the church population (emphasis on people in their 30’s and 40’s if you have them)
4. Ideally are, able persons with proven leadership skills who attend Sunday services regularly and exhibit those charisms that scripture promises will emerge from the life of a person of prayer, love and balance.

Note: This is not a committee for “nice” people: this is a committee for proven “effective and bold-faith” people.

Step Five: Stewardship Campaign Kick-off Sunday

Announce to Parish: the Call to Pray for Stewardship  1st Sunday in October

Pledge Card Distribution:
Do not mail pledge cards until after the first Sunday – the physical action of searching for and finding one’s pledge card is a valuable one. Things that arrive by mail get lost among catalogues and junk mail.

Pledge cards are given out after services and a liturgical element could be planned. (i.e., weekly stewardship collect, etc). Make this a special day and a joyful one! The largest and most effective barrier to effective stewardship campaigns is boredom! Make a splash. Have some fun. Do not combine the Stewardship Campaign (money) with the recruitment fair (time and talent). People need to focus on one thing at a time. Some parishes give costumes (around a theme) to their vestry or have special food or do some special event after the service (picnic or barbeque or concert).

**FOOD + FUN = ATTENTION AND INVOLVEMENT**

Parishioners pick up their pledge card brochures (in alpha order in envelopes by church door) on their way out of services on this day. Parishioners are asked to NOT make pledges until they have prayed about the pledge for at least two weeks. Colored pledge cards could be included in envelopes for children to use and as a teaching tool for parents with a handout guiding parents in the conversation about giving. Remaining pledge cards not picked up on October 1 are mailed in early October.

A Collect for Stewardship (or some form of one) is used regularly in liturgical norms for the fall season in addition to regular Collects prescribed.

**A Collect for Stewardship**  
*(see Appendix for more collections of prayers)*  
*(For possible secondary use in October and November)*

*Gracious God, giver of all we have and hold as stewards; grant the people of this church a deep and abiding awareness that all things come from you – our health, our incomes, our jobs, our talents and our generous impulse. Send your Holy Spirit to help us as we swim against the rising tides of materialism, envy, individualism and greed in our culture. When we are tempted to think of money as a private matter, remind us that you have asked for part of what we are given, to be returned to you as a symbol of our awareness that you give all we have. And further, help us to help each other in this grace of giving, for you are the lover of our souls and call us to nothing less than transformation in Jesus Christ our Lord.*  
*AMEN*

The Adult Forum education hour(s) are used for conversations and education about money.  
*(See Appendix)*

*(Note: One possible education hour conversation to prepare for the stewardship campaign is to have attendees answer (as they volunteer) the questions pertaining to their money and their God. Parishioners may then take the questions home to answer as a family as they discuss their pledge and pray about it. Give parishioners copies of the Collect for Stewardship for their family prayer time. See Appendix handout for collect and questions)*
Step Six: The Stewardship Annual Pledge Campaign Management

Once all the planning, listening, research of mission and community needs, discernment, communications of the Case-for-support and celebratory kick-off have been accomplished, the campaign must be managed. Fundraising is like flying a plane – it needs a long runway and a short take-off. The actual management of the campaign itself is only about 10% of the work and only about 20% of the time taken in a year to raise the money for a church.

A frequent pitfall in campaign management is that once the kick-off happens everyone seems to pull in and hide under desks while they “hope for the best.” That is not management and it is not faithful. The campaign needs to be carefully tended week by week and the Stewardship Campaign Committee needs to be meeting weekly to be sure that everything possible is being done to get communications and event-planning done to support momentum in the campaign.

Here is a possible schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week One</th>
<th>Ministry Minute #1</th>
<th>2nd Sunday in October</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 14: Flyer #1 is mailed to the parish (for a sample see Appendix)</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week Two</th>
<th>Ministry Minute #2</th>
<th>3rd Sunday in October</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 21: Flyer #2 is mailed to the parish</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week Three</th>
<th>Ministry Minute #3</th>
<th>4th Sunday in October</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 28: Flyer #3 is mailed to the parish</td>
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<td></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week Four</th>
<th>Ministry Minute #4</th>
<th>1st Sunday in November</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>November 4: Flyer #4 is mailed to the parish</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week Five</th>
<th>Ministry Minute #5</th>
<th>2nd Sunday in November</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>November 11: Flyer #5 is mailed to the parish</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week Six</th>
<th>Ministry Minute #6</th>
<th>3rd Sunday in November</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>November 18: Flyer #6 is mailed to the parish</td>
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How to Manage Ministry Minutes:

“Ministry Minutes” are presented as part of both services during the campaign. These Ministry Minutes are personal testimonies of how the parish has helped them in their life and Christian walk. Ministry minutes are 3-5 minutes and are written and presented by parishioners with help from clergy. The addition of Ministry Minutes demands that sermons are shortened by five minutes. Some suggestions:

Clergy should identify the prospective “Ministry Minute” speakers (early August) based on the diversity of the message (youth ministry, visited in hospital, care of the elderly, inspired by music, cared for in crisis, inspired by formation, educated by formation, children cared
Phone calls are made to ask prospective ministry minute speakers if they would be willing to speak on (pre-determined subject) and if they are free on (pre-determined Sunday) to speak at all services.

Once all six speakers are recruited photos are taken for use in Stewardship Pledge Card Brochure. One sentence is drafted to go with the photo in quotes representing the summation of the message of the speaker and is sent to the brochure designer. (Note: often a simple brochure can be done by a volunteer on a domestic layout and design program such as Microsoft Publisher)

A 3 X 5 card is written for each speaker so that key points are made in their talk, so that they are not caught in stage-fright, so that they do not ramble on and so that everyone is clear on what is to be said. (Note: Keep talks at each service to 5 minutes – this cannot possibly be over emphasized since a long talk can annoy a congregation, upset the schedule and affect other speakers and other listeners.)

Assign a different member of the stewardship committee each week of the six weeks to meet the “ministry minute” speaker, be sure they have arrived, inform the clergy before the service that they have arrived, and go over the service schedules to be sure the speaker knows when to rise, speak and sit, where to stand, and how to use the microphones.)

**Ministry Minute Flyers (See Appendix)**
These are one-page flyers, folded, sealed with a dot, and mailed bulk rate the day following each corresponding “Ministry Minute” Sunday. These are only effective if they go out on Monday morning, so the turn-around time is fast! The Stewardship Committee must schedule to stay after church each Sunday for an hour to count and produce the statistical information which, along with the photo and quote, encourages the parish to see the building momentum and the work of the Holy Spirit.

**A note about the use of fundraising thermometers:**

Unlike secular fundraising, the church does not employ fund-raising thermometers showing a goal (parish budget) with the red mercury-marker line that grows Sunday after Sunday to meet the goal. In the church, we do often use a secular thing for a sacred purpose (i.e.: a goblet is a goblet in a dining room and a chalice in a church), but in a stewardship campaign, the thermometer places the emphasis on the money raised rather than on the spiritual life of the giver. That is not the focus we want.

There is, however, one very useful place for a thermometer: the percent of the parish that has pledged. Many churches employ a thermometer to show what percent of the population of the parish (active and regular) have made their pledge to the parish.

*An Example: In my last parish we used an enlarged pen and ink drawing of the chapel tower (the icon of the communications in the Stewardship Campaign and a part of our parish logo) as the thermometer (see the attached brochure to see the tower!). The image was enlarged to six feet and placed on foam-core. The image was placed by the door to the church and each
Sunday we figured what percent of the total parish family pledging units had dropped off or mailed in their pledge and raised the red line to show the percentage. This encouraged those who had pledged because they saw a visual sign of their part in the stewardship campaign. This challenged the “not-yet pledgers” to get their pledge cards in and it placed emphasis on participation rather than on money.

The final Sunday of the campaign, last Sunday before Thanksgiving
The parish is aware of and decorated for Thanksgiving. Ushers bring all pledge cards (those mailed in these last many weeks, those brought in this day and those from the pews that were filled in on this Sunday by those who had previously not yet pledged) to the altar with the plate offerings to be one of the many outward, physical signs of inward, spiritual stewardship grace.

(Note: In addition, in many churches, the people in the pews are given apples as they enter the church. After the blessing of the pledge cards, the people move to the altar during a gradual anthem and place their apples and other signs of Thanksgiving bounty such as gourds, corn, etc. into baskets and onto the altar itself as a symbolic, physical act to link being thankful for bounty with pledging to God. Kids LOVE this and learn from it. Creativity is the essence of a vibrant parish program. Ours is a liturgical church that employs symbol. Please make use of symbols whenever you can!)

Step Seven: The Stewardship Campaign Follow-up

Report Sunday, Advent One (New Year) December 2
Inform the parish about how things went in the Stewardship Campaign:

1. percent of the parish who made pledges
2. average gift
3. amount pledged
4. amount needed for next year’s budget
5. increase of average pledge over last year’s campaign
6. increase of percentage of parishioners who pledged, etc.

Money is not an evil thing. Money is simply a tool. In a parish, money is used to extend the ministry of God through each of us, to the marginalized. Therefore, to discuss money in the parish is no more or less “holy” than discussing water or wine or electricity or prayer books. Report Sunday brings money out of the closet and into the chancel.

The Acknowledgement Process December 2 – 9
The Vestry writes and signs an open letter thanking the parish for the hard work, prayer, discernment and sacrifices and (hopefully) reports that pledges have met the needs of the parish as discerned for the ministry budget of the next year. (…and there is much rejoicing in all the land!)

The Rector takes a few working days of quiet solitude (Advent one is a good time for this—SSJE’s Emory House or some other retreat center or a friend’s cabin might be a good
place….) to write thank-you notes to parishioners, thanking them for their pledge. This personal touch is hard on the hand (I wrote 300 in my last parish) but the benefit is incalculable. People like to be thanked. People like to be thanked personally. People consider this to be a very generous act on the part of their Rector.
Chapter V: Generationally-sensitive Fund Raising in the Church

The changing face of giving:

When clergy and lay leaders look out over their congregations or leaf through the photo directory, they see faces staring back at them of all ages. There are a wide range of generations represented and each generation is marked by certain characteristics which dictate how they communicate, how they join groups, how they like to be asked for money and how they give money away. Companies spend significant amounts of money to find out how these different generations tick so that the advertising they do is effective. This is not manipulation – this is communications, branding and marketing.

The church has for centuries not felt that it needed to engage in this behavior. Church leaders considered themselves “above that” and were self-assured that people must give to the church simply because they always have or because the church is Jesus and not giving money to Jesus would make God angry. For some, giving to the church made one a “good person.” Those days are over. In the 21st century, the family pledge (on average $1,800) to the church will require similar hard work on the part of the church to the hard work any company must do to make a $1,800 sale of merchandise.

Giving in church history – “game over”:

The church has for centuries used various means by which to raise the money it needed to pay for clergy, church expenses, church warfare, church buildings, monasteries, lands and the materials used in worship. Here are some of the ways the church raised the money it needed over the last centuries:

Jesus’s time: Women quietly gave Jesus the major gifts he and his followers needed. Jesus probably asked at first but as the benefits of Jesus’ presence manifested themselves, it became easy to make the investment in the ministry of a person able to cause miracles. As Jesus’ popularity or notoriety increased, major gift solicitation became easy.

33 AD – 300 AD: People of wealth secretly gave money needed and pot lucks fed Christian communities in hiding until the church became imperial by virtue of Constantine’s consecration of it as the state religion.

Dark Ages Once Constantine made the church imperial and it had power and authority the following means were used to raise funds:

- warfare
- taxation
- coercion
- manipulation
- death threats
- intimidation
- conscription of monks and nuns
- exchanging money for forgiveness of sins
- slavery and servitude
- theft by way of Crusades
- monopolies on services and products by the church coupled with high prices and commodity taxation
- the exchange of safety (castles, monasteries), health care and food for funding
- the use of pretend miracles combined with societal superstitions
- fear about the afterlife being a pit of lava and torture
- a theology of depravity – the notion that we are basically evil and God is furious as a default
- sale of release from torture or prison
- family monopolies over church lands

Middle Ages: By the middle ages the church was more organized and was better able to hide these atrocities and limited the list of means by which it raised money to the following:
- warfare
- taxation
- coercion
- manipulation
- death threats
- intimidation
- conscription of monks and nuns
- exchanging money for forgiveness of sins
- slavery and servitude
- monopolies on services and products by the church coupled with high prices and commodity taxation
- the exchange of safety (castles, monasteries), health care and food for funding
- the use of pretend miracles combined with societal superstitions
- fear about the afterlife being a pit of lava and torture
- a theology of depravity – the notion that we are basically evil and God is furious as a default
- sale of release from torture or prison
- family monopolies over church lands

Um…in other words all but the crusades…and event that went on in other forms….so …all of it.
The Renaissance: By the renaissance some things being done by the church to raise money had ceased leaving only:

- warfare
- taxation
- coercion
- manipulation
- death threats
- intimidation
- conscription of monks and nuns
- exchanging money for forgiveness of sins
- slavery and servitude
- monopolies on services and products by the church coupled with high prices and commodity taxation
- the exchange of safety (castles, monasteries), health care and food for funding
- the use of pretend miracles combined with societal superstitions
- fear about the afterlife being a pit of lava and torture
- a theology of depravity – the notion that we are basically evil and God is furious as a default
- sale of release from torture or prison
- family monopolies over church lands

The Victorian & Edwardian Era: By this time there had been some advancement in the connection between the way the church lived its life and the way the church preached its morality such that many financial atrocities of the past 1,500 years were considered out of fashion for church executives leaving only:

- taxation
- coercion
- manipulation
- religious inclusion by state law
- tithing by state law
- intimidation
- exchanging money for forgiveness of sins
- monopolies of land and estates by the church coupled with high prices and commodity taxation
- laws of inheritance and family association with the church (primogeniture)
- fear about the afterlife being a pit of lava and torture
- a theology of depravity – the notion that we are basically evil and God is furious as a default

As the people became less and less willing to be manipulated after the Reformation, people also became more and more aware of new possibilities. They began to have access to the Bible in new ways and began to see a balance between the “wages of sin” and the “call to love.” Clergy domination and manipulation became less and less tolerated and the clergy and
church leaders began to lose control over the people making money harder to raise and making reckless spending on Bishop’s palaces and vicarious clergy (vicars = vicarious, ie: clergy who took the money from a church but hired a cheap priest to run it) less tolerated.

The clergy then shifted their strategy for fund raising from manipulation to association saying that to be a part of this community (family, village, nation) one needed to be a part of and financially support the dominant church. This was how money was raised in England. The Anglican Church was the state religion. If you were British, you had to attend church and pay a tithe to the church in a kind of tax. If you did not go to your local Anglican village church (and neighbors were watching) you could worship some other way by paying a fine on top of your pledge to the Anglican Church or be imprisoned.

It was out of this system that the Episcopal Church was formed in Virginia during colonization and similar rules applied in southern regions. In the North East, devotion to the Anglican Church was replaced with a devotion to whatever was the predominant village church and still included both the legal and societal norms of attendance and pledging.

This DNA in the church, with a deep layer formed by manipulation and fear and an overlay of pledging by association went on right through to THE MID 1990’s.

After World War Two, society had shifted. The pain suffering and courage through which the west passed in the world wars made it resilient to all but the most subtle and systemic (invisible) manipulation. The church began to use the theology of community as a means by which to encourage people to pledge to the church. The new slogan was “attending church and giving to church is what our sort of people do.” and it would work well until the early 21st century.

The 20th Century: By this time, giving to the church in the west had moved from coercion and devotion to devotion and association. The world wars sobered people up to the manipulations of the church and state leading to women’s rights, the cessation of slavery, and other reforms opposed by the church.

The Post Internet Era: The internet has changed everything. The church has not yet awoken to the ramifications of pledging by the “search, click, enter and click” made possible in philanthropy by way of the internet.

Giving as biological choice:

The Kuala bear has a very small brain. So small in fact that its brain is smaller than the skull in which it resides. Over time their brain has shrunk faster than their skull. The reason for this small brain is that the Kuala bear only eats one thing: Eucalyptus. This woody and leafy plant is the entirety of its diet causing it to sleep almost the entire day and night due to a lack of protein. The human brain on the other hand has grown significantly over the two hundred thousand years of its development entirely because of the need for the brain to make so many choices about foods. We avoid bitter foods because in nature, bitter foods are often poisonous. We crave and enjoy sweet foods because our bodies and minds crave the
carbohydrates usually found in sweet foods so that the energy provided to the body and brain can help us to think through and escape from danger.

The brain thinks a lot about food because our lives depended on making good decisions in the forest and because our brains managed that process of decision-making. Similarly, we know that different ages of people will often have different tastes in foods, merchandise, pictures, messages and clothes. When a company wants to sell stone-washed jeans with small rips for an urban look they do not advertise that jean in AARP because elderly people are not going to be attracted to them. Similarly, when a company wants to sell baby food, they are not going to advertise in Teen Magazines since most of their target market is in their twenties and thirties. There is a reason that Target is called “Target.”

Leadership by resistance and avoidance= failure:

The church is so anxious about asking people to attend, volunteer and pledge to the church that we drop a letter in the mail with one hand (by the finger tips) and turn our heads with a wince as if the function of asking for money is degrading to us or offensive to them. In fact asking and giving are perfectly normal, social activities. In fact connecting a person who wants to give money away with something which needs their financial support is a tremendous honor and an activity which carries great satisfaction.

The other problem is that the church thinks that fund raising (or stewardship) is about the church, her programs and her needs when in fact, fund raising is always and only ever about the donor. It is the donor’s need to invest in something of value that is of the highest importance and not the budget of a church. It is the donor’s interests which are of the utmost importance and it is the donor who will or will not decide to give the gift.

What we face is a massive shift in which churches will change or die:

We face generations in Gen X(35-54), Gen Y (20-34) and Gen Z (under 19) which will, for the first time in the history of the church, be unresponsive to most of the ways we currently raise money and raise members.

As the Baby Boomers (55-64) enter into a phase of handing giving over to the next generation, they will be the last generation to be giving to or attending church based on affiliation. Their previous generations – their parents (the Silent Generation now aged 65-85) and their grandparents (The GI Generation now aged over 85) were the last generations to give or attend the church because of any of the following as a primary reason:

- This is what my family has always done.
- This is what my “tribe” (people, ethnic group, etc.) does.
- Our church makes our town (village, community, neighborhood, etc.) a better, more stable place.
- Our church is trustworthy and trains our children in morals and good choice-making.
- Going to or giving to church makes one a good citizen.
- When I pay my bills with a check and assemble the envelopes to be mailed off, it is easy to add a check to the church on a monthly basis.
- Our clergy stop by often just to sit with us in the kitchen for a cup of coffee – they are like family to us.
- Making a gift to the church is the main way to make a contribution to a worthy cause.

What these changes mean to giving for younger generations:

Those may have been good reasons to give to the church for those over 65 and there is no disrespect meant for the spiritual depth, social virtue or philanthropic awareness of those generations but they did not grow up in nor were they formed in today’s society the way those under 50 have been, which means that:
- Donors are increasingly independently minded.
- The internet tells us about many non-profits beyond the church which do the kinds of things we like to make happen with our giving. We can find them by simply typing “non-profit, donation, ___________” (and here we place a few key words about our passions like “planet” or “hospital” or “hungry children”).
- Although my church has a food pantry and asks for my pledge in the hopes I will support it, I can, while in my pajamas, go to the computer in my home, the I pad on my lap or my I phone in my pocket and type “donation, non-profit, hunger” and find eighteen million, six hundred thousand opportunities listed just for contributing to hunger relief most of which will let me contribute with a click of a button and will text me about how my money is being used.
- Donors are suspicious of the institutional church and do not consider it automatically trustworthy.
- Payments by internet are increasing exponentially such that few people under 60 carry check books with them or can find them easily at home.
- Our society has, in the last 30 years become pathologically insular and individualistic. People no longer gather at the general store or in block parties or even on front porches. People now gather in chat rooms and have phones in their pockets.
- Clergy do not stop by often due to the individualism in our society. Some clergy will hold open visit hours at their local coffee house but find themselves having to move from table to table for privacy and confidentiality. Clergy rarely drop in to kitchens and face-booking clergy get five-word statements from parishioners.
- Online giving has grown in popularity at a staggering rate as noted in the recent Wall Street Journal article: A New Generation Reinvents Philanthropy: Blogs, Social-Networking Sites Give 20-Somethings a Means To Push, Fund Favorite Causes (go to the following link to read the article: http://online.wsj.com/public/article/SB118765256378003494.html)

The point is that “the times they are ‘a changing” and yet the church is still asking for pledges, communicating why people should give and receiving payments on pledges the way they did two generations ago, entirely unaware that the people who are able and willing to give in that way to the church are now entering into their last phase of life. Their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren are no longer moved by the church’s reasons to give, no longer communicating the way the church is communicating and no longer pledging the way the church is asking them to pledge.

The future of giving and pledging in the church
1. The number of those willing to pledge will drop significantly, perhaps in some cases by 80% in younger congregations.
2. Response codes (those inky square blocks of code) will be printed in bulletins as a way for listeners to make spontaneous, targeted gifts. You will preach about a youth trip to Honduras to build an orphanage – congregants will wave their phone over the code in the bulletin and with two clicks, make an immediate gift to the church and to that specific mission trip fund within about 4 seconds. A minute later hundreds of dollars appear in the church account under “Honduras Youth Trip.”
3. Donors will be more involved in the process of discerning programs and budgets of the church. If they are not physically involved in the design of programs and services or are unaware of their impact on human lives, they will not give.
4. Pledge payments will be made electronically and responses to those payments will be regular (monthly) and will explain in detail how their money was used by the church and how lives were changed.
5. Younger congregants will seek to give to the care of the planet through their church. If that option is not available, they will go around the church to non-profits which care for the planet in some way.
6. Involvement of congregants and accountability of clergy and vestry will increase proportionately to the increase in funding and similarly there will be a proportionate and similarly linked decrease of each; the more involvement and accountability, the more funding.
7. The spiritual underpinnings of giving will still be essential, which means that formation around how people understand money in the context of their faith and life with God, on the planet and in the church community will be essential to their awareness that they need to give a portion of their money away. This will not change with Gen X, Y or Z. What WILL change is that although they may be converted to giving from not giving – they will not necessarily give to the church unless they perceive that the church deserves their gift.
8. Giving and pledging will increasingly be seen not only as a gift but also as an investment. If there is not a clear and understood return on the investment communicated to the donor, then the gift will be redirected to a non-profit which does a better job of that communication and transparency.

What we need to know about working with younger donors in annual, major gifts and capital fund raising within the church:
Generalities about younger donors to our churches:

Younger people in generations X (Gen X) and Y (Millennial) aged 20 - 45 years of age will have different motivations for giving to the church and will give to the church in different ways. These differences will also significantly impact program involvement, membership growth and membership retention in our churches but the impact of these changes on Evangelism is for another book.

Why is this a big deal? Because not only is this the first time in church history that giving by manipulation or by affiliation will end; it is also the first time in church history that the “philanthropy turning” will begin to reach its completion within the lives of these two generations (the next 30 years.) What is the “philanthropy turning?”

The Church Philanthropy Turning (CPT)

The Church Philanthropy Turning (CPT) is the reversal which has been going on since the 1950’s in which the tables have nearly completely turned on donor and charity power around philanthropy and giving. It used to be the case that a church had a defined membership (by family ties, village membership, social class, etc.) and that congregants gave and attended their church because of location and affiliation. Being a member of the “right” church could improve job prospects, social alliances and access to elevated standards of living. Many chose churches both for their potential social opportunities and for their ease of location.

Churches had a somewhat captive audience in those days. It was harder and more expensive to travel and so going to church where you lived was the way it had to be. This gave a certain power to churches. They could afford to be less transparent, less responsive to donor/stewardship pledger interests and less flexible in program and service provision. You paid your pledge and you got what you got and were expected to like it.

You could spend 2% of your income on the purchase of a new car. You could search all you wanted for the perfect car to fit your needs as well as the perfect car loan. You could get exactly what you wanted because – well – you were paying a lot of money and “the customer is right.” The car salesman would show you options and shift you around to try to keep your business within his brand. You could leave one dealership and go from a Chevrolet to a Ford if you chose- seeking the best deal and the best kind of car. You could go from one bank to a different bank if you found a better loan deal. That competition was good for the buyer and kept the dealerships and banks on their toes to either give you the best deal or hide the flaws.

Churches did not have to play by those rules. Churches may not be using fear, intimidation and manipulation on those whose giving was not giving by reason of devotion and spiritual depth, but they also knew that you were there because you lived nearby and that social norms meant that you were unlikely to move church membership (which, by the way, required paperwork, signatures and authority to grant acknowledgment of the change) nor were you able to know easily what other churches offered. Before the internet there was little information available to you other than either asking a neighbor or looking for a steeple on the skyline and heading towards it to sign up membership (which, by the way…is why they had steeples!)
Then came the 60’s and a lot changed, or at least began to change. Individualism took over and people began to push against structures, including the church. This was the era in which previously un-asked questions were starting to be asked. In 1963 (the year I was born!) An earlier Bishop Robinson – The British Bishop of Woolich – caused an upheaval in the church by publishing a little book called Honest to God (SCM Press.) The theology was not his own but the assembly of it was new and provocative. This book turned the Church of England and the world-wide Anglican Communion on its end by asking previously un-askable questions and doing it out in the open…in an unauthorized book. The content of the book is not as interesting in this conversation as was the conversation around the book.

The then Most Reverend Michael Ramsey, Archbishop of Canterbury spoke out on television about this renegade Bishop without telling him he was to do so. Naughty Archbishop! At the time the Archbishop wrote about an article which promoted the contents of the new book by saying the following:

“I was especially grieved at the method chosen by the Bishop (John A. T. Robinson) for presenting his ideas to the public [which] caused public sensation and did much damage. Many of us who read the article [in a newspaper] and its slogans might not have had the opportunity or the necessary brains for reading the book referred to.”

It is the Archbishop's tone which is most revealing of that hinge-point in the church’s history. It is revealing that he expects questions about God and theology to be raised in the privacy of the Church's back rooms, among those who can handle them without shock and dismay. These were the days when a few white, male Bishops would gather at a men’s club in the back room, surrounded by brass fixtures, servants, green velvet table cloths, maroon leather chairs, waste-paper baskets made from the foot of an Indian elephant and cigar ash-trays made from the same beast’s tusks. In incense-like clouds of cigar smoke and with brandy in the other hand, Bishops made decisions “on behalf of the poor-unwashed and uneducated.”

The sensibilities of the faithful congregants of churches in hamlets and villages are damaged by questions and tentative answers. Why? Because by implication of the Archbishop and those whose voice he represented, congregants were considered not to have the “necessary brains” to deal with such matters.

The patronizing attitude of Archbishop Ramsey is appalling today and is summarily rejected by the blacks, women and homosexuals now openly allowed to lead worship. But at the time, most church-goers who did not read the book joined the Archbishop in his disgust by default. It was in their DNA as congregants to do as their Bishops told them to do and to think as their Bishops told them to think. In fact, they need not even think…the Bishops would do that for them. Ramsey was a man who didn't like being pressed about awkward matters. He was a man of his era – a fine Archbishop in many ways – but representative of his era and his time in the church.

Now, forty-eight years later (I know this because that is how old I am now…..) some things have changed a lot and some things are taking rather long to change. A new Bishop Robinson is kicking up a ruckus and meeting no small resistance. Still, nearly half a century later, locked out of the new version of the Bishop’s back-room (now smoke free, with earth-friendly accessories but still with walls lined by swords and spears – I know this from a few
of my own stays in that palace) this purportedly “entirely heterosexual” group of Bishops at Lambeth in 2009 still exhibit the lingering echo of the intransigence of our forbearers. On the other hand, ask any Gen X or Gen Y member of our church and you will find that those days are now over for them, and they will, in the next three years, begin to take the reigns of our church. And things will change.

People under 45 will not object to back-room decision-making by clergy or vestry. They will not be upset by confusing annual meetings which obscure where money is going and how it is being spent. They will not worry over clergy whose actual work-load is a veiled mystery. They will not be troubled by churches which are little more than clubs in hospice. They will not be perturbed by money spent on big, empty buildings or pet projects from days of yore. No. Gen X and Gen Y congregants will not be bothered by these things because they now have choices.

They will simply un-fund such churches in favor of either a transparent, responsible church or a walk in the woods and some prayer with friends around a meal.

As one Gen Xer recently said to me at a coffee hour “We do not need to do battle with misogyny, racism, waste or homophobia in our older generations of church leaders, we just have to live our lives and wait, while they get older and too tired to fight anymore. I give it about ten years.” When pressed about why this young person gives to the church she said “I give because I must! I must give because of all that God has given to me! Giving makes me joyful! Giving back to God by giving to the mission of the church is fundamental to my spiritual life. All I am saying is that although I do not have much choice about IF I give, I have tons of choice about WHERE I give!” And with that, she smiled, rather mischievously, drinking her coffee and looking at me long and hard over the rim of her mug which said “The Episcopal Church welcomes you!”

Things to know about younger donors:

Pledgers, donors, embracers-of-the-theology-of-stewardship, tithers, spiritual-paragons-of-the-virtue-of-generosity, givers – I am not going to get caught up in a too often distracting and boring discussion about terminology! Donors under 45 are simply different kinds of givers. They listen differently, they use different means by which to pledge and give and they want to be connected and thanked in different ways than any previous generation. The only exception to this is that Millennials currently in their teens and twenties, will exhibit similarities with their great-grandparents (the GI generation now in their 80’s.)

Generally, younger generations under 45 make up almost 40% of the U.S. population. Those who have disposable income so young have earned their money and have not inherited it. Many are still paying off loans and raising children and most will not begin to reach peak giving for four more years …when they reach the years between 49 – 70 years of age. Unlike their parents and even grandparents, they were not the children of people who saved, budgeted or planned the use of their money. And younger donors are aware that this is the case. They are not inclined to repeat the mistakes of their last two generations and are more than a little resentful of the situation in which their parents and grandparents have placed their planet – “this island home” as the Book of Common Prayer calls it so hauntingly.
Perhaps rather surprisingly, almost 30% of Americans with a new worth of $1 million dollars or more are under 44 years of age. Most clergy and lay leaders will say “We don’t have any people under 44 in our church with any money.” and this is either due to the fact that younger church donors are now showy about their money or it is a way to talk themselves out of having to raise the money at all. Either way, an opportunity is lost.

**Donor-mission driven gifts**

Younger donors to our church’s mission are giving precisely to that – the mission of the church. They have returned, in their theory of church, to the age immediately after Jesus’ day in which the church was a movement and not yet an institution. In fact the “institution” of the church sort of creeps younger generations out. They are naturally suspicious of institutions and especially the church’s version. Macro fund raising by the institution of the church (ie: The Episcopal Church USA out of New York’s head offices and the Anglican Church out of Canterbury/London) will be possible but only because of relationship building and case-development around issues passionately embraced by younger donors.

In fact, to say that younger donors are “mission-driven” is a massive understatement and a bit of a puzzle. Understanding this puzzle is the essential thing about younger donors…this one point is THE point! Here is where you need to pay attention. Miss this point and you have missed the boat entirely!

Go back to CPT – Church Philanthropy Turning (see the previous article) and you will see that the turning of the tables is that although younger donors are mission driven in their giving – they are driven by their **mission** and not the mission of the church.

Younger donors may be giving to the church out of a deep understanding of the spiritual underpinnings of a theology built on a foundation of stewardship and gratitude. They may even be giving a tithe or more than a tithe out of the sure knowledge that all they have comes from God. They may even give because they understand that to give back a portion of their money to God is a basic part of the deal God has cut with God’s people – that we get what we get and our job is to carve a portion off and return it to God through the church. Indeed these and other very healthy, spiritually-deep, well-formed understandings of life and giving may be the firm foundation of giving among younger donors, but (and this is a humongous but!) the tables have turned beginning in the last decade and speeding up for the next two decades exponentially. Younger donors have a mission. They are passionate about their mission. They have options for giving which connect with their mission and for many, that passion can be the church’s mission – or at least a part of it.

The days of congregants funding the mission of the church are over.

Now we have the responsibility of meeting the needs of these younger donors rather than having the donors meeting the needs of the churches. This is something the other non-profits have been doing for two decades – and doing very well. It has not much changed the museums or the hospitals. After twenty years of our brother and sister non-profits raising money with transparency and an openness to the missions of the younger generations, the museums still have art in them and hospitals still heal the sick. This change in philanthropy will not change the church’s mission because the church is not the institution and the church
is not the buildings and the church is not the programs and the church is not even the worship. The church is the people of God who make the institution possible. The church is the people INSIDE those buildings, ATTENDING those programs and WORSHIPPING their God. The church is not its workings. The church is its people and increasingly, it will be those very people who will fund or de-fund the church.

Ten years ago, the question pledgers to the church had to answer was “To which church shall I give my returned gift to God?” Now the question is “What is important in the world which needs funding and can I see my church doing that in some way by what they are telling me about the use of my money? And if the church is not getting good work done – the kind of work Jesus did- then a simple word search will find a charity worthy of my money.” They may still come to church if the programs and enjoyable and the worship compelling, encouraging and moving. But they may not do more than drop twenty into the plate as it goes by - the value of an hour and a half of entertainment per week…sort of like paying for a deeply moving movie or a session of therapy. Then the bulk of their money will be channeled off to some agency which feeds the poor, clothes the naked, cares for those in prison, heals the sick…you know the list. It’s in the Bible.

Donor-driven giving is going to be very healthy and very challenging. It is going to require that the church deserve the money it is raising. I do not for a moment want to imply that churches have, in the past, not deserved the money they have been raising by some of its more medieval or even Victorian means of fund-raising and pledge-raising. I simply mean that from now on, those churches which do not deserve the money they are raising or cannot communicate how and why they deserve the money they are raising will cease to exist sort of the way the tomato plants thrive in the garden when the weeds are pulled. Church budgets are going to increasingly become a conversation between church leaders and younger donors. Conversation is always a good healthy thing.

If a parish can communicate effectively with their younger donors and teach them what the church is doing, why it is doing it and how it is in keeping with what Jesus called us to do when he brought Mary and John together as ecclesia and said “do this in remembrance of me” then all shall be well. Donors are open to the church’s formation and teaching. Young donors do not want the church to go away. They want to understand how what they see and experience on Sunday morning is connected to what they and their clergy and their wardens and their vestry and the rest of the congregation and the budget of the parish are accomplishing the rest of the week. If a church can convince them that their money is being used to usher in the Kingdom of God and can do so with specifics then it’s all good! But younger donors are increasingly improving their ability to sense when they are being lied to or being told the truth. Younger donors are will no longer let the church talk at them or down to them. Those days are over.

Another interesting thing to note about younger donors is that not only do they like to fund things which are a part of their mission on earth, they tend to fund things in which they are directly involved. Millennials and Gen X donors like to be physically or at least logistically and emotionally engaged in the mission of the non-profit to which they give. They will fund a church when their “personal mission” is something with which the church is not much engaged if the church is willing to engage them in some tangible and central part of its mission both through regular communications and through presence-making beyond simply Sunday morning worship (though engaging and moving Sunday morning worship is a huge
plus just as a dull liturgy will disengage younger congregants.) The parents of Gen X (the Silent Generation) were content to write a check and sit rather passively in the pews while “Father so and so” worked on the budget and mission with his vestry.

Many people who know and love the BBC television show “The Vicar of Dibley” (and even those who do not) too often see the plot of the show being about the stresses and strains of a woman vicar in a small English village of the 1980s and indeed that is a big part of the show’s humor and plot. However the show is about what happens when a new generation begins to take leadership in the wake of the previous generation. Notice that the protagonists of that show are all young or very elderly. It is the intractable “Silent Generation” embodied by the Senior Warden who is the shows constant foil and antagonist. Even the not-terribly-well-closeted gay Bishop of the Diocese is one of the “young-at-heart” in the series. This show is not about women in leadership as much as it is about young boomers/Gen Xers in leadership. Perhaps it did not stay on for long in the ratings because the target market which would find it hilarious were all on their laptops and I pads while the viewers were uncomfortably seeing themselves in the Senior Warden.

By involving younger donors in the life of the parish between Sundays (by the way…they will come if the invitation and event is attractive, fun, meaningful, full of their friends and engaging) you are meeting younger donors on the field, making it much easier and more effective to both communicate mission and build relationships. All fund raising is about relationships – ALL fundraising…even stewardship. It is tempting to get all “but giving should be out of a spiritual ….” and we can whine all we want, but it will not change the reality that God co-creates with us, and although it is God’s job to send the Holy Spirit to enliven the hearts of our congregants to give and get involved…it is equally OUR job to communicate well and provide attractive, creative, fun, engaging events and missions.

Younger donors, in general, have a very strong moral obligation to do good in the world and are, in that way very much like the GI generation. They want to protect their assets while preserving their capital and they like very much to be connected to other donors whose interests are similar to their own. This can work in favor or against the church. The church can link members of the congregation around similar issues, help them to donate and pledge to it and help them to meet each other forming small communities of interest and that will benefit everyone. On the other hand, the church can just as easily ask young donors to pledge to a vague mission at which point the donor simply clicks a Google search for the list of charities which engage in their interests and though the membership on Sundays may go to the Church, the pledge goes to God through the United Way, Save the Children, Outward Bound and Episcopal Relief and Development. This is sad when simply engaging this young person with the groceries ministry, the Haiti missions trip, the youth group and the Missions trip to New Orleans would have assembled and kept those gifts within the parish budget as a full-bodied pledge.

So what can a church do to improve giving by younger people in general?
1. Register your church with volunteer networks that do hands-on work in the community and the world and build your own volunteer system to get people physically engaged in the work of the church on days other than Sundays. They will come if the work is interesting and if you have helped them to make friends with each other.
2. Connect to your younger donors and attendees on line through Facebook and Myspace. On Facebook you can even use a program called “causes” to connect donors to friends and charities which do good work.

3. Use a blog and an e-news blast to keep younger people informed of what you are doing. To do this well it needs to be kept up, refreshed almost daily and must be accurate but the energy behind the news will energize your donors.

4. Be sure to have a way to bring younger people in the parish to a form of the vestry table. If you have the opportunity to elect a youth to Diocesan Convention, by all means do not miss this opportunity and then get them to meetings and in front of the church so that they are informed. Try to have a young adults and teen “counsel of advice” to the vestry so that they feel both heard and listened to.

5. Look at all branding and marketing you are doing with an eye towards younger congregants and get their input of drafts, images, tag lines, headlines and plans.

6. Always ask yourself as you manage your stewardship / pledge campaign is this “ask” based on our needs or on the mission of the donors?” Have we communicated our mission so well and so involved our young people in our leadership that they own the mission of this church?

7. Train young people in all levels of Sunday school and youth formation about giving, stewardship, and gratitude. Teach parents how to teach their children about these things.

Meeting generational needs of donors:

There are five generations alive on the planet at this point, and though different sociologists will name slightly different birth and death year parameters, the trends are uncontroversial and indicative of certain strategies when managing involvement and giving in the church and in other nonprofit agencies. Needless to say, as has been thoroughly covered in other areas of this book, the spiritual underpinnings and the conversion of life issues which encourage giving are essential, however they alone, with the praxis of effective management are not enough to raise money in the church. There needs to be a combination of deep spiritual formation COMBINED with careful strategic planning. One without the other will be ineffective.

The GI Generation (now well into their eighties in age):

The Greatest Generation, also known as the G.I. Generation, is the generation that includes all those who lived as adults during World War II. They were born from around 1916 to the mid-1920s, coming of age during the Great Depression and it was this generation which bore the brunt of and shouldered the responsibilities of these two massive and formative events in world history. The settled down after the war to a frugal prosperity, working hard , valuing teamwork, engaging in conformity and working towards fair play and honor in their dealings. They have a significant respect for authority and hold titles to be of great value as societal ques.

Spiritually they long for a deep inner spiritual life and given the chance will seek out and find places and times of sanctuary. Monasteries swelled to capacity after the Second World War and this generation it frequently a guest in them now. They are team-players and tend to do
what they say they will do which makes them excellent campaign honorary chairs although physical limitations will limit energy in some cases meaning that campaigns need a Silent or Gen X campaign chair. They enjoy legacy initiatives and will work hard to establish something which lasts.

The GI Generation in fund raising:

**How to recruit as volunteers and leaders:**
Recruitment of the GI Generation will best be done by their peers, person to person in the home and sometimes over a meal. They like to work face to face and they appreciate time to get things done. Fast and loose is not this generation’s way. They have wealth and power but need to be handled in a very personal way and often not by email.

**How to ask for a gift or pledge:** face to face by a peer is the best way to ask this generation. All strategies with regard to this generation should be designed around planned giving as well as annual funding and should be related to their personal history with the church.

**How to thank them:** personally with a visit. If they are given a gift they would prefer it to be simple, home-made and consumable or personal or spiritual such as bread and tea, a framed prayer or a drawing from Sunday school framed and boxed.

**How to communicate:** by personal visit or by telephone. Letters are fine if there is a long turn-around time. Put this generation on no list-serves even if they use email unless they request them.

**How to use their gifts:** this generation as symbolic leadership and as counsel of advice. Do not under-estimate their wisdom and their power to motivate things to get accomplished.

The Silent Generation (now in their 70-85):

The [Silent Generation](#) was born 1926 to 1938, and is the generation that includes those who were too young to join the service during World War II. Many had fathers who served in World War I. They are generally recognized as the children of the Great Depression, this event during their formative years had a profound impact on them.

These are the funders of what we currently see as church – buildings, structure, ethos. With their death, funding of macro church mission will begin to be in jeopardy since their way of building and giving was not passed on to the next generation. This is especially the case as regards capital building and capital maintenance. This generation believes in conformity, authority and rules. They have a very defined sense of right and wrong; are loyal, disciplined, logical, detail-oriented and view an understanding of history as a way to plan for the future. They dislike conflict and are intrigued by and will seek out technological advancements. They prefer hierarchical organizational structures and will still prefer to use clergy titles and prefer to be called by their first name by permission. This group values privacy and sharing inner thoughts may be challenging. Members of this generation believe in hard work and “paying their dues” before their achievement is recognized. Communication, propriety, and procedure are formal in this generation which was raised in
an orderly society having clearly defined roles and functions. Because they survived the Great Depression and World War II, this group is not wasteful and values saving and making do as well as being hard-working, economically aware, and generally trustful of the government. They are optimistic and willing to sacrifice but with them, patience is a virtue.

The Silent Generation in fund raising:

How to recruit as volunteers and leaders: This generation will allow for both face-to-face calls and invitations by letter, telephone and email though the latter may take more time since they are a very patient generation and responding to emails overnight is simply not their way. They need to see a whole plan and process is important to them. Circumventing or running roughshod over process with this generation will not give good results and will deteriorate relationships. They appreciate a plan and a clear job description and they like to work a plan with measurable objectives.

How to ask for a gift or pledge: They would like to be asked for an annual pledge as a group but for a major gift personally. They are less likely to want to meet in their home (though some may) and are more likely to want to meet at a local diner to chat over a simple meal. They are using the internet comfortably. This is a group with high capacity for giving but a low tolerance for sustentation. Underestimate their capacity for giving at your peril. You will think they cannot or will not give but this group has inherited nest-eggs which they have not spent. They have high capacity to give and they have high interest due to long involvement. They should be asked for capital, major and planned gifts by the right people at the right time and for the right request which must be based on THEIR interests and their mission.

How to thank them: Like their parents they like to be thanked (everyone does and if they say they do not they are lying!) but also like their parents they like to be thanked creatively and not expensively. They do not (like most people) like to be thanked in the form of a bill for a pledge payment and would rather have the pledge payment reminder to be in the form of a letter with merged data needed as “billing information.”

How to communicate: They like to be met with personally for big things and they like to use email and letter for the rest. They like lead time on things and will not react well to immediate requests unless they are few and of urgency.

How to use their gifts: This group is a good set of leaders and they will work hard for you as long as you are working a plan which has been well-communicated. They like advance planning and will not respond well to short-cuts and plan-changes.

Baby Boomers (Now aged fifty and into their late sixties):

The Baby Boom Generation is the generation that was born during World War II and up to the 1960s, a time that was marked by an increase in birth rates. The baby boom has been described variously as a "shockwave" and as "the pig in the python." In general, baby boomers are associated with a rejection or redefinition of traditional values and have a suspicion of intuition and of the institutional church. In Europe and North America boomers
are widely associated with privilege, as many grew up in a time of affluence although they are not known for having well-maintained that affluence the way their parents in the silent generation did. One of the features of Boomers is that they tend to think of themselves as a special generation, very different from those that had come before them.

They were born in 1945-1961, have a life span of 73, and will currently begin to die (2015-2036) at which point their giving to the church will begin to end (2015) as they hand giving to the church to the next generation.

The Baby Boomers are the last generation in the history of the Christian Church to give to the church by affiliation and indeed only the older half of baby boomers are so inclined.

Baby boomers are drawn to:
• working long hours at the office, including evenings and weekends;
• building their career over the long term and loyalty to their employer;
• viewing themselves and their career as one and the same;
• commitment to quality and doing a good job;
• “hanging tough” through difficult work situations and policies;
• finding solutions to problems;
• being in charge and respecting authority.

This generation’s giving has become accomplishment-based and is no longer associated with tradition or perpetuation.

This group grew up in a time of economic prosperity against a background of rebellion. They value peer competition and strive for challenge and change.

Boomers, like Traditionalists, value hard work because they view it as necessary for moving to the next level. This is a show-me generation in which body language is important. Boomers work well in teams and do not like having rules for the sake of rules. This group will fight for a cause they believe in but their belief must be generated from within and not imposed on them. Health and personal growth are important. Boomers thought their parents’ world needed an overhaul so they saw their role as one of questioning, justifying, and creating change. The workplace will be dominated by this generation until 2015 at which point their giving peak (50-70 years of age) will begin to decline in favor of the next generation.

The Baby Boomer Generation in fund raising:

How to recruit as volunteers and leaders: This is our current leadership generation and they are designing new ways of being church as we speak. They have less time than money and they do not have the money their parents did. They do like to connect with each other and they like to connect around spiritual life issues so recruiting them to a team of their peers is a good idea. These are better workers than top leaders and this generation has low quality control of excellence. Post-Watergate distrust of institutions was heightened by the Roman Catholic sex scandals and so they will be tentative connectors within the church.
How to ask for a gift or pledge: The do not want to be met with in their homes and would rather meet in their work-place but do like to be visited. They very much like to express their opinions so make time for these conversations and ask more questions than you answer. They want to talk about their giving and their reasons for giving before they are asked for the gift and they may not make a pledge on the spot as they commit very carefully and tentatively. They will need time to process a request and especially a major gift. They have complex schedules and they need to be met with when they can meet. Their need to understand the vision and mission is much greater than their need to understand the budget or the structure. Their main interests are the care of children and youth and the care of the environment making them reluctant to pledge to capital maintenance.

How to thank them: Life in community is important to them even though they are the beginning of an individualistic phase of societal change and entrenchment. They want to be part of things and so they will often be willing to have their names listed on a donor wall or in a donor list.

How to communicate: Use email and telephone but be aware that their schedules are very complex and so they will only be able to respond sporadically.

How to use their gifts: Get this generation onto teams and use them in speaking events such as testimonials. Recruit them to jobs but make them time-closed and term-ending.

Generation X (now in their late twenties through their forties):

Generation X is the generation generally defined as those born from 1961 to the latest 1981. Since their life span will take them to between 2051-2071 and since their height in giving range will occur between 2011 -2031, they will just be beginning to make full pledges in 2011 at which point the hand-over between the Baby Boomers and the Gen X generation will begin. Given that, that event is what is about to occur at this time in the church’s history, we are concerned to know more about Gen X and how they involve themselves and how they give. Knowing how they make decisions and what their social patterns are will go a long way to helping the church to manage the complex systems which will both encourage involvement (Evangelism) and giving (philanthropy.)

Church funding as we know it will end between 2011 through to 2041-2051, the change has begun and will exponentially increase in speed and impact on church budgets. Members of Generation X (born between 1965-1980) tend to:
- prefer high-quality end results over quantity;
- set and meet goals and are very productive;
- multitask;
- balance work and life, like flexible working hours, job sharing;
- see themselves as free agents and marketable commodities;
- be comfortable with authority but not impressed with titles;
- be technically competent;
- value ethnic diversity;
- love independence.
This is the first of the “tech” generations and this is the first of the generations for whom spending so much time behind television and computer screens will incline them to a heightened tendency towards a level if individualism and isolationism never seen before in human history. Due to the cyber form of the relationships they build and the contact with those relationships, they will begin to lose the desire and ability to come together easily and for pleasure in all but the smallest affinity groups and even that will be increasingly difficult to manage due to schedules and shifting norms about how they spend their leisure time.

This group may be economically aware or even hyper-vigilant because members of this generation grew up with double-digit inflation and unemployment stress.

Unlike their predecessors in the Boomer and previous generations, Gen X do not trust institutions of any kind for long-term security. Gen X grew up with only one headline in the newspapers about the church and those headlines were largely bad and involved clergy misconduct, acquired situational narcissism (ASM) and abuse of power. These headlines were burned into their minds and changed how they saw the church at large.

This group can be discouraged about society and about its churches, but they are adept, clever, and resourceful. They are comfortable with change and clear about the meaning of balance in their lives. They work to live, and do not live to work. This means that they may form a new kind of society but whether or not they will bring the church along into that society in the next 50 years is still a question.

They introduced and are passionate about diversity to the extent that they are saying that the next generation will be called “the mosaic generation” in honor of their tendency to choose and enjoy a highly diverse community of individualism. They will look at the churches they are considering attending and funding and they will ask themselves if that kind of social diversity, freedom of expression and creative thinking is present in those communities. For Gen X, churches will be attractive to the extent that they are:

1. open to all kinds of people regardless of sexual, social or political ideas;
2. care deeply for the earth as a planet-home and are working to save it from human impact;
3. are bringing people together in creative ways without imposing creedal demands;
4. provide humor and enjoyment of social interaction (these will be less and less accomplished by this generation in their own homes meaning that fun churches with creative worship and social events around meals will be attractive to this generation);
5. provide beauty, mystery, awe and silence in liturgies. This generation craves a place in which and reason to turn off cell phones (or at least turn them to “silent “mode), leave computer screens and enter into God’s presence. They will flock to our churches if we provide:
   a. beauty in liturgy
   b. effective formation in spiritual life
   c. meaningful and fun human social interaction.

The successful church of the next century will be ones which can create vibrant and beautiful liturgy and fun and meaningful meal-making outside the liturgy. In summary- if we “do this in remembrance of me” in the best Anglican and Celtic and other traditions in our liturgy and then do it again as family-meal-making then people will attend and they may even continue
to pay for the upkeep of some of our buildings – though that is unlikely for the long term. Given the reduced funding we expect and the expenses of keeping up our buildings, we suspect that Gen X will be the first and not the last generation to choose meeting hall and pastor over galley-church and ecclesial executive which may force the church to return to the kind of church we were prior to the effects of Constantine’s imperialisation of the church in the third and fourth centuries.

Generation X are thinking globally, and are seeking “fun” in both the workplace and the religious place of meeting. They work hard and, like Boomers, want to rise on the ladder of success, but they do it mostly to be in control of balancing their lives.

This group wants plenty of information. They value loyalty in the workplace, but loyalty can also mean giving “two weeks’ notice” which means they seek loyalty while there but not as long-term-dedication. Gen X will be “there” for the church they have joined but only until they choose not to be at which point all bets are off. This may be the first generation for whom “church membership” is reinvented to mean church involvement.” Boomers introduced “church shopping’ to our vernacular but Gen X may introduce “church hopping” which will mean that even more than in the past 50 years, the next 50 years will bring us a congregation of people who will vote with their attendance and their wallets in a shock-and-awe way we have never before seen. In this case, strong churches which meet their needs and which provide beauty, awe, silence, meal-making and real connection will survive and the rest will die from lack of funding.

Generation X like to manage their own time and solve their own problems. They will give their time to the church they choose and will work hard and creatively to solve the problems of that church and to make it strong, but they will not fund or give time to any institution which is not meeting their mission goals. Fund raising in the church has, for the past half century had to radically change how it does business to meet a new reality that the mission of the donor is essential to the making of a gift to the church. Gen X will set that reality in the highest possible relief.

Gen X in fund raising:

**How to recruit as volunteers and leaders:** Gen X are coming of age at a later date than ever before and are extending the time they need to make major decisions about family and community. They are going to be hard to engage until after 40 years of age when they will make decisions about family and until which their focus is on earnings, financial stability and children/family. They are going to be smaller families than we have seen in the past and will be two-income families by necessity given that the recession of the early 21st century may take decades from which to recover financially and even longer to recover from emotionally. This generation will change careers often (not jobs, careers!) and so location and place will not be of high importance to them. They will have more academic degrees and be more curious than previous generations incurring considerable academic debt and their tendency to be Individualistic in all things and especially in religion and church will all conspire to make this a very difficult generation to recruit for anything other than short-term, event-oriented tasks with clear outcomes and a clear end-time.
The effective ecclesial leader or manager among Gen Xers will see their congregational leaders as players on a chess board and will need to constantly be moving them all around with what will feel like frustrating speed in order to get the most out of their volunteer energy and time. This will require more time and attention of church leaders as they are constantly re-evaluating who is doing what, where, how and for how long.

**How to ask for a gift or pledge:** Gen X will have very low discretionary income given that their time in places of work and house-holding will be short. This will impact their ability to ramp up reputations, relationships and salary ranges and will reduce the likelihood of being deeply known to church communities. They will carry considerable debt and will be a hard-sell on pledging versus giving to plate. They will be very technically aware and will give most of their philanthropy online and by design of their own mission on the planet. Many will use QRC (Quick Response Codes) to make spontaneous gifts and we will see more and more churches using those black and white boxes as giving codes on bulletins so that when, in the announcements a mention is made of the upcoming “Youth Mission Trip to Belize” congregants can swipe their IPhones over the Quick Response Code to make an immediate gift to that effort. This will make raising money in church more complicated but could assist us in matching mission to philanthropy since this information about response and association will be valuable to connect young people with mission-giving. This generation is interested in absolute transparency and will not pledge without seeing and understanding how the money is being used. They will want not to be passive but rather engaged and interactive with the budget PRIOR to being asked to pledge which will mean doing budgets earlier (a year in advance) and vetting them with the donors. They will be consumers in their pledging. They will be seeking community precisely because they are not good at getting that need met. Asking them to pledge as much for mission as for the theology of community will be essential to the case-for-support. The spiritual enrichment of their children will be important to them given their rather low spiritual formation (which they sense but are not sure what to do about) and so giving to the formation and care of children will be essential to the case for support and its expression.

This group wants just the facts. Make case-for-support (the stewardship letters, brochures, mailings etc.) brief and to the point. Give Gen Xers the opportunity to give online in multiple ways and at multiple times. With this generation we will need to balance the need for one budget and one pledge with the need to raise money by issue and not create donor-fatigue.

**How to thank them:** This group needs to be thanked not only for their money but for their time and their talent which will require time and attention of clergy and lay leaders not to mention creativity. They want emails and they want short frequent emails. They will meet with clergy but usually for coffee and briefly.

**How to communicate:** Use the internet and the telephone (during work hours). Break them down into smaller groups and meet with them as focus groups when seeking input and sending message. Caring for the earth, serving the poor and advocating for justice will be central communications of case in the church of the next several decades. De-emphasize the institution of the church, never be unprepared to speak about details in budget and case-for-support, never talk down to this generation and clergy will need to be light-hearted and dispense with titles and authority – neither of which will work with this generation and which
will be a huge turn-off to them. Terms like “Father so-and-so” will only work well with the GI and Silent Generations. These titles will disengage Boomers and revolt Gen X.

**How to use their gifts:** Gen X will speak passionately if given time to understand case and mission. They will be essential in helping the church to move into technology effectively so use them both as focus groups about communication and mission as well as advisors for technology and its use in marketing, branding, evangelism and stewardship. They will be valuable in leadership so use them on Vestries but be prepared to be transparent, honest, open to change, and welcoming of new ideas. This generation’s ability to use technology to preach the Gospel will be stunning – use and manage it well. They crave all that the Episcopal Church offers and will be a tremendous resource for some churches and will unemotionally de-fund others.

**Generation Y or Millennials (now 6-25):**

Generation Y is also known as Generation Next or the Millennials. Today, many follow William Strauss and Neil Howe's theories in defining the Millennials which places the start year as 1982 and end in the early years of the 21st century. This generation will be inheriting giving as they age into their 50’s and through into their 70’s in 2038-2050.

Members of Generation Y tend to prefer:
- effecting change and making an impact;
- expressing themselves rather than defining themselves through work;
- multitasking all the time;
- active involvement;
- flexibility in work hours and appearance; a relaxed work environment;
- teamwork;
- on-the-job training;
- getting everything immediately;
- a balance of work and life.

This generation loves and admires their parents and there will be a lot to admire. The Gen X generation loved their parents but did not have much admiration for their generation from whom they inherited debt, recession and global warming. This generation will try to emulate their parents and their grandparents and great-grandparents but will not seek to emulate their parents. They will not reflect the individualism of their parent’s generation but will rather be both optimistic and group-oriented. This generation will flock back to the church but will be choosing carefully and seeking churches which are exciting, open, communicate well, have powerful missions which are for the poor and are internationally oriented and which are working to care for the planet.

This generation, as it ages and inherits leadership will have an emphasis on the care of children, health and safety, responsibility, a respect for right and wrong, teamwork and the acknowledgement of all successes rather than individual successes. They will be powerful and competent like their parents and they will return to their great grandparent’s embracing of order, hierarchy and tradition. This generation will, as is usually the case, reflect many of the traits of the GI generation. Generational change usually works in four-part cycles which repeat meaning that the next generation being born today will reflect the Silent Generation’s characteristics.
Millennials (of Gen Y) will be overwhelmed by the data and words of so much technology and, like their parents will seek refuge and oasis from that overstimulation by seeking out churches which offer silence, beauty, awe, transcendence and opportunities for meditation and contemplation. Frantic, busy and noisy churches (literally of psychically) will not be attractive to them. They will probably bring the monastic guest-houses back to full tilt in their desire to spend time in them.

This generation will be focused both on right-living and on the pragmatics of making good choices. They will take religious obligation very seriously and so will be devoted and long-term members of denominations (unlike the taciturn of their parents.) Their interest in reason and logic will play against their desire for silence and beauty such that they will question creeds and desire to name mythology as mythology while embracing it for what it points to and not what it literally says. This generation will not put up with literal treatments and interpretations of scripture and will transform the evangelical wing of the church.

The desire to remain unaffiliated with a denomination will still appeal to 30% which is double the number among their parents and grandparents. On the other hand, 40% will say they are deeply committed to the church or denomination they attend. This generation will re-embrace liturgy if it is simple, beautiful and meaningful. Their mission will no longer be local but will be global.

Gen Y in fund raising:

**How to recruit as volunteers and leaders:** This generation will be very easy to recruit and to keep recruited as long as they see transparency, openness to global initiatives and diversity in their group. They will be good story-tellers and they will be able to tell the story of God’s work in their lives if they are formed with the right vocabulary and allowed to tell each other those stories. They will be resistant to being recruited for long-term tasks which are not clearly about changing the world but will stay in a task longer than their parents did.

**How to ask for a gift or pledge:** The yearning for spirituality, community, connection, making a difference in the world, and spiritual transformation will mean that the design, transmission and verbiage in the case-for-support (those tools being used to tell people why their money is being asked for and what it will be spent on and why these things are important) will need to be clear, convincing and easy to assess quickly. Video case communication will become the new norm.

**How to thank them:** It is still unclear how this generation will want to be thanked but we do know that the following will probably be important to them: frequent thanks, thanks which includes being brought together and thanks which acknowledge specific accomplishments rather than general truisms. This generation will want specifics.

**How to communicate:** This generation may be entirely paperless and what they now do on computers will be done on their phones.

**How to use their gifts:** This generation will be called “Generation Why,” and has a firm desire to know the reason behind what is happening and what they do. They are optimistic about the future and realistic about the present. They like to know why they are doing
something and do not like to take blind orders. They like to see how they made a difference in others’ lives or in their own personal life so to use their gifts and keep them involved, leaders in the church will need to be attentive to showing them how what they are doing is causing specific change.

This group questions “starting at the bottom” and feels the best person for the job should be the one who does it best so seniority will have to be justified and people will have to earn respect which will not be automatic. “Straight-line thinking” is a challenge for them because they believe it’s okay to skip certain steps to achieve what they want and having patience is really a challenge; they want to see immediate results and action. This is the group that will be impatient with the speed of downloading a document that would have taken weeks to research 10 years ago. It is important to note that this group includes present-day teenagers and those in their early 20s, therefore, what’s happening right now are the things that will influence this generation’s future behavior.
Appendices

The following appendices are designed to offer samples of some of the tools referred to in the preceding manual. As you manage your campaign you may simply use these samples and modify them to your needs or you may use them as starting place from which to re-invent them for more effective campaign management.

Please see the Episcopal Diocese’s web site for new additions to this set of resources by going to www.nhepiscopal.org and then clicking “Congregational Life” and then going to “Stewardship.”

If you invent something or improve on something herein, the author would be grateful if you were to share that by email to The Rev. Canon Charles LaFond at clafond@nhepiscopal.org.

Appendix 1: Prayers for Use in Stewardship and Discernment

A Collect for Stewardship
(For possible secondary use in October and November)

Gracious God, giver of all we have and hold as stewards; grant the people of this church a deep and abiding awareness that all things come from you – our health, our incomes, our jobs, our talents and our generous impulse. Send your Holy Spirit to help us as we swim against the rising tides of materialism, envy, individualism and greed in our culture. When we are tempted to think of money as a private matter, remind us that you have asked for part of what we are given, to be returned to you as a symbol of our awareness that you give all we have. And further, help us to help each other in this grace of giving, for you are the lover of our souls and call us to nothing less than transformation in Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN

PRAYER FOR THE PROVISION OF FINANCES

Blessed are you, Lord God of the Universe, for you create out of the cosmos this fragile earth and give life to it. You maintain our lives with the spark of our heartbeat and the growth of food from the earth. How can we do anything but respond by giving back a portion of our blessings to the life and ministry of the Church, your body on earth? Help us to be less afraid of vulnerability and thereby to loosen our death-grip on our money. Help us to see clearly the inequality in our world and to respond by giving through your body, the Church. AMEN

PRAYER FOR THE PROVISION OF TIME AND TALENT

Father, you breathed life into humanity and gave us various gifts and talents by which to live and move and have our being. Forgive us when we fall into the temptation of thinking that time and talent are made by us. Help us to see that our salaries and our hard work come only because of your provision of life and health and creativity. Help us as we struggle against a culture in which “time is money.” Help us to give ourselves as you did, even unto the cross. May your self-offering be our model and may your love be our encouragement. AMEN

PRAYER FOR THE PROVISION OF FUNDS FOR A CAPITAL CAMPAIGN


Lord Christ, you built the Church by joining Mary and John at the cross as you began to give up your earthly life. Ever since you have encouraged the Church as your body on earth to flourish and grow. From a mud hut in an ancient Celtic village to a cathedral in a bustling city you have fed the Church with energy to build and grow. Help us as we grow. As we build our (parish, church, parish hall,...) help us to see this building as a symbol and tool for preaching the good news and living the joy of community together. Provide, through your Holy Spirit, the resources and wisdom we will need. Then, when the last stone is laid and the last board nailed, dwell with us that we might be with you and through you to each other as you are within and among the Trinity, world without end. AMEN

PRAYER FOR THOSE LEADING STEWARDSHIP MINISTRIES
Lord Christ, you held your ground as you communicated a message amidst support and amidst the rejection of your message. Give to us who lead stewardship ministries the strength to help our church to discuss that which it would rather ignore. Help us to speak openly about money, time and land as gift. Help us to respond to a culture for whom greed is nothing more than a scream of fear; so that our work is not merely fund-raising, but is rather a pastoral ministry to a people weighed down by a spiritually deadly combination of abundance and fear. AMEN

PRAYER FOR USE BY A VESTRY REGARDING STEWARDSHIP
Heavenly Father and Creator of all we enjoy, we give you thanks for the countless people who have gone before us in the leadership of this church. We know that the Holy Spirit inspired some as they longed for this church, others as they built this church and still others as they lovingly and boldly led this church through times of abundance and times of scarcity. Help us to be bold as we model giving of time and money to this parish. Make our bold and generous pledge a symbol of both our integrity and our gratitude. Then help us to encourage giving with one sixth of what we do and say, just as you did while physically teaching among your disciples. AMEN

PRAYER FOR USE BY CHILDREN REGARDING STEWARDSHIP
Jesus, we love you and we know you love us. Everything we have is a gift from you. Thank you for play time and for our growing bodies. Thank you for our laughter and our joy. Help us to give some of our time and some of our money back to you. When we think of giving something away to someone who needs it, help us to give two and not just one. AMEN
Appendix 2: Leadership Roles in Stewardship of Finances

I. Characteristics of a good choice for Chair of Stewardship Campaign:

(This is a very important choice. Also, please do not use co-chairs! The “Buck” needs to stop somewhere!)

1. An able person with proven leadership skills who attends Sunday services regularly and exhibits those charisms that scripture promises will emerge from the life of a person of prayer, love and balance.

2. A person who gives generously (financially) and consistently to the parish and, if possible, who is either a person from a family who tithes or is working towards a tithe.

3. A person who is well-known to and trusted by the congregation and who both likes and has a good relationship with the clergy and vestry.

4. A person who does what they say they will do and has a track record to prove it.

5. A person with a high level of commitment to success. A bold and Christ-centered determination by campaign leadership to succeed has pulled many campaigns over the finish line. This kind of individual makes possible funds for the church to be the Church, making for good spiritual development in the people of the congregation regarding both money and faith.

6. A person with enthusiasm for the mission of the church and of the parish. Stewardship of Finances is not a subject that is second nature for most people. Indeed there can be significant spiritual and emotional resistance to the subject. However, a campaign chair’s enthusiasm is infectious, making even the most difficult challenges of stewardship programs seem attainable.

7. A person with generosity with his or her time. Campaigns are comprised of dozens of meetings: Vestry Committee, coaching meetings, kickoffs, events, announcements in church, strategic planning sessions, etc. The campaign chair’s attendance is noticed by others, is appreciated and sets the pace for other’s involvement and passion.

II. The Role of the Stewardship of Finances Committee:

1. Receives Vestry, clergy and staff campaign recommendations, works with the clergy on revisions, and approves recommendations.

2. Recruits and supervises campaign volunteers including event planners, pledge accountants, communications management, etc.

3. Works on Major Gift requests by directly asking for gifts (with clergy support where needed).

4. Prays for and witnesses to the ministry that is helping people manage their relationship with money and God. Strides into resistance with missionary zeal.
5. Evaluates the Stewardship of Finances Annual Pledge Campaign: What went well? What did not go well? What would one change next year? (“The Three Questions” that ideally follow every event and every program.)

6. Personally does their own discernment about their family’s pledge and witnesses to that work, process and outcome. Seeks internal spiritual growth in the area of stewardship of their money.

7. Personally makes a pledge which is a financial challenge towards their family’s goal for pledging; or makes a pledge which is at their goal of pledging.

III. Role of the Clergy in managing stewardship of finances ministries

The Clergy is responsible for the day to day execution of the Stewardship of Finances Annual Pledge Campaign effort unless staff has been so assigned. Clergy is as responsible for managing stewardship programs (raising the money) as they are responsible for budgets (managing and spending the money). There is nothing un-spiritual about the Stewardship of Finances Programs.

The Wardens are responsible for reviewing the plans for and results of the work done by staff and stewardship volunteers (the stewardship committee) and for reporting plans and results to the Vestry.

Regardless, ultimate responsibility for the success or failure of the Stewardship of Finances Annual Pledge Campaign effort lies with the Rector (or Vicar or Interim, etc.). That individual must consider the campaign of highest priority, influencing Vestry members, committee members and other lay leaders to assure success. Success is defined as doing good work to challenge the people of a congregation in their spiritual formation around money and stewardship, as well as raising such funds through that spiritual formation work that provides the parish with the funds needed to effectively manage a bold mission. Without that commitment to success, the campaign will fail, no matter how competent the staff, vestry, committee members and lay leadership.

The Clergy partners with the Campaign Chairperson and directs the campaign by:

1. preparing the General Plan (containing the campaign goal, table of organization, important campaign strategies, campaign calendar, expense budget, job descriptions, etc.);

2. preparing the campaign case – what money is needed to fulfill the mission of the parish in the next year;

3. working as staff liaison to the Vestry;

4. serving as the parish’s chief spiritual and logistical planner, resource and campaign expert;

5. supporting the Stewardship Chair during recruitment of the campaign committee membership;
6. implementing the set of “best practices” as found in the Stewardship Resource Manual;
7. preventing lay leadership from undertaking unproductive stewardship campaign practices;
8. organizing the stewardship campaign systems to provide accurate records and controls: master lists, campaign records, mailings, auditing and reporting systems.
9. protecting and producing prospect lists for all levels of major gift requests;
10. providing training and motivational efforts throughout the campaign:
11. reporting accurate and timely results to ensure all lay-leadership are up to date on the campaign’s progress;
12. ensuring that all pledgers and volunteers are acknowledged and thanked for their efforts and sacrifice;
13. exerting the strongest personal leadership on the total organization and effort.

IV. Role of the Vestry

1. Pledge early, visibly and boldly.
2. Review strategic plans and ensure with clergy that plans are executed on schedule.
3. Discern mission, assign budgets to the discerned mission, and raise funds through Stewardship of Finances ministries that make mission happen.
Appendix 3: Campaign Planning Checklist

Church_____________________________________, spring, 20__
Chair: _______________.
Members:_________________________________________________

Vision statement for new income: (what would you do with the funds if more money was pledged next year? Would it be a great vision? Would Jesus say “wow!”? Would it inspire giving?)
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

Dates for Six Planning Meetings:
__________________April __________________August
__________________May __________________September
__________________June __________________November

Date for campaign review and evaluation: ______________________ December

Dates for Six Sundays  Themes  Speakers (ministry minutes)
1__________________ __________________ __________________
2__________________ __________________ __________________
3__________________ __________________ __________________
4__________________ __________________ __________________
5__________________ __________________ __________________
6__________________ Consecration (final) Sunday __________________
(Note: Thanksgiving week is a good week in which to have the final Sunday.)

Case Development: forms_____________, Author:____________  Due:________
Kickoff Event:  Closing Event:
Date:_________ Time:___________  Date:_________ Time:___________
Theme:_______________________  Theme:_______________________
Chair for food / fun:_____________  Chair for food / fun:_____________
Goal for attendance:_________________________________________________
Communications Plan/dates:  Communications Plan/dates:
Com. #1______________________  Com. #1______________________
Com # 2______________________  Com # 2______________________
Com # 3______________________  Com # 3______________________
RSVP List:____________________  RSVP List:____________________

Goals: (for pledges raised in ‘10 for ’11 payment and budget)  100% of vestry pledging (yes) (no)
Last year Fall  % of pledging_______  This year Fall  Goal % of
pledging___________
# pledges___________  goal # of pledges___________
# increased___________  # increased___________
average pledge___________  average pledge___________
Checklist (best practices):
___ all vestry/clergy has pledged ___ liturgical changes made to mix things up
___ celebration & conversion stressed ___ consider percentage of giving to income
___ pledge cards picked up and mailed ___ time and care given to discernment
___ ministry minutes kept to 3 minutes ___ pledge cards (formal, 8. x 11, and attractive)
## Appendix 4: Planning Calendar Template

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<th>Date</th>
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<th>Responsible Person</th>
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<td>Recruit Team</td>
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<td>Set Dates &amp; Notify</td>
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<td>Vestry Pledge statement</td>
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<td>Vestry Pledge date and procession</td>
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Appendix 5: A Model Outline for an Adult Forum on Money

Please note that on the Web Site of the Episcopal Diocese of New Hampshire, there are videos which can be used by churches in place of sermons or as an adult forum. Please go to www.nhepiscopal.org to find those videos.

How We Deal With Our Money as Christians- The Rev. Canon Charles LaFond

1. What blocks our giving
   a. Fear and the effects of the media
   b. Genesis—the foundation of human insecurities
   c. On the disappointment of Not being God
   d. Fear of abandonment and vulnerability
   e. Sense of security versus faith

2. Why we are made good and streaked with evil and not evil and streaked with good and what that has to do with our greed.
   a. 670 AD- Council at Whitby
   b. Pelagius versus Augustine
   c. Are we basically evil or basically good?
   d. The struggle to feel good about ourselves – liked as well as loved by God
   e. God’s creation of the world as “very good”
   f. Relationship with God
   g. Renovating our childhood view of God as angry schoolmaster

3. Giving as a response of gratitude
   a. God’s creation: awareness of Bounty as God’s gift
   b. Thanksgiving as the foundation of the relationship of money and God with humanity
   c. Media in the 21st century and its forming of our fears and greed
   d. The new thing being done to humans in the west: no need to get us to sin, just get us isolated, over-stimulated and exhausted
   e. Money and Filthy Lucre
   f. Money as not evil but as simply a tool – our own money issues
   g. The incarnation of Christ – God’s honoring of things (sarx-meat)

4. Why we give as part of our relationship with God and the making of a theology of community
   a. The notion of covenant: God makes a deal with humanity
   b. We keep 90% (or we work towards that tithe goal)
   c. Not generosity, but covenant with God and each other
   d. How money and tithing affect our relationship with God

5. Stewardship and mission in the church: why our church works to deserve the money given
   a. Helping people to live in covenant with God who gives
   b. Responding to human needs in our community
   c. Where the money goes
   d. Why salaries translate into ministry

6. Why we have an Annual Stewardship Pledge Campaign
   a. Coaching people to do what they suspect needs to be done
   b. Intervention: money is the elephant in the room
   c. Conversion of life

7. Why we do stewardship as a theological and spiritual act and not as a logistical one
a. The fitness trainer coaching the exerciser as model for the fund-raiser in the church
b. One day at a time—slowly increase your tithe
c. The joy of right relationship with God and each other

Appendix 6: Case-for-support Development Survey Sample
(used for preparation in advance of either annual or capital stewardship campaigns)

Parish name
Parish address
Date

Dear Parishioners;

As we enter (season), which is a natural time of discernment, your Vestry is prayerfully considering the budget for (year) in advance of our stewardship program next fall. We are planning a year in advance so that we are sure that the money entrusted to this parish through pledges is used in the best way possible as we both reach-in to care for people attending the parish, and reach-out to those in our area to whom Christ would have us minister. As the Vestry does this self-study and discernment we would very much benefit from your input.

Below we have listed in-reach and outreach ministries in which the parish is currently involved, along with some basic statistical information about each ministry. After having read the following list of ministries, please prayerfully consider other ministries, either to our own parishioners or to people in our area, which you feel this parish might consider providing.

We hope that being aware of our ministries will be of interest to you and we’re sure that your suggestions for other ministries will benefit us as we consider the best possible use of time and money in next year’s budget.

**Food Pantry:** We currently provide three bags of groceries to three families per week from September through June.

**Parish Nursing:** Sarah Jones visits two home-bound parishioners each week and is available to parishioners who have no health insurance.

**Clergy Visitation:** Clergy visit those in hospital every day and those who are home-bound every month with communion and conversation.

**Child Care:** Infants and toddlers attending this parish are cared for during services and major community events. This ministry involves 150 volunteer hours and 50 paid hours per year to a congregation increasingly growing with young families.

Etc…

What other outreach opportunities do you see that need to be addressed and that may be addressed by this parish?
Appendix 7: Best Practices in Annual Campaign Leadership

Best Practices in Planning

1. Insert prayers for the campaign and for the giving into liturgy and vestry meetings.
2. Recruit in March for a Fall campaign.
3. Have ONE campaign chair and one (learning) rising chair.
4. Maintain your chair for three years to maximize experience.
5. Print and copy materials in summer.
6. Have a kick-off and an ending celebration events.
7. Establish ministry minutes – what we love about our church (6 weeks, 6 people).
8. Communicate on bounty and gratitude not need and budget gaps.
9. Have a clear goal of ministry to be funded and explain the “case”.
10. Plan to report weekly to the congregation over the six weeks to establish momentum.
11. There should be at least 8 meetings prior to the campaign to plan the campaign well.

Best Practices in Campaign Management

1. Hand deliver pledge certificates in case on a kick-off Sunday for pick up in alpha order at the back of the church.
2. Mail the balance of uncollected envelopes the next day.
3. Report weekly on involvement (% of ASA pledging) - create momentum and sense of urgency.
4. Have fun, get silly, take the acidity out of the game.
5. The committee should meet briefly, weekly during the campaign to huddle over what is happening and what needs to be done.
6. Be sure to preach boldly about the need to be good stewards and to make pledges – it is as much your responsibility to ask as it is their responsibility to pledge.
7. Have lay people take leadership in front of the congregation on the subject of the campaign (other than liturgical stewardship prayers and preaching). It is their church and their campaign.
8. Do not let time spent on secondary things prevent primary things from getting done (i.e: time spent on pretty visuals, posters, etc.)
9. Primary things:
   a. Warm up letter 2 weeks in advance.
   b. Great ministry minute speakers set up in advance.
   c. Pledge cards and cover letters done on time and ready for kick-off.
   d. Vestry pledges boldly, visually and in advance.
   e. Campaign kick-off event with 80% of ASA (average Sunday attendance) in attendance.
   f. Campaign Victory Celebration with 80% ASA in attendance.
   g. Thank you letters immediately generated by hand for each received pledge.
   h. Campaign schedule done 6 months in advance and schedule kept.
   i. Visually large, attractive pledge form (8.5 x 11 inches paper, heavy stock, attractive graphics, no clip-art, etc.)
Best Practices for in Ending Management

1. Plan and market a fun-filled event for the closing celebration.
2. Make the event a leverage to receipt of pledges.
3. Celebrate achievements as they occur.
4. Goal: all pledges are in by the closing event.
5. Conduct a phone campaign by vestry members to close the gap on receipt of pledges.
6. Thank people immediately when they pledge by a hand-written note.
7. Thank people in creative ways.
8. Personal thank you notes at the end of the campaign.
9. Rector knows pledges and acknowledges the pledges made in writing.

Best Practices in Follow-up

1. Research statistics: amounts, involvements, understand your stats.
2. Ask the three questions when fresh (went well, not well, would do differently).
3. Establish the next chair and leadership team and basic schedule as the final act of the team’s work.
4. Establish the next rising chair.
5. Send pledge status reports in the form of a letter and not a bill.
Appendix 8: SAMPLE PLEDGE FORM

(on heavy stock paper and on 8 ½ by 11 paper – remember most donors have old eyes!)  
(Private and Confidential)  
(name of Church)  Episcopal Church

(add artwork)  
Annual Stewardship Campaign Pledge Certificate for 20__ Offering Back to God

Name:__________________________________________________________________
Address:_________________________________________________________________
City, state, zip:____________________________________________________________
home telephone, work telephone:____________________________________________
e-mail address:____________________________________________________________

In gratitude for all that God has given to me/us and in the awareness of all that God is calling  
(your parish) to do in (your town), the Diocese and the world, I/we would like to return a  
portion back to God through(your church’s name) Episcopal Church. I/we understand that  
this gift is a symbol of our gratitude for life, love, health, food, shelter, talents – indeed for all  
that we have and all that we enjoy.

And so…

I/we hereby pledge a total gift of $_______________ during  
the next fiscal year (January 1, 20__ – December 31, 20__).  
(I/We realize that in the event of a financial problem in 20__, we can adjust our pledge by calling the  
rector/vicar/priest-in-charge.)

Payment Options: (a weekly pledge is very helpful in our financial planning!)
☐ a weekly pledge of $___________ per week, totaling $___________ for the year.  
Or
☐ a monthly pledge of $______________ totaling $______________ for the year.  
Or
☐ a one-time gift pledge of $_______ for the year to be paid in (month)________.
(please check and fill out ONLY ONE of the above options)

Signature(s):___________________________________________________date___________

You will be sent a letter confirming your pledge, pledge envelopes, and a letter in December 2012 for your tax use.  
Please send your completed pledge card to:  
Stewardship Campaign (Your church’s name) Episcopal Church  
(Your church’s name and address)  
Optional request of further information:  
☐ I / we are interested in making a separate gift (in addition to the annual support listed above) to (insert a specific  
project for which funds are needed). Please have the clergy contact us about having this conversation.  
☐ I / we are interested in receiving information about planned giving (estate planning, charitable trusts, making a will  
or living will, etc.) Please contact me/us about this by sending literature which will help to inform my /our planning.

66
Appendix 9: Weekly Flyer Sample

Sent to ALL parishioners on the Monday after each “Ministry Minute” presentation by parishioners. This keeps people informed and aware of the campaign.

St. Swithens in the Swamp Episcopal Church

“When I was in the hospital, ___________ church was a real spiritual home for my family. Our kids were able to find support among the youth in the youth group and my husband attended the Men’s Bible Study which prayed for me every week. Immediately after the surgery, (Rector name) came to the hospital and was the first face I saw when I came out of the anesthesia. That hospital Eucharist was the beginning of a recovery which was as spiritual as it was physical. My family knows what it means to benefit from being involved in this parish. We thank God for it every day.

Sarah Jones (& the Jones Family), Ministry Minute Speaker, Sunday, October 8th, Hospital Visitation

The Stewardship Campaign is going very well so far. Thank you for praying!

28 families and individuals have pledged.
5 new pledges were received.
10 pledges increased from the previous year.
22 % of the parish has pledged $34,000 to help meet the need for $154,000 for ministry in our parish.
Thank you. Please keep this ministry in your prayers.
Appendix 10: Summer Campaign Preparation:

July - Draft the brochure for the campaign which includes:

1. the ministry minute speaker’s photos and statements about what they love about the parish or why they give so robustly back to God a portion of God’s gifts to them; (two sentences per person….3-8 speakers);
2. the schedule of the stewardship campaign as it pertains to the parishioners; (3-5 things);
3. a statement by the vestry on why they give, that they are increasing their giving and what they plan to do in the next year with the increase for which they have been abiding hope in God (3-6 sentences);
4. fun and attractive announcements about special events (kick-off and closing);
5. a prayer for families to use as they consider their 2013 pledge. (3 sentences)
6. A statement from the rector about the health and vibrancy of the parish (5 sentences). (note: if you use a pre-designed flyer or brochure in Microsoft Publisher (which comes on most computers) this brochure takes about an hour to do. The diocese has a template set up for this brochure through work done in Dover so that there is no need to reinvent the wheel!)
7. Design and print out the pledge certificate (Note: we suggest a certificate rather than a pledge card for many reasons:
   a. Pledge cards are small and easily get misplaced.
   b. The design of a larger sheet of paper is easier to include artwork and photos which go with themes of the campaign and which personalize the certificate to your own church. Some churches use their steeple or their logo or an image such as an icon or piece of artwork.
   c. Larger type can be used and since more than 2/3 of pledgers are over 50 years of age, the larger type is considerate to their needs.
   d. The size and design and weight of the paper match the weight of the action.
   e. It is easier to include all the information needed rather than cramming it into a small chunk of paper.
   f. We suggest that the paper be of a strange color or have a distinct boarder (Paper Direct found on the internet at www.paperdirect.com has good an affordable paper like this as well as brochure templates and brochure paper selections so that you can print or copy in black & white still having a colorful end result) so that confidentiality be assured and so that pledge cards are never accidentally left on a table in an office.
   g. Each year the card can be different so that the “pledger” is encouraged not to just “do the same old thing.”
   h. We suggest a different version of the pledge form (even if it is just a different color of paper) for use with children in families. These also can be done well in advance.
8. Envelopes for each family will be needed for the kick-off event since we suggest that the pledge cards are picked up by parishioners on their way out the Sunday Service Kick-off Sunday or dinner event. Those not picked up can be mailed the next day with a letter saying how sorry you are that they could not be there and giving them the basic information they missed at the kick-off). Each envelope should have a family pledge form and forms for the youth if there are youth in the family. The envelopes can be done in the summer to ease the bulge of work in the fall. We suggest the envelopes be set up at the back of the church by the door and set up by alpha.
August

1. Set a joint meeting with the campaign leaders and the staff so that the entire campaign can be seen on paper and so that a checklist can be developed which spreads the work out among people and weeks so that there is less panic during the campaign.

2. Decide what visual space you want dedicated to campaign materials in information throughout the Fall. Recruit a Stewardship Bulletin Board lay volunteer to place information and materials such as campaign updates and inspiring materials on the board throughout the campaign. This is a manageable job for a person who wants limited involvement.

3. Do your Event Check-lists so that you are not in a panic during the campaign and so that no balls are dropped in the rush of fall schedules.

4. Be sure that if you have adult forums or other formation opportunities you consider what stewardship teaching will be done outside the pulpit.

(NOTE: This schedule is ONLY for those who have not been able to plan a 12 month planning calendar. This abbreviated (rush job) is NOT recommended for anything other than a crisis situation in which planning must be forced into the summer prior to the campaign held in the fall or within the two months prior to any campaign.)
Appendix 11: A Family Meditation About Money, Prayer and Giving

The best way for people to become good stewards of their money and to learn good habits of giving is in the home. The following is designed to help a family work together to consider their pledge and to teach their children the importance of pledging to the mission of the church and the importance of giving back to God a portion of that which is God’s.

**A Collect for Stewardship**

*Gracious God, giver of all we have and hold as stewards; grant the people of this church a deep and abiding awareness that all things come from you – our health, our incomes, our jobs, our talents and our generous impulse. Send your Holy Spirit to help us as we swim against the rising tides of materialism, envy, individualism and greed in our culture. When we are tempted to think of money as a private matter, remind us that you have asked for part of what we are given, to be returned to you as a symbol of our awareness that you give all we have. And further, help us to help each other in this grace of giving, for you are the lover of our souls and call us to nothing less than transformation in Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN*

**Family Discussion Questions:**

1. a. What is your (our) personal and family relationship with money?  
   b. How do we, as a family, talk about money?

2. a. What is your (our) parish’s relationship with money?  
   b. How do we talk about money as a parish?

3. a. In what ways do our relationship with God and money intersect?  
   b. How do we talk about money and God as a parish?
Appendix 12: Spiritual Formation of Children

Let Kids Be Kids: Raising Children in a Consumer-Driven World
The Rev. Amanda Gott

Critique marketing messages. Advertising has a big influence on children's attitudes toward money and possessions. Advertising targets children as young as 18 months, so it's never too early to think about the effects of commercialism. Parents who want to curb their children's exposure to marketing messages can limit television and surfing the Internet. Better yet, parents can talk with their kids about the ads they see. Conversation starters include:

1. How did the ad make you feel?
2. What words did the ad use to describe the product?
3. Why do you think the ad used those pictures, props or scenery?
4. Do you think the product is as good as it looks?
5. If you buy the product, do you think you will like it six months from now?

Set a good example. Children learn most of their money habits by watching their parents. Kids typically mimic their parents' financial habits, whether they are "savers" or "spenders." Think about the money-related activities your children observe, such as getting cash from the ATM, paying bills and shopping. Then talk to your kids about these activities, including why you do what you do and how money affects day-to-day decision-making.

Talk about values and money. We may not always realize it, but our financial decisions are based on our values. Children learn a lot by hearing their parents talk about their financial situation and by observing how their parents deal with money and financial pressure. Parents will want to consider which values most influence their finances, and then think about the best way to share those values with their kids.

Teach wants vs. needs. When children ask why the family can't go on a cruise to the Bahamas, it's helpful for them to understand what the family considers to be "wants" vs. "needs." Some families spend their money on "needs" first and "wants" second. What's important is that children learn to understand the difference between wants and needs. Parents can help their children tell the difference between wants and needs by giving examples and by being open about why the family does--and doesn't--spend money on certain things.

Respond to peer pressure. There's no easy solution to the peer pressure children experience to wear the "right" clothes or have the latest CDs. Although it's difficult for parents to set spending limits, parents who do will likely see lifelong positive effects on their children's financial habits. As with other parts of life, moderation is a reasonable goal for parents when helping kids understand peer pressure. It's also helpful for parents to talk to their kids about how peer pressure influences their financial decisions and the consequences of those decisions.

Instill money management skills. Sometimes it's easier to give children money every time they ask for it rather than help them develop money management skills. But shelling out bucks on demand robs children of important early experiences with money.
The alternative is giving an allowance, which provides parents "teachable moments" as children experiment with their own money. Parents can set guidelines for how much children save, spend and donate to charitable organizations. It's important to make money management enjoyable for kids by helping them set a savings goal, such as buying a toy, or by matching what they save and share.

**Share with those in need.** Charitable giving is worthwhile for children because it teaches the value of generosity and helps kids appreciate what they have. Parents can motivate their children to share a portion of their money with people who are less fortunate by matching donations--even if it's one donation per year. Children are more excited about sharing their money when they get to choose the cause they want to support. Parents of younger children can help research potential recipients for their donations.

**Allow for mistakes.** Although it's not easy for parents to watch, sometimes kids make mistakes that cost money. However, it's better to learn from mistakes as a child rather than learning as an adult when the stakes are higher. As long as financial mistakes happen only occasionally, parents need not become overly concerned. If a 10-year-old buys a toy that immediately breaks, she learns a valuable lesson for relatively little money. It's also common for kids to make an occasional bigger mistake, such as breaking a window. By being understanding about infrequent accidents and helping kids make amends, parents avoid sending the message that material objects are the most important.
Appendix 13: Children’s Spiritual Formation

Christian Education: Children, Advertising, and Values.
The Rev. Amanda Gott

Many parents have expressed concern about the influence that advertising has on children. Parents are annoyed and worn down by the constant nagging from children to buy the latest toy, game, name-brand clothes, or gadget. It seems harder and harder to assert healthy boundaries about what to buy and what not to buy for children. Although this is especially obvious around Christmas time, it is a constant problem for parents throughout the year. It is worrisome for parents when a child’s entire self esteem depends on what possessions they have, and it angers parents when children seem programmed to buy, buy, and buy with no end in sight.

Part of the problem:

Did you know that American children influence household spending of $450 to $500 BILLION annually, and spend $150 BILLION of their own money annually? Advertisers do know this, and they invest considerable resources of money, energy and expertise to convince children to buy their products. Advertising targets children as young as 18 months and children see approximately 1.2 million advertisements each year. Your children get more information from people trying to sell them something than from any other source. All of these advertisements have the same theme: “Buy this, and Buy it NOW!”

This intensive marketing constantly bombards children with messages. These messages include:
Think only of yourself and what you want at this moment. Do not concern yourself with sharing your money with others, including people in need and the organizations that try to help them.
You can have whatever you want, immediately. There will be no real consequences for spending too much money, or even spending money that you don’t have.
Your worth and value as a human being depends on what you look like and what you have.

Why do we approach this as a spiritual problem?

In addition to having major financial consequences (rising consumer debt, no savings, alarming increases in the number of young adults declaring bankruptcy), this is a very serious spiritual issue. Our Christian faith emphasizes compassion, sharing with others, and not judging people on appearances or what they have. The values of self-sacrifice, patience, delayed gratification, sharing with others and contributing to the life of the community or to the “common good” are undermined by these advertising messages. The advertising-driven emphasis on thinking of yourself first and only, immediately fulfilling all of your desires regardless of the impact that may have on yourself and others, and judging yourself and others by what things someone owns are in direct opposition to what Jesus taught.
Although giving to the Church is an important aspect of financial stewardship, it is only one piece. Financial stewardship includes all of our financial habits and how they do or don’t reflect our values as Christians. Children are very quick to pick up on inconsistencies in what adults teach and reflect in their behavior. Therefore, in order to teach financial stewardship to children in a way that is meaningful and effective, the issue must be addressed holistically, and not just in terms of “how much money you give to the Church.” Unless we look seriously and intentionally at the larger issues above, Church teaching about stewardship will fall short of its potential.

**What is the good news?**

The good news is that even with all of this marketing and advertising aimed at manipulating children into buying, buying immediately, and then buying more, *parents still have more influence than anything or anyone else in teaching their children about values, money, and the relationship between them.* We CAN make a difference in addressing this serious spiritual issue with children if we involve parents and families.

**What can we do?**

The most important step is to do exactly that – address the issue and talk about it, and encourage and empower parents to talk with their children about money and how to share, save, and spend it. We are all very quick to agree that parents need to talk to their children about things like sex and drugs. A lot of the time, though, when it comes to money, children are met with silence. It is hard for us to talk about money, and it often feels unpleasant, but it is too important to neglect. It is important to emphasize to children the values of sharing money and saving money.

**Four points of emphases:**

The Church can equip parents for this task by providing tools that will help families talk with children about money. There are four primary emphases in this approach:

1. Teaching and supporting balanced financial habits that include sharing money, saving money, and spending money – in that order of priority.
2. Drawing connections between important values – what Jesus taught – and financial habits.
3. Raising awareness of the pervasiveness of advertising, the impact that advertising has on children and families, and how the messages and value systems that are conveyed in advertisements are different from the messages and value systems of the Gospel.
4. Distinguishing “wants” versus “needs” and helping families and children make financial choices accordingly.

By helping families to have open conversations and work together as families on these points, the Church can play a major role in teaching children about healthy financial stewardship.
Desired Outcomes:

1. Parents will be led to evaluate their own financial habits as they consider what they are “role-modeling” to their children.
2. Parents will be empowered to initiate conversations with children about money and financial habits and will be equipped to address these issues with children more openly and comfortably, and therefore more effectively.
3. Children will have opportunity to learn by practicing the sense of fulfillment, accomplishment, and joy that comes with both sharing and saving money.
4. Families will have knowledge and understanding to help fight the influence of advertising and consumerism on their lives, values, and their financial behavior.
5. Families will begin a process of re-evaluating their own value system such that it is more Gospel-oriented and less consumer-oriented. (For example: Recognize and question the consumer-oriented value that people and their worth are to be judged by what they own.)

Only by providing families with tools for this kind of conversation and learning can we begin to hope to address financial stewardship with children. Many parents know that there is a problem with children and how they relate to consumerism and money, but feel helpless to address it. The overall goal is to equip parents to do that. Because many parents are frustrated about this topic, we have every reason to believe that such help from the Church will be received openly and with gratitude by parents.

Most importantly, by addressing these issues and empowering families to understand, act out, and pass on their values to their children through financial habits, we will be further empowering people to live into their baptismal covenants in every aspect of their lives. For how we use money is one of the most significant areas in which we “proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ,” and “strive for justice and peace among all people.” Therefore, it is essential that the Church help parents and families to break the silence surrounding money and its connection with the values of the Gospel that we strive to proclaim.

Helpful Resources:

Prodigal Sons and Material Girls: How NOT to be your child’s ATM, by Nathan Dungan.

“Money” in Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling, edited by Rodney J. Hunter.

The following articles on the website for Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, education center (http://www.thrivent.com/planning/education):
“Let Kids Be Kids – Raising Children in a Consumer-Driven World”
“Kids, Money and Peer Pressure: Parents Should Pledge to Do Their Part”
“Resolutions, Kids & Money: The Three Keys – or “C’s” – to Success”
“Lessons That Teach the Three “S’s”: Sharing, Saving, and Spending”
“Doing the Math: An Activity on Allowances for Kids and Their Parents”
“Summer Job Money: Teaching Children to Spend Wisely”
“Doing Your Homework for Back-to-School Shopping”
Appendix 14: LYBUNT Script ~

For those calling pledgers who gave last year but not this year (LYBNT)

**Things to keep in mind when calling:**

1. Pray about the calls. The Holy Spirit is tender towards the people you are calling. The Holy Spirit knows how hard it is to talk about money as an American in the 21st century and so will give you the words you will need when you need them (not before you need them) and will help you as you speak and them as they listen and speak.
2. Be bold. Do not be afraid. Be confident in this ministry of helping people to let go of the death-grip they have on their money. You are just facilitating what God is doing! You are helping people to do things they need to do and will feel good about doing when they have done it.
3. Be a good listener. In our nervous energy, we sometimes barrel through these conversations trying to get them over with. But this is a Holy conversation. Let it flow and realize that if you are and sound peaceful then they will respond that way.
4. Write notes from the conversation (with CONFIDENTIAL on the top of the page) which will help the Rector (or interim etc.) to know more about what happened and how to better serve the people with whom you are speaking.
5. Have a stack of pledge cards, envelopes, pen and note paper with you. Each call should have a mailing label or at least a ready address so that you can write them a quick note and mail them a second pledge card AS SOON AS YOU HANG UP! Do not go on to the next call until you have sent a note of thanks or a note and card.

Possible script for the call:

*Hello, I am sorry to interrupt your evening but may I speak to ________ (make sure you have the name right...if there is a nick name or the second name is used then you should know that in advance)*

*I am calling on behalf of (name of parish) to follow up as we near the end of our (stewardship program). It is going very well. (add a piece of good news...such as “We are ahead of where we were this time last year and people are on average increasing their pledges by more than ____%!” or other appropriate good news)*

*You pledged last year and we were hoping you could participate again this year.*

*We are hoping to have all the pledges in by __________ so that we can form a ministry budget for the parish.*

*Would you like me to send you another pledge card; I have one right here I could drop in the mail to you!*?
Note: at any point, the responder may interject. At that point stop, listen and respond but always try to get back to where you are in your script so that you get to the end.

If they ask a question you cannot answer or if they express their anxiety by being cranky (which may happen….don’t take it personally and don’t be tempted to judge it….they may have just had a hard day…or life!) then just listen and ask if they would like the Rector (or interim etc.) to call them back for a conversation.

Thank you for your time. Again, I am sorry to interrupt your evening but we are all committed to a strong and healthy parish and the budget and our pledges are part of that health. Thank you, Good bye.
Appendix 15: PYBUNT Script ~

For those calling congregants who did pledge in past years but did not pledge this year (past year but not this year - PYBUNT)

**Things to keep in mind when calling:**

1. Pray about the calls. The Holy Spirit is tender towards the people you are calling. The Holy Spirit knows how hard it is to talk about money as an American in the 21st century and so will give you the words you will need when you need them (not before you need them) and will help you as you speak and them as they listen and speak.

2. Know in advance what you need to know: When was the last time they pledged? Were they regular? Was there a problem which you should know about before you call (i.e.: they are furious at the last rector or they lost their employment last year or they are upset with the ….whatever. What you are told is CONFIDENTIAL AND SHOULD BE FORGOTTEN)

3. Be bold. Do not be afraid. Be confident in this ministry of helping people to let go of the death-grip they have on their money. You are just facilitating what God is doing! You are helping people to do things they need to do and will feel good about doing when they have done it.

4. Be a good listener. In our nervous energy, we sometimes barrel through these conversations trying to get them over with. But this is a Holy conversation. Let it flow and realize that if you are and sound peaceful then they will respond that way.

5. Write notes from the conversation (with CONFIDENTIAL on the top of the page) which will help the Rector (or interim etc.) to know more about what happened and how to better serve the people with whom you are speaking.

6. Have a stack of pledge cards, envelopes, pen and note paper with you. Before making each call, you should have pre-addressed envelope or at least a ready address so that you can write them a quick note and mail them a second pledge card AS SOON AS YOU HANG UP! Do not go on to the next call until you have sent a note of thanks or a note and card.

Possible script for the call:

*Hello, this is ________________ calling from (parish name)*

*I am sorry to interrupt your evening but may I speak to _______ (make sure you have the name right...if there is a nickname or the second name is used then you should know that in advance)*

*I am calling on behalf of (name of parish) to follow up as we near the end of our stewardship program. It is going very well. (add a piece of good news...such as “We are ahead of where we were this time last year and people are on average increasing their pledges by more than ____%!” or other appropriate good news)*
We were hoping you would participate this year.

We are hoping to have all the pledges in by __________ so that we can form a ministry budget for the parish.

Would you like me to send you another pledge card?

Note: at any point, the responder may interject. At that point stop, listen and respond but always try to get back to where you are in your script so that you get to the end.

If they ask a question you cannot answer or if they express their anxiety by being cranky (which may happen….don’t take it personally and don’t be tempted to judge it….they may have just had a hard day….or life!) then just listen and ask if they would like the Rector (or interim etc.) to call them back for a conversation.

Thank you for your time. Again, I am sorry to interrupt your evening but we are all committed to a strong and healthy parish and the budget and our pledges are part of that health. Thank you, Good bye.
Appendix 16: Two Sample Stewardship Sermons

Silenced Stones
A sermon for the spirituality underneath stewardship
“The silence brings us home to ourselves”

Sermon preached by The Rev.
Canon Charles LaFond* Canon for Congregational Life
The Episcopal Diocese of New Hampshire for the Eucharist of November 16th, 2009
Trinity Episcopal Church, Copley Square, Boston

One of the most delightful experiences in life is being snowed in at my farm in New Hampshire. There are three wood stoves – on one of which sits a tea kettle. In the silence I find my way home to myself. Home to my center where God waits for me to remind me of who I really am. With the day-timer and cell phone in the car, I am cut off from the whirl of to-do-lists and so I make ginger cookies – the old kind – dark and stormy with candied ginger and molasses.

Of course, winter has its dark side. In the New England countryside of the 1800’s a farmer knew that if a blizzard looked likely, it was best to tie a rope from the barn door to the house. There were too many stories told of farmers caught in a whiteout – freezing to death while walking in circles in their own back yards. It is easy to be home and yet still feel lost.

It is the silence which is the loudest voice in today’s gospel. And it is in silence that we so often are able to find our way back to who we really are and what we really believe. As we live through this stewardship season, giving will not happen with pledge cards and brochures. Giving our money to God’s work in the church happens when people, lost in a blizzard of noise and work, find the rope to lead them back to God – back to themselves. Today’s gospel is an example of a crowd being brought home to themselves.

As we enter this moment in John’s gospel, Jesus is confronted with a woman caught in adultery.

In this scene, Jesus hears the charges and the question posed to him, and brings the speed of the event to a grinding halt. Jesus is aware of the many agendas of her accusers and aware that a life is in his hands. But Jesus goes silent – squats on the ground and writes in the dust. But what does he write? How could it not be recorded?

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1 I have a good recipe or two from the internet, but my favorite is from a package! Dark ‘n Stormy Ginger Cookies from The New England Cupboard, PO Box 8, Hampden, ME 04444, Tel: 207-941-1152 * Fax: 207-992-2540 or visit www.NewEnglandCupboard.com but they need to be pressed on the cookie sheet so that they are flat and crisper and I do not coat them in the crystallized sugar at the end. Perhaps the gift shop could carry this product from Bristol Harbor Homemade (www.BristolHarbourHomemade.com at 401-396-9033)
I can’t tell you how much ink has been spilled over what Jesus wrote in the dust!

Whatever he wrote, seemed to have a very powerful effect on the men with stones in their fists.

Whatever he wrote slowed down the action and turned them from accusers to listeners and from listeners to peaceful wanderers.

Whatever he wrote stopped the speed and the violence.

And in the middle of this writing in the dust, comes one of scriptures greatest rejoinders:

"Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her."

This call to integrity hangs in the middle of this silent dust-writing, changing the atmosphere – like turning on a light in a spooky basement.

And of course, one can’t help but wonder what Jesus wrote. Was he doodling? Who knows? My favorite theory is that he was writing the names of the mistresses of the accusers? That’s my favorite – can you imagine? ‘Mary, Sarah, Rebecca, Salome…Jack…who knows.”?! You can almost hear each stone drop with each name in the sand. It’s a delicious theory!

Regardless – the silence seems to work on these men – demanding that what they do has integrity with how they live. The devil is known in scripture as “the accuser!” And the one thing the accuser seems unable to stand - is Jesus’ silence.

Jesus gently invites these people – even the adulterating woman - to come back to their senses. Jesus places their hands on the rope of their souls, and calls them home to their integrity – demanding that what is hidden be in sync with what is visible. Jesus neither shames them nor enables them. Jesus waits for them to choose integrity – a wholeness between their hidden-heart failings and their exposed piety.

**

I am often asked for counsel on how to get a congregation to give more money to their church. But this Gospel reminds me that pledge cards are not the issue. The issue is that we are lost in the blizzard of our busy lives.

We are over-caffeinated.  
We are over stimulated.  
We are under-rested and  
We are under-silenced.

We have forgotten that what we are given is to be given away – not spent on the tawdry stage sets of our lives.

I think that the issue is that we are scared. Scared that our money and what it brings us will still not be enough to protect us. So we keep the lights on – keep the TV on – keep the schedules going – whatever it takes not to feel the fear. And then, we tip God – more of a
membership fee than a returned gift. Something of an offering to a celestial butler – like a
good luck charm.
You see, beloved people of God, we are not greedy people, we are scared people, and our
greed is just our scream. But in that silence – deep in it – God is whispering “I love you. I
like you. I delight in you. You are my beloved.”

**

One night, at my farmhouse, by the woodstove, on a snowy night, a friend asked me a
question which stunned me. We were having wine with dark, rich stormy ginger snaps
spread with Blue Saga Cheese. (That combination will change your life!... And if you don’t
have Blue Saga, some regular blue cheese mixed with butter will do.)

He said “What do you believe?”

The fire crackled and my black Labrador retriever raised an eyebrow as if intrigued by my
answer.

I knew that I could recite the creed or quote any number of saints but my friend would just
smirk. And he knew I was an Episcopalian, so quoting scripture was not an option!

He wanted proof. He was an engineer – they love proof, engineers! He wanted all my
church-going to be put to the test. “What do you believe?”

As the silence hung pregnant in the air, I pulled my check book from my desk and placed it
on the table. He smiled. He was satisfied by my answer.

I spend money on my friends – in whom I find God; and on my pledge of 20% of my income
to the church. What is left, is enough for me to live on, if I live simply.

In the end, all my church-going and all my sermons and all my committee memberships must
stand the test of the primary statement of who I really worship and what I really believe.
And that statement is in my check book.

Two thousand years ago, the call for integrity was made by Jesus asking if what the crowd
was doing with their stones had integrity with what the crowd was doing with their lives.

Today, in this beautiful, sparkling church, the same question is being asked by Jesus –
writing in the sand at the far end of Copley Square. Is what you write in your check books in
keeping with believing that God and the church as Christ’s body on earth – it of immense
importance? Do you believe that what you have is yours or that what you have is on loan
from a God whose gift of it is meant to soothe a suffering world?

Inside this church, candles flicker and lights enliven a glittering kaleidoscope of holy images.
The geothermal heating warms our hands and our politics. Priests drip in vestments and
congregants sport the latest fashion. But out there, where Jesus also sits – writing in the dust
– out there, is a world of hunger, fear and illness. A blizzard of fear.
So as the men in today’s gospel drop their stones, we drop our rigid resistance. And tonight, at home, with the television off, we might light a candle, and sit with a friend and sink our teeth into a rich, dark ginger cookie with creamy blue cheese on it.

And Jesus, whose lips are so close to our neck that we can feel the moisture –whispers – “It's ok. I love you. Take hold of this rope. Do not be afraid. Do not be afraid. Do NOT BE AFRAID.”

AMEN

Charles’ dark stormy ginger snaps (w/ Blue Saga Cheese)
Ingredients
1 cup butter
1 cup packed dark brown sugar
1 egg
1/4 cup molasses
2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons ground ginger
2 teaspoons baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons minced fresh ginger root
3/4 cup finely-chopped or pulverized crystallized ginger

Directions
In a large bowl, cream together the butter and brown sugar until smooth. Beat in the egg and molasses. Combine the flour, ground ginger, baking soda, and salt; stir into the molasses mixture using a wooden spoon. Mix in the fresh and crystallized gingers. Cover, and refrigerate dough for at least 2 hours, or overnight.
Preheat oven to 350 degrees F Shape dough into 1 inch balls, and place about 2 inches apart onto ungreased cookie sheet. Then press the balls down to form a cookie shape – this flattened shape will make the cookie crisper and therefore better to hold the spread of Blue Saga Cheese or the mixture of blue cheese and softened sweet butter later.
Bake for 10 minutes in the preheated oven, or until lightly browned. Cool on wire racks. If they are still too chewy, bake them for a bit longer to evaporate the moisture.
Most of us, with some saintly exceptions, find pledging money to God, through the church, hard to do. I want to hold it back, let others pull the weight, rest on dead-people’s gifts to the endowment. But my inner-Gollum is overwhelmed by God’s image. Remember J. R. R. Tolkien’s character in Lord of the Rings? He had a split personality; ”Sméagol” still vaguely remembered things like friendship and love, while ”Gollum” was a slave to the Ring who knew only treachery and violence.

People say we are a greedy society. No. We are not greedy people. We are scared people. Our greed is just our version of a scream.

We give because we were designed to give. We pledge because we follow belief with action. We give to a mission of the church seeking to reclaim the Garden of Eden, one foot at a time.

The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them: You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy….I am the LORD.

Within only three chapters of Leviticus, we hear “I am the Lord,” a remarkable 25 times. Here God commands Moses to tell the people that we shall be holy BECAUSE God, OUR God is Holy. Not and God is holy, but because God is Holy. Our holiness is BECAUSE we were made in God’s image – the imago dei – like a child who has her mother’s eyes or his father’s nose.

What is God’s image? We see what God is by what God does –God is creator, lover and giver. God creates the wilderness of chaos into the Garden of Eden. God loves from within the Trinity’s life of love. And God gives – ultimately giving God’s self away on the cross to enable human projections of anger to find some release. God creates. God loves. God gives. That is who God is and that is how we are made to be - creators, lovers and givers.

As leaves fall, wood piles wait to be stacked and houses are prepped for winter, my garden has been overturned, spread with straw from the chicken-house and covered with a tarp. While I was doing that this week, I remembered a summer’s day in which I was taking a friend on a tour of my farm. She oooed and ahhhed over a summer squash (which was fabulous!) and though my impulse was to reach down and pick it for her to take home, something inside me sputtered, crackled, chilled, hissssssed and withdrew. “I had had a poor crop” a voice in my head said. That squash was the only one I could see. So I smiled, rather too sweetly, and we moved on – she got not my last squash. It was mine..myyyyy preecciousssss. The next day I was playing with my dog Kai and his ball went into the garden. In searching for it among the squash plants, I lifted leaves and found six, huge squash. More than I could possibly eat.

Your cathedral was named for God’s beloved Disciple, John. So your calling is to embrace the people in the shadow of this building and show them their belovedness with food, clothing, love in tangible things which improve lives.
Your congregation was named for the wilderness in which the original building was set, 700 miles from the nearest church. But the wilderness around you is no longer a wilderness of nature but a wilderness of human needs.

Our pledge is not about giving to the church. Our pledge is about being who we were designed to be. Your steeple was designed to call people – and it is impressive. Size matters! But the steeple in a city of buildings is not you. The people is the steeple of this church. You. You. You. Be holy because God is Holy. Be who you were made to be.
Appendix 17: The Spirituality of Fundraising and Stewardship

The Rev. Canon Charles LaFond

Before coming to New Hampshire to work in this beautiful diocese, I was a monk. Yes, I mean what you are imagining... big stone monastery, long black robes, meditation, candles, worship six times each day. When I left the monastery, my first purchase in New Hampshire was a huge, new television. And I mean HUGE. Complete with surround-sound and High Definition. And my first few nights I sat there – in a dark room, staring into that television—click, click, clicking that remote, surfing 150 cable channels and On Demand movies like there was no tomorrow! Blue light flooded my face and I fell under the trance of the big, blue light. I was in awe.

The Loss of Awe:
Just imagine the awe of people in the last few thousand years before science, when the sun disappeared behind the moon in an eclipse! Just imagine the fear and the awe and the wonder of people who depend on the sun for light and warmth, when the sun disappeared – even for a moment and then re-appeared for no apparent reason. We are so sophisticated that we have lost the wonder of the mystery of the creation in which we live and move and have our being. And when we lose awe, we lose wonder and when we lose wonder we lose the valuable ability to see that which is bigger than ourselves. And that is a sad thing and boring too. Damned boring!

It is no wonder that early civilizations worshiped the Sun. That mass of fire inspires awe in us - a holy fear - and has inspired awe in every civilization before ours. It is no accident that our Christian day of resurrection feast is on “Sunday” a word developed in the 6th century meaning “day of the Sun.” Sunday is the celebration of the Light of Christ in a dark world.

Holy Fear: The Wind in the Willows
For us Christians, this awe, this holy-fear is enveloped in love – making it different from horror-fear. It is hard for our ears to hear "fear" as a wonderful, dynamic thing. Perhaps the best description I have seen - of this particular kind of fear - is to be found in the old children's book The Wind in the Willows. In this little moment in the story, two characters "Mole" and "Rat" have an encounter with the Divine Piper at the Gates of Dawn. In this story, the character called "Friend and Helper" is a metaphorical Christ figure.

"Suddenly, the mole felt a great awe fall upon him, an awe that turned his muscles to water, bowed his head and rooted his feet to the ground. (This kind of fear) was no panic terror – indeed he felt wonderfully at peace and happy – but it was an awe that smote and held him...(He) raised his humble head; and then, in that utter clearness of the imminent dawn... he looked into the very eyes of the Friend-and Helper ... and as he looked, he lived; and still, as he lived, he wondered. "RAT," he found breath to whisper shaking, "Are you afraid?"
"Afraid?" murmured the Rat, his eyes shining with unutterable love, "Afraid!? Of ...Him? Oh never, never! ......And yet – oh, Mole, I am afraid." Then the two animals, crouching to the earth, bowed their heads and did worship!"
The Transfiguration of Luke’s Gospel:
In the Transfiguration story, Luke sets the whole event off in an experience of prayer. They climbed the mountain to pray. And that event started a movement – a pilgrimage from fear to grace. From the fear of “not-having” to the grace of having God’s provision. They probably climbed the mountain at night and it was probably Mount Harmon, a mountain about 9,000 feet high. They were exhausted. Jesus was praying and they may have spent the whole trip up the mountain mulling over that their lives may be more filled with gore than glory as Jesus brings into momentary view God’s kingdom.

Dazzling light:
And then comes the moment. Jesus, who is at prayer –changes—physically changes. It is dark and it is cold and it is the black of night. On the verge of sleep they notice Jesus’ face change and his clothes become bright. And not just any bright but “dazzling.”(NRSV) Some translations say “glistening” or “blinding” (The Message) or “as bright as a flash of lightning” (NIV) – the Greek word (Leukos) could be translated as “bright light.” And there, next to him are Moses and Elijah – the most famous of Jewish saints. It was a time of holy fear – holy awe. Awe and hope mingled like two grape vines.

So that was then and this is now. What’s the Good News for us? What do we do about an event which took place 2,000 years ago?

Stewardship as awareness of awe
As the Canon for Stewardship in the Diocese of New Hampshire, I go around helping the church to have the difficult conversation it needs to have about money. It is easier in our culture to talk about sex than it is to talk about money! When it was announced that I would be coming to the diocese from Cambridge, Massachusetts where I was an Episcopal monk in a monastery, I thought people would not want to talk about money. I thought they would not want to talk about stewardship – not want to talk about giving to God through the church.

But I have found quite the opposite! There seems to be relief that we are finally breaking the silence of shame. In my first eight weeks, I was invited to speak to 30 churches! That is more than half the whole diocese— in the middle of the summer! I am stunned by the excitement. And the reason is that people sense a deep desire to move from fear to Grace. The reason is that the people of the church know, deep down inside, that God is an awesome and dazzling God. We know deep down that all we have comes from God. We know that this globe in the middle of an apparently lifeless universe is no accident. We know that worshipping ourselves is not quite right. That our standard of living is linked to the 1,080 people who will die of starvation while we talk, over the course of this hour.

Healing the Resistance - Like a drug intervention
The response in the Diocese reminds me of the feeling in an intervention. Perhaps you have experienced an intervention before or read about one. People close to a drug addict will gather in the living room. Mother, father, parish priest or minister, close friends, a drug councilor…they all gather like a somber surprise party in a silent living room. When the drug addict gets home, they see the group waiting for them and their heart sinks for a moment. They realize that the gig is up. They realize that these people love them and want them to stop using and to stop dragging themselves and their family down. In that moment of realization when the addict walks into that crowded living room and realizes that he or she has walked into an intervention, there is a mingling of both fear and relief. There may be
fear – life is about to change and the self-anesthetizing of addiction is going to have to give way to feeling the pain of life for a while. But there is also huge relief that the charade is over…finally over. Pretending that “everything is ok” is now over. No one was being fooled…it was just a huge conspiracy of silence. Now the silence is broken and we can get on with the healing. Now begins the hard but healing work of making drastic changes.

The changes will be hard but the resulting balance will feel good – right. Well, that is what this conversation in New Hampshire over stewardship feels like. We are shocked that we are actually talking about a subject we had tried to ignore – tried to pretend no one needed to talk about. But in our hearts we know that living in wealth while the world starves is not right and the gig is up! We know that shopping as a way to relieve stress and dull pain and despair is not the way to live and we are glad that we have begun a spiritual and financial intervention.

Television lies to us
We know that spending money on the things television commercials shout at us about every 7 minutes is not grace. It is fear. The Gospel preaches grace and awe but the media preaches fear. And it works.

Television says we are fat – so we buy diet pills and exercise equipment.
Television says we are plain, - so we buy more and more clothes to feel impressive.
Television says terrible things will happen – so we buy more pills and more insurance.
Television says we are boring – so we buy new and bigger toys – cars, houses, gadgets.

But here is the truth: Television is lying to us to get us to spend our money. Television and other advertising is playing on our fears and our inadequacies in order to get us to spend our money. Why were we surprised that there was so much advertising for home insurance in the months after Katrina and so many commercials for life insurance after 9/11? Three or four lies every seven minutes, all evening long as we watch TV. The light coming out of that box is not the true light; it is just the blue light.

The truth is this: God loves us.
God loves you and me! And not only that, God even likes us. And God likes us JUST AS WE ARE: warts and all. God does not want our money. God wants our whole selves! Our pledge is just a symbol that we understand the situation. Our pledge to the church is our way of being in community with each other and our pledge is our way of showing God that we are grateful for all God has given us. Our pledge is our way of being released to spend the rest of our money joyfully and guilt-free.

People often ask me: “Why don’t people give a portion of their money to God through their church anymore? Why is giving going down year after year?” I personally make $58,000 a year and I give $6,000 back to God through my church because that is what God has asked of me. I don’t think about it anymore! I urinate. I defecate. I breathe. I pledge. I eat. These are the things I do as a human and as a Christian. I don’t try to decide if I should do them. I just do them.

But it took moments to learn to breathe and years to learn to pledge– moving from 1% to 3% to 6% before I got to where I am as a giver today. I give not so much because God says so; I
give because I am grateful for life and grateful for all God gives me – from the stuff in my home to the electrical pulse in my body that keeps my heart beating.

God has given us life, and beauty and food and clothing and all God has asked for in return is that we give back ten percent – or whatever percent you like (some people give 20%) as a symbol of our gratitude.

Fear
So why don’t we do that? Why don’t we give a chunk of our money to God through this church to help the people of our towns? It is because we are afraid. We hear the lies of television and radio and newspapers and movies that say we are not good enough and that we are alone and that we are not safe and that if something terrible happens we need to care for ourselves – that we are alone. All alone. Fear, not Grace is what we live by.

Or, if we do not feel vulnerable, we swing the opposite way and we begin to think we are God. Since the Genesis myth of the Garden of Eden, humans have wanted to be God and have never really gotten over not being God. It is our form of passive aggression to God to hold back on our pledge because we are still in the midst of a life-long tantrum that we are human and not God.

But there seems to be nothing in between being fearful and being prideful.

We are desperately loved by God
Beloved people of God: we are not alone; not at all alone. And, sadly, we are not the creator either – we are the receivers. We are in the presence of the God of glory who shines with blazing light

shattering the darkness of fear,
shattering the prison of greed,
shattering the lies of worthlessness,
shattering the dull pain of being helpless and alone.

When we finally come to the awareness that all we have comes from God,
When we finally come to the disappointing truth that we, in fact are not God,
When we finally see that God loves us and that God will care for us…

…then and only then will we loosen the death-grip we have on our money and make things right with God by doing what God has asked us to do. And when we do that –when we learn to return to God a real gratitude gift instead of giving God a tip – then, and only then, will we know the beauty and the awe of the glory of God.

When we finally come to see how loved we are by God and when we finally come to see how wonderful life is and how blessed we are and when we finally come to be able to express our gratitude…then and ONLY then, will we give to God through the church. And when that day comes, stewardship campaigns and ministries will become extinct like the Dodo bird. There will be no need for stewardship campaigns in September and special sermons and special brochures and pledge cards and pledge accounting letters and stewardship officers. One day, if our greedy, fearful race survives our greed and our fear, we humans will give freely to God and to each other and then life will take on a whole new hue.
And I will be out of a job and will spend the rest of my days in my pottery studio and in my parish. But until that time, I sense a call to help the church have this conversation and to be bold about it.

The Gospel will not be silenced
There will always be some who are bitchy and cranky (and who are often just masking their fear and their insecurities about pledging with their crankiness!). There will always be some who do not want to hear this message. Either they are so greedy that they do not want to be challenged or they are so prideful that they do not want to be changed or they are so afraid that they do not want to be drawn from the darkness of fear into the warmth of the light of the Gospel. But we must not – WE MUST NOT let a few voices hold the rest of a parish hostage even if those voices (as they so often are) are the wealthy or the powerful or the influential voices of a parish. The spiritual growth of the many outweighs the silence of the few who object to talking about our money in church. Jesus spent one sixth of his spoken, recorded time discussing money and so set a powerful example. Jesus knew that it was money and fear which blocked spiritual growth and so too do we.

Sometimes, as happened in one of our New Hampshire parishes this year, some matriarch or patriarch in the parish who gives a big pledge out of wealth rather than out of generosity will dig in their heels and hold the Rector hostage. “You stop talking about money in this parish or I will leave!” or “If you don’t stop talking about money in church I will hold back my pledge!” I suggest you do what you would do with a two-year-old having a tantrum. I suggest you let them have their tantrum rather than allow them to rule the household. Let them leave or let them hold back their pledge. Invariably they will either give-in to the Gospel mandate that we struggle with these issues openly, or they will leave and the rest of the parish will have a new respect for a rector whose voice is not for sale to the highest bidder.

Stewardship leads us from places of fear to places of Grace! From darkness to light just the way we are led in the wee hours of the morning during the Great Vigil of Easter. Walking light into a dark church and growing the light as candles are lit one to another to another. Here, we light our candles and we take them home and we light other candles with both theology and praxis. Both prayers and handouts. Both theology and pledge cards. With both encouragement and courage.

As I travel I spend more time on discernment (how we make decisions in the context of God’s whispering to us) than I do on Stewardship because I truly believe that moving from fear to Grace is more about realizing God’s glory and bounty than it is about knowing our budgets and missions – even as wonderful as they are!

Discernment
So we must spend some time on Discernment before we spend time on Stewardship. I BELIEVE THAT WHEN WE TRULY GET IT – THAT EVERYTHING IS FROM GOD and that our pledge is just a symbol and not a gift – then we will have passed from fear to Grace and we will do so from hearing God’s still, small vulnerable, shy voice of invitation.

What blocks our giving? Our relationship with God.
In J. Philip Newell’s stunningly beautiful book Listening to the Heartbeat of God, Philip tells the story of our Christian heritage of fear. We come from a long line of people afraid of
God. We were taught to fear God by a church intent on using the sacraments to oppress people rather than to give life to them.

Until the 7th century, there grew up within the Christian church two very different points of view. On the one hand, the Celtic Christians of England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales and much of France believed that humans are basically good but streaked with evil. On the other hand the Latin Christians of the Mediterranean Basin followed the Augustinian view of Original Depravity in which humans are viewed as basically evil and streaked with good. When the two churches met at Whitby, the Latin group won the debate (though how they won is another matter for another day!...cheaters!) so the church has long taught that humans are basically evil and streaked with goodness. It has taken a long time for us to begin to turn this ship around and see that Augustine was wrong about our core being as humans. The Church taught us that we are evil and depraved in order to manipulate and control us. Slowly, we are waking up to the fact that HUMANS ARE GOOD, NOT EVIL. We do evil things but we are, basically good because God made creation and labeled it, correctly, as “very good.”

Our insecure perspective holds back our giving
If we believe that we are basically evil, then that spiritual self-mage is going to color our view of the world, our view of ourselves and especially our view of God. It is also going to infect our relationship with God in such a way that we live in fear rather than in Grace. That point of view, that we are evil and repugnant to God in our depravity, is going to make us ashamed before God rather than grateful and joyful. Just imagine a human relationship. If you think a parent sees you as evil, then you will have one kind of relationship with them. If you think a parent sees you as good, then you will have another kind of relationship with them. We live in a church whose DNA is fear-based. The church, from the 3rd century until the 9th century, was led mostly by men. The control of the people by the church, especially from the 10th century until the 16th century, had its foundation in fear. If you make the people think they are evil and then get them to pay their way out of it by money or participation in the sacraments, then you have control of their psyche. Then, if you paint lots of pictures of people burning in Hell-fire and prodded by demons with pitchforks, then the people will do what the men leading the church want them to do. As far as the clergy and the church was concerned, I am sure they thought it was “for their own good.”

The church has a lot of apologizing to do for what it has done to people “for their own good.” Sadly, one of the biggest areas needing healing as a result of the Church’s manipulation is around issues of self-perception and relationship with God. This in turn is the foundation for what we know as stewardship because a people living in fear will hold on to what they have for dear life, whereas a people who live in peace will be more willing to part with what they have and share it with others. Fear curdles gratitude like lemon juice curdles milk.

But this is a new day. The death of patriarchy has begun. And as patriarchy dies, a new and lovely wind is blowing in the church as it becomes increasingly led by women whose experience of nurturing is considerably more developed that that of men and whose tendency to use brute force and coercion is somewhat less frequent than men. So the church is healing, slowly, but surely.

As we heal and our perception of God moves from being a bad boy or girl standing in front of an angry and disinterested parent to being a good boy or girl standing in front of a loving
and doting parent, our self-perception will change and our clenched fists will loosen on our money and our time.

**My old house-mate**

Here is a story that illustrates what I believe is going on spiritually in our nation regarding our relationship with money and our relationship with God.

I once had a house-mate. He was out of a job and his girlfriend was a close friend so I invited him to live in my guest-room and have the run of the house until he got his feet back on the ground. My mortgage was $1,000 per month and he was being asked to pay a rent of $150 per month (or 15%). He smiled when I told him what rent I was charging and said that it was very kind of me and that he was grateful for the break. He said that as soon as he had a job again he would increase his own rent again and pay more, but that in the meantime he was grateful.

He paid his rent. He and his girlfriend would often have dinner with me (I love to cook) and we stayed up late laughing and talking about life. Our friendship deepened through all the time and attention we were giving to it.

A few months later, he got a job and started to buy new clothes and bought a new car with his new financial freedom. He never suggested that his rent go up. In fact he paid half one month, saying that he would make it up the next month. Then the next month he forgot to pay the rent at all. He never again paid $150 per month. For a couple months he paid $100. Then he paid $50 and then he moved to a new home he bought across town. Over the previous months before his move, as he stopped paying “full rent” he tended to avoid me. He and Christina never stayed in for dinner and he was usually gone when I came home and slept-in long after I left for the office. Our friendship began to atrophy and die from malnutrition.

Years later he and I bumped into each other at a church conference. I suggested we meet in the pub and have a beer. The conversation started out stiff and awkward until I said “You know, I must have done or said something which offended you because I was so sad that our friendship seemed to die before you moved out.”

His eyes welled up with tears and he said “No, you did not do or say anything. It was me. I was so excited about my new job and was so busy dressing up to look the part that I had no money left over for the rent. The more I failed to pay the rent (which I knew to be only a fraction of what I should be paying) the more awkward I felt around you. I started to avoid you out of embarrassment. I saved a few bucks, but I destroyed our friendship.”

I said that the money did not matter to me, but that the gesture of using the house and not paying the rent made me feel a bit used. I said that the money was not the issue for me. What I missed was the friendship. He apologized, I accepted his apology and now we are close friends. We laugh a lot these days.

No analogy about God is perfect, but this one is as close as I have been able to come to describing what I see happening in our Church and in our culture around stewardship. When I receive from God – life, family, talent, land, money, safety, health, energy, food – when I receive the bounty of this life from God’s creativity and generosity and I then give no gift back to God through the church, I begin to do what my house-mate did. I begin to pull back
from God, knowing that I am not keeping my part of a deal that is heavily in my favor. My symbolic gift is just that – symbolic. It represents my understanding that what I have did not come from me but was a gift from God – no matter how hard I work for my salary – all of life is gift from God and my pledge is simply a symbol that I understand the situation.

If I did not pledge a significant chunk of my money to God through the church, I would be spending that money on myself and I would begin to pull back from God in shame. A wonderful, rich relationship would wither on the vine. What a shame that would be just so that I could spend more or save more money! What a tragedy.

There are no commercials encouraging us to give to the poor and to the church. The ads are encouraging us to give to ourselves. So the church has a moral and theological responsibility to help the people of God do what they know – deep down inside – they need and even want to do. That is this ministry called “stewardship.” This stewardship conversation is not about lofty theological ideas – it is very simple. People need to give and we, the Church, need to step up to the plate and help people to give – which means giving ourselves – so that we have the integrity to encourage others to do so.

Stewardship of Finances is like the rain which develops from a warm front and a cold front meeting in the atmosphere. When the warm front meets the cold front, the resulting reaction is precipitation that feeds a hungry earth. So too, when the passion of the Church’s mission meets with the passion of the individual’s conversion-of-life (which is life-long) the resulting reaction is that people give money back to God through the Church.

The old trendy gimmicks which used to work to increase contributions are tired and they only work for a year or so. Then the novelty wears off. The only true way to deal with stewardship is to encourage robust conversion-of-life through Christian formation and to inspire people with mission and ministry that makes people think “Wow! Can we actually pull that off?!!???” Then, and only then, will stewardship have life breathed back into dead bones.

**Awe**

The transfiguration is not about being afraid of an angry God. The transfiguration is about being in awe of a giving God – not the Santa Claus God of our childhood but the generous, erotic lover of our souls – the God of Glory, who made all we have and gives it to us day after day as gift.

The problem is that we have lost the ability to be in awe of God and so our money now goes to our new god – ourselves and our new pornography – catalogues and advertising sponsors. We must go back to our childhood when big, bright things impressed us. If we can regain our awe of God’s Grace we will regain our ability to give God what is God’s and that will dispel our fears.

"Suddenly, the mole felt a great awe fall upon him, an awe that turned his muscles to water, bowed his head and rooted his feet to the ground. (This kind of fear) was no panic terror – indeed he felt wonderfully at peace and happy – but it was an awe that smote and held him... (He) raised his humble head; and then, in that utter clearness of the imminent dawn... he looked into the very eyes of the Friend-and Helper ... and as he looked, he lived; and still, as he lived, he wondered. "RAT," he found breath to whisper shaking, "Are you afraid?"
"Afraid?" murmured the Rat, his eyes shining with unutterable love, "Afraid!? Of ...Him? Oh never, never! ......And yet – oh, Mole, I am afraid." Then the two animals, crouching to the earth, bowed their heads and did worship!

AMEN

Presentation made to a Province One Conference on Stewardship, Evangelism and Congregational Development as Plenary.
Appendix 18: On facing resistance to fund raising in the church

Resistance – people you are leading not wanting to move forward – is as old as Moses, literally! There will be differing reasons for the resistance but be assured that the deeper the spirituality of the congregation and the better the case-for-support and campaign management, the less resistance will be felt.

Resistance, like conflict is a natural occurrence and simply needs to be met with the strength that comes from centered, well, kind, loving leadership. Coercive power, manipulation, mismanagement, truncated process; shallow spirituality or un-dealt-with congregational conflict will often inspire resistance in the annual stewardship pledge campaign of a church and should- since it is a way for the congregation to say there is a problem. Resistance in a campaign can be like a fever in a human body – it can be a symptom which indicates a deeper illness which needs to be treated.

On the other hand, much resistance will simply come from people and families overspending, not having a budget, responding to too much bad news on television (fear) or simply being too spiritually shallow to see the gratitude which in-turn fosters giving back to God what is God’s (i.e.: tipping God.)

Leadership in the church must be done by gathering people with loving kindness and helping them to do the right thing. We must accept the frailty of each human as they struggle with money and their response to God regarding it.

The Guest House
-- Jelaluddin Rumi,
translation by Coleman Barks

This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.
A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they are a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
still, treat each guest honorably.
He may be clearing you out
for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice.
meet them at the door laughing and invite them in.

Be grateful for whatever comes.
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.
Appendix 19: Ten things to do to raise money in an economic downturn:

**Step One: Prayer**
Clergy and lay leaders commit to pray:
1. Try a “One candle – five minutes campaign”.
2. Use collects about economy, stewardship and mission in the liturgies.
3. Clearly ask for God’s assistance.
4. Clergy must tend, with great care, to their spiritual and emotional balance and well-being to provide for:
   a. Silence
   b. Sabbath
   c. Simplicity…in their lives and model that for their parishioners.

**Step Two: Don’t Panic**
1. Retain a non-anxious presence.
2. Do not avoid speaking openly about finances, downturn, hope and conversion.
3. Only reduce your budget if the needs you see around you reduce.

**Step Three: Communicate**
Church members do not want to know how the economic downturn is affecting your church, rather, church members want to know how the economic downturn is affecting the people whom your consider it your mission to serve.

**Step Four: Do not apologize**
1. It is as much your responsibility to encourage giving as it is their responsibility to give.
2. The pledges they make are an opportunity for them to validate their most cherished values and beliefs.
3. Giving is a way to create some sense of integrity for life lived on the backs of the poor.

**Step Five: Cut costs...smart, not deep**
1. Do not slash the communications budget thinking it is good for the church.
2. Retain money in things which communicate mission, vision and the message of conversion.
3. Go for simplicity in events and publications.

**Step Six: learn from pledgers**
1. Regularly ask their opinion (wow cards, surveys, open-mic opportunities, etc.).
2. Involve the people who pay the bills in the making of mission and strategic planning.
3. Visit those whose financial investment is cornerstone to thanks and get input.
4. Make sure everyone’s pencils have touched and marked the strategic plans of the parish – involve, involve, involve.

**Step Seven: break down the communications silos**
1. Integrate your message through communications.
2. Have a mission elevator speech (3 minutes on what your parish is doing for the kingdom of God to be realized).
3. Do few things well.
4. Find creative ways to state impact.

**Step eight: respect your pledgers**
1. They are making an investment.
2. They deserve a return on their investment.
3. The other organizations out there should not easily be able to prove that your church is unworthy of the investment. Make sure your parish deserves the pledges before you ask for them.
4. This is a spiritual issue but it is also in the context of stiff competition for philanthropy.

**Step Nine: the first commandment**
“Thou shalt have no other god but God.” We must re-orient our focus from ourselves to God.
1. Physically…we are what we eat. Spiritually, we are what we adore
2. Make sure that there are periods of silence in then lives and liturgies of your parishioners so that the Holy Spirit can do the preaching about stewardship.
3. The silent word gives us voice and the emergence of that voice deepens us once again in the silent word” (for more see SSJE rule chapter 23 on Silence)
4. “The tragedy of contemporary religion, preoccupied as it is with power struggles of the clergy, is that it seems to have forgotten the task of bringing the transfiguring silence of adoration into the static world of noise. Clergy are no longer trained for lives of holiness but rather, for career trajectories” Maggie Ross, Solitary, Diocese of Canterbury
5. The core silence we nurture and allow to be – its quality or its absence will determine how we behave. We must encourage deep spiritual lives- not just church attendance.

**Step Ten: Be good leaders**
1. Develop a written plan for stewardship with dates and responsible parties and work the plan with measurable objectives. A plan can be long or short – shorter is better. NO PARISH IS SO SMALL THAT A PLAN IS NOT NEEDED! Work by measurable objectives!
2. The primary job of a leader is to make choices- make them wisely and include the whole parish in them when possible.
3. Good leaders will inspire confidence, vision, investment from a place of their own excellence in self-care and spiritual life wellness. It is like what they say on the airplane in the pre-flight instructions: put your own mask on first and then place the mask on your children. Church leaders must first tend to their own wellness and spiritual lives and then, from that place of balance and wellness, lead others.
4. Poor leaders will allow retrenchment, fear and either disorganized or missing communication around conversion and mission.
Appendix 20: Campaign Recognition Suggestions

There are a few things to consider as you plan your recognition plan for the parish stewardship program:

1. The first “thank you” should come from the rector, vicar or priest-in-charge. It should:
   a. be handwritten on attractive and inexpensive note card stock (Staples carries good note stock);
   b. be legible (if you have bad handwriting, then use a printer to do the body of each note in an informal script and write the salutation (“Dear……:” and the concluding signature of first name) in blue, live ink;
   c. be mailed within 30 days of the end of the campaign at the latest;
   d. Include the amount pledged for the year;
   e. Be kept short (two-three sentences).

2. The second communication should come from the treasurer and should:
   a. list the terms of the gift and its amount (frequency of payments, etc.);
   b. note that payments will be acknowledged quarterly;
   c. note that a final tax acknowledgment will be sent in the first week of January;
   d. note that the gift amount is strictly confidential between the treasurer and the rector, vicar or priest-in-charge;
   e. typed on church stationary, 8.5 x 11 inches, with live blue ink signature, no personal note and stamped “confidential” by ink stamp (Kinko’s has them) or in laser on the letter text.

3. The acknowledgment of payments should be monthly or quarterly. Pledgers should never be unsure as to how they stand on their pledge payment unless they specifically request that no statement be provided regularly.

4. Late payments should be reminded gently by a short form note from the treasurer asking if there is anything the parish can do to assist the congregant in the payment of their pledge.

5. A tax acknowledgement should be sent from the treasurer to acknowledge all payments made prior to midnight December 31st. If checks arrive up to four days into the new year, most parishes accept the pledge as payment for that previous year’s pledge.

6. Sample Language for the Rector’s note:

   Dear John and Sarah:
   Thank you for your pledge of $1,500 to the life and ministry of the parish. Your gift back to God through this church is gratefully received and will be carefully put to good use. On behalf of those whose lives will be touched by this gift, I am pleased to offer my thanks. Warmly,

   (first name of signatory)
Appendix 21: Article Samples on the Spiritual Underpinnings of Generosity

The following articles are from a monthly article series in the New Hampshire Episcopal News, a regular newspaper of the Episcopal Diocese of New Hampshire written by The Rev. Canon Charles LaFond and are designed to get people thinking about gratitude and spiritual life which supports pledging and right relationship with money.

The view from Blackwater Bluff – on stewardship

Blackwater Bluff is a small farm which juts out over the edge of the meandering Blackwater River just below the dam of the same name in Webster which is not far from Canterbury’s Shaker Village. Blackwater Bluff is a small farmhouse built in the mid 1800’s and is where I am making a home after having left a monastery in Cambridge, Massachusetts. It is a small farm house with a pottery and a bit of forest and it is a good and quiet place to call home.

Most of my old friends know me as a city dweller! They look at me funny and say “What do you do there?” with an implication that I am made a silly choice in choosing a house on a dirt road in the woods.

I say I am busy “becoming.” And it is true. I am trying daily to become God’s hope for me. Sometimes I fail miserably and sometimes I can just barely hold my own. And sometimes I can see that I am changing – becoming converted into the likeness of the One who created me.

“Stewardship” – the word, gets a bum rap in church. It gets tarted up with all sorts of misplaced anxiety and mis-spent efforts of design and program. Some people, in a fit of frustration, will say they want to erase the word from the church’s vocabulary and start again. But I like the word. It just means that what we have is not ours and that what seems ours is really just a gift given by the real “master.” I sometimes hate “stewardship” because I want to pretend that what I have came from me and is mine to do with as I please. But that is a lie.

Moving into a new house means buying stuff. And I like to buy stuff. As a result of some of my purchases at outlets and “50% off tables,” I have arrived on their catalogue lists and on others as well. And now I am flooded with catalogues as Christmas buying seasons approach. Television is doing the same thing – playing on my insecurities to get me to buy things. “Am I good enough? Am I loved? Am I handsome? Am I liked? Am I impressive enough?” When the answer bubbles up from a sad place as “no” then I go shopping. I self-anesthetize with small and useless purchases.

But on my better days I am and want to be a child of the living God who created me and formed me and continues to form me. The ads on TV are lies. The loneliness is lies. The implications that things will make me happy are lies.

What is true is that we are deeply loved by a God who gave us all we have. What is also true is the God delights in our enjoyment of what we have. As I live my story is it is lived as a Christian – created in the image of a God whose primary way of being is as giver, lover and creator. So I too must be a giver, a lover and a creator.

To live the Christian life is to become, more and more, my true self as a giver and a lover and a creator. As a potter I love to create. As a friend I love to love. But sometimes I need help being the giver. I count on the life of the church to help me in my becoming.
So stewardship is a valuable thing to spend time on. We are helping people to work out their story. Stewardship is not fund-raising. Stewardship is human-making.

I think Blackwater Bluff is where God will do some of God’s best and hardest work on my soul. Becoming is hard work but it is wonderful work too.

Frederick Buechner in Telling Secrets – telling our own secrets:

“...I have come to believe that by and large the human family all has the same secrets, which are both very telling and very important to tell. They are telling in the sense that they tell what is perhaps the central paradox of our condition – that what we hunger for perhaps more than anything else is to be known in our full humanness, and yet that is often just what we also fear more than anything else. It is important to tell at least from time to time the secret of who we truly and fully are – even if we tell it only to ourselves – because otherwise we run the risk of losing track of who we truly and fully are and little by little we tend to accept instead the highly edited version which we put forth in hope that the world will find it more acceptable than the real thing. It is important to tell our secrets too because it makes it easier that way to see where we have been in our lives and where we are going.” Telling Secrets (New York: Harper & Row, 1991), pp. 2-3.

The View from Blackwater Bluff – on stewardship as transformation

The feast of the Transfiguration (August) tends to get lost in the sand and suntan lotions of summer. By the time this newspaper is read, the summer will be over and Fall “to-do” lists will be underway.

Labor Day tends to hit us like a ton-of bricks. As we shake off the relaxation of summer and put on the armor of productivity, near the top of our church to-do list is the Stewardship of Finances Campaign. Raising the funds needed in 2008 will require a new campaign with new themes and pledge cards and committees and deadlines. The pressure is on. If we do not raise the money, we may lose programs or even staff members! And by the time Halloween comes ‘round, the screams are less from ghosties and ghoulies and more from Rectors and wardens who wonder if we will “reach our goal.”

It would be helpful if we could move the Feast of the Transfiguration to September! What wonderful icons of spiritual transformation this event and image are! Christ is surrounded on each side by Moses and Elijah who are discussing the impending suffering Christ will have to endure! And the dazzling white light of the transfiguration seems almost to come from the emotional current charged between Elijah and Moses’ discussion. The event calls us to an awareness of letting go; and the power generated by doing so.

The Greek version of the Transfiguration Icon shows Jesus, Peter, James and John going up the mountain and then going back down it – two images on either sides of the transfiguration Christ-image. A story is told. The group is visibly changed! Jesus has been emboldened. Peter, James and John have been encouraged and inspired.

If our work in stewardship over these next few months does nothing but raise money for budgets then we have failed. Our work in stewardship is transformation. Our work in “stewardship of finances” is to soften hardened hearts – to encourage and inspire. If we just go back to having beg-athons then we have missed the point. Our job is to see the
magnificent glory of God in the Transfiguration of Christ and to respond by helping each other re-calibrate what is important versus what is urgent.

Our giving to God through the church is not fuel for our church budgets. Our giving to God through the church is transfiguration for our human lives.

The View from Blackwater Bluff - on being centered as givers

Summer mornings in New Hampshire are nothing short of delicious. The air is cool; the sun is yellow and low while the pastures and gardens sparkle with nature’s baptismal waters. No matter what went “bump” in the night and no matter how frightening life can seem at 3:00 am, morning seems to whisper that we need not be afraid and are not alone. Mornings at Blackwater Bluff is my time. For three or four hours I have a long runway into the day and I guard it jealously. With no telephone, and my cell phone in the car, I know that no phone will ring. The silence of a phone not ringing is not as sweet as the silence of a phone being unable to ring.

With a dark-roast coffee in hand, I make the rounds from house to studio (are there any pots that need to be covered, trimmed before work, unloaded from the kilns?) to pond, to bluff, to end up at the swing. From the chair-swing, I watch Kai, my black lab, as he pulls huge sticks from the woods and parades them around the yard with the pride of an Olympic gold-medal winner taking his victory lap. The hammock-seated swing falls from the lowest branches of a huge tree with a trunk the diameter of a kiddie pool. With a green roof above me and the swing so high off the ground that I can barely touch the grass with my toes, I swing and sip and run through as many things as I can think of for which I am grateful…food, my bed, warmth from my friends, a job I love and work which satisfies my re-channeled passions, the coffee in my hand, the dog whose paw rested on my leg in the darkest season of the night in gentle assurance. The morning hours between rising and the drive to work are hours to be assured that all manner of thing shall be well.

“Drop thy still dews of quietness,
Till all our strivings cease;”

These words come from the second stanza of my favorite hymn (Dear Lord and Father of Mankind, Hymn #120, sung to the Repton tune). The hymns of our church are the molten core of our life together because they are the people’s theology. We Episcopalians sing our interweaving of spirituality and life-living in our hymns. (To see it being sung in Westminster Abbey go to http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=faNij71hh7o on the internet and you can hear the lovely English tune as it moves up what seems to be a set of stairs to each verse’s climax and into its final line – a constant return to the promise of praise and its resulting peace.)

The words of this hymn come from a long narrative poem called The Brewing of Soma by American Quaker poet John Greenleaf Whittier and describes the human desire to interact with the spiritual life – an existence which, in other literature, the Christian Celtic mothers and fathers refer to as being just a few inches above our reach, swirling around us and drawing us into its silence from the noise of our world.
As this hymn reminds us, we are always being welcomed into a “recloting … in our rightful mind” so that as strain and stress is removed from our souls and “our strivings cease” and “our ordered lives confess” the beauty of God’s peace. My life gets its order from these morning meditations and assurances.

As the adult child of alcoholics, I live with more than the average hyper-vigilance. “Am I safe? Have I done enough? Am I good enough? Is there more I should be doing? Is my schedule impressive enough? Have I forgotten something?” These strivings are the “Lion” referred to in the Compline office:

“Be sober, be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith. 1 Peter 5:8-9a”

In our morning prayers, walks, inventory-taking and meditations we are establishing and order for the day to come in which God can and will speak through the earthquakes, winds and fires of our life with stillness and calm; speaking the love we will spend the day distributing to each other.

(Dear Lord and Father of Mankind; verses one, four and five)
Dear Lord and Father of mankind,
Forgive our foolish ways!
Re-clothe us in our rightful mind,
In purer lives thy service find,
In deeper reverence praise.

Drop thy still dews of quietness,
Till all our strivings cease;
Take from our souls the strain and stress,
And let our ordered lives confess
The beauty of thy peace.

Breathe through the heats of our desire
Thy coolness and thy balm;
Let sense be dumb, let flesh retire;
Speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire,
O still small voice of calm!
A Stewardship-based reflection on Matthew 5:1-12 – on being centered and so being able to be givers

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:
"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
"Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.
"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
"Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Coming Home to Love

The spiritual illness of our age is a poverty of spirit.

The Beatitudes, as with most biblical passages from which we preach, are not spoken in a vacuum but rather, are spoken to a specific people at a specific time and situation. These beatitudes, for example are being preached to the people Israel. Jesus’ ascent to the mountain is a harkening back to Moses and Mount Sinai so that Jesus here is the New Moses. Israel has returned from exile but is still being oppressed by a government and social situation which inclines the hearers of Jesus’ Sermon to experience and connect with the first “BLESSED” perhaps most profoundly:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

What does that mean?

The question for today’s hearers of this gospel is this: In what poverty do we modern listeners find ourselves? Where is our poverty of spirit, our mourning and our hunger? Into what peaceful kingdom are we being invited?

Each age has had its crises. The preacher in a London pulpit in the late 1660’s for example was preaching in the context of plague and fire. If he (it was a he then) did not address issues of loss and grief, then he was simply not doing his job. Today, a preacher in the United States mounting a pulpit in the early 21st century is preaching in the context of a crisis as well. Our modern wilderness seems to be the wilderness of greed, envy, workaholism, exhaustion and noise. And similarly, cautious preachers who seek to speak around these issues are not only cowards, but are leaving their flock to buffeted about by every wind of the media and mercantilism.
One of the most delightful experiences in life is being snowed in at my farm in New Hampshire. There are three wood stoves – on one of which sits a tea pot. In the silence I find my way home to myself. Home to my center where God waits for me to remind me of who I really am. With the day-timer and cell phone in the car, I am cut off from the whirl of to-do-lists and so I make ginger cookies – the old kind – dark and stormy with candied ginger and molasses- best with Blue Saga cheese.

Of course, winter has its dark side. In the New England countryside of the 1800’s a farmer knew that if a blizzard looked likely, it was best to tie a rope from the barn door to the house. There were too many stories told of farmers caught in a whiteout – freezing to death while walking in circles in their own back yards. It is easy to be home and yet still feel lost.

As much as the beatitudes have to say, it is the silence between each beatitude which is the loudest voice in this gospel. These sayings are not run together. They are staccato. They stand alone and they ring into eternity punctuated by the silences in between. It is in silence that we so often are able to find our way back to who we really are and what we really believe. It is in the silence that we can feel our spiritual poverty and see the absurdity of our greed. As we live through the “stewardship of finances” work we do in the church to raise money for mission, giving will not happen with just pledge cards, letters and brochures. Giving our money to God’s work in the church happens when people, lost in a blizzard of noise, debt, work, and caffeinated exhaustion find the rope to lead them back to God – back to themselves.

As a parish priest, corporate fund-raiser and ex-monk, I am often asked for counsel on how to get a congregation to loosen their death-grip on their money. But this Gospel and this season of Epiphany remind me that pledge cards are not the issue. The issue is that we are lost in the blizzard of our busy lives.

We are over-caffeinated.
We are over stimulated.
We are under-rested and
We are under-silenced.
We are under-prayed.

We have forgotten that what we are given is to be given away – not spent on the tawdry stage sets of our lives.

I think that the issue is that we are scared. Scared that our money and what it brings us will still not be enough to protect us. So we keep the lights on – keep the TV on – keep the schedules going – whatever it takes not to feel the fear. And then, we tip God – more of a membership fee than a returned gift. Something of an offering to a celestial butler – like a good luck charm.

We are not greedy people, we are scared people, and our greed is just our scream. But in that silence – deep in it – God is whispering “I love you. I like you. I delight in you. You are my beloved.”

The word “disaster” was developed in the middle ages around the Bethlehem star of the Epiphany. To be in disaster – that is poor in spirit, mourning, starving, imbedded in war or
persecuted by ridiculous standards of living– to be in disaster was to be in dis-a-stron. ‘Dis’ meant to be “without” and “astron” meant “star.” So to be in dis-a-stron was to be without a star. People who wandered in the desert or on the seas knew well how important it was to be able to see the stars, moon and sun for navigation. The notion of Epiphany was the notion that the star over the manger was leading us home to the One who came to save us – the Saviour. It was that light which drew us home.

Today there are so many competing lights – television screens, computer screens, billboards, neon – all demanding that we be rich in estates while we become poor in spirit. The guiding star of Bethlehem burns through these clouds and storms to call us home. And when we come home to that awareness of how desperately God loves all of us, we will also come home to gratitude. And then there will be no more stewardship campaigns and no more pledge cards. People will give to the mission of the church out of their love; giving stewardship leaders the chance to find new things to do with their time. And until then, we preach not how to give money, but rather how to feel love.

**The View from Blackwater Bluff – on gratitude**

My black lab “Kai” and I – like most families I suppose – have a morning routine.

We get up about 5:00 and while I shower Kai goes off into the pasture do what dogs do in pastures. Then I make coffee and get the fire going again. Kai sits in the kitchen by his bowl silently staring at me. His eyes say “um…breakfast please.” Kai then eats his breakfast – “slurp, slurp, munch, munch…pause…huge pink tongue licks face, sigh.”

Then we sit in front of the fire (me with my coffee! - lights off) and wait for the sun in the cool of autumnal dawn. And we pray or read a bit – well, I read. Then we get the eggs from the hen house and I make an omelet. This all takes three hours. And I will admit that it is, without a doubt, my favorite three hours of the day in my favorite season of the year. I am an autumnal morning person.

I wish I could be as Kai is when he receives his food. He sits there, very peacefully, gently waiting for breakfast but never asking for it. He just waits there by his bowl. If I change the routine, he just waits longer but never objects. Never leaves that spot. Never makes a sound. And whatever I give him he eats happily. And when he is done, he bounds over to me after his sigh to rub his face on my leg in thanks. Then he sleeps – not anxious about the next meal or even the schedule for the day. He seems to trust me and life.

I wish I could be that way with God. I wish I could just accept what I receive without worrying about getting more or having enough or being sure of what I get tomorrow. It would free up my pledging!

“Give me my daily bread” is just a saying to me. I do not really mean it. I say it because it’s part of the prayer but I do not mean it. I want a heck of a lot more than a piece of bread today. And that’s before watching TV – when I will start wanting the things they are talking about in the commercials.

This month we read the parable of the Rich Young Ruler. Mark 10: 17-22
The man asks Jesus what will bring eternal life – in other words – what will bring security – safety - wellness for ever – he is used to having lots more than his daily bread!. Jesus recites the laws of Torah – no murder, no stealing, no sex outside marriage, no lying and be nice to your parents when they get on your last nerve! The man says he does all that. Then the story slows way down.

Jesus sees beyond the presenting symptoms to the deeper illness. This man is not worried about being happy in the after-life. This man is worried about being afraid in this one. And then occurs, in my opinion, one of the most beautiful moments in scripture:

In our translation we read “Jesus, looking at him, loved him.”

Since the word for “love” here is not "phileo" but rather “agapeo” Jesus’ look of love on this hypervigilant man is not patronizing nor is it condemmatory. A better translation would be “Jesus looked straight at him; his heart warmed to him.”

That this passage is about fear comes from studying the words. It is so easy for us to dismiss this passage as about other people. Rich people. Those rich people…over there. It is so easy to think that this passage is for “them” and not for me. This is for some judgmental stewardship sermon for the rich people in Hollywood….not us in humble New Hampshire.

Why is this passage about fear rather than wealth? Because Jesus sees past what we fear to what we lack – and what we lack is peaceful hearts. We modern Americans who, together, own and feel responsible for more possessions today than every person today and stretching back to the cave man, combined. We westerners, today, own more things than every human on earth now and since the world’s creation!

Our grasping at things – at possessions, is a way of acting out our fear. It is a way of seeking some sense of control. “I own this. I have power over this thing. I have things – I appear to have it all together because I have these things. People will think well of me if I have these things” – that message is the cornerstone of television advertising and we swallow it hook, line and sinker. At least I know I do.

But Kai does not. My big, goofy, ridiculously cheerful and relentlessly optimistic black lab – Kai does model to me what “enough” means. Kai could beg for my food but he does not. Kai could go for food on tables or on the kitchen counter but he does not. He simply accepts what is given to him and very happily lives out simplicity as if God put him in my life to teach it to me. Kai is a celestial plant!

In Mark’s gospel, Jesus starts out cranky. Very cranky. But then, after some time with this rich man, Jesus “warms to him.” It reminds me of the slow warming of my frigid living room when the morning fire gets roaring.

Throughout our diocese, parishes are asking people in their congregations to stop tipping God. They are asking people in our parishes to invest in the mission of the church – to spread Jesus’ warmth in a cold, dark world. That Jesus warms to the rich man gives me hope because I know that my greed causes – perhaps indirectly – the poverty of the world from which we steal daily.
“Lord, with food and shelter, as with so many other things, may I live more and more like my black lab!” God Bless Kai. He takes only what he needs and is peaceful – very peaceful and joyful with just two cups of kibble, a bone and a warm bed. When I can see it, once my needs are met – I have plenty left over to invest in the church’s mission. Icons are in the unlikeliest of places!

The View From Blackwater Bluff – on simplicity and awareness as prelude to giving

At this time of year, the farm comes alive and entertaining moves from inside to the fields and pasture around the farm-house. There are six park benches and some swings tucked away in various spots throughout the property so that even in a large gathering, everyone can find a spot in which to be alone and sit and ponder things in hearts.

My favorite spot is at the end of a long path at the edge of the pond. Once there, one is in a carved –out space in the woods and unseen from the road, field, lawn, house or pottery studio. In the pond is a small island about the size of a bath tub (it’s a small pond – some even rather uncharitably call it a swamp – it is a pond!). On the island is a small tree and on the tree is a metal arm which holds a hanging hurricane glass and candle.

Early in the morning I often find myself there with my coffee. Me, my coffee and a candle. As the sun comes up, the candle light seems absorbed since the sun rises behind it. Slowly the farm comes into focus as the light enlarges with the rising sun. It all takes about an hour, so I often bring a blanket.

I need that time – me and my candle – to center myself or to be centered by the hand of a loving God who loves to be with me there – seems to have been waiting for me to show up. Often I am a bit bored. Sometimes the chores of the day pull at me like a child yanking on a coat-tail. Sometimes I think about sex. Sometimes I doze off.

We put too much weight on doing prayer correctly. Whatever one’s morning prayer habit is, it can easily be seen as having to be productive. But the great gift of giving oneself and God that time – be it 5 minutes or an hour – is that one simply shows up. It may be dull; it may be infested with thoughts and even rants. It may seem a waste of valuable time or ruined by having dozed off. But God accepts it all lovingly delighted.

When my nieces and nephews colored me a picture with crayons in their childhood, I loved the pictures. The tree may have been blue and the bird may have been pterodactyl-like and the house may have been architecturally unsound and the bushes may have been a color purple which does not often occur in nature – but the gift – the self-offering was so lovely and so kind and so generous that its imperfections made it all the more delightful to me.

I tend to think God feels that way when we take the time to pray or to sit with God in a garden or favorite chair with a candle. We Americans are so focused on productivity and merchandise that our critical eye has lost that ability to see something simple for its beauty.
Often with my coffee I will have some breakfast and my favorite is cornbread with orange-honey butter. To make the butter special and to make the fresh cornbread is time-consuming but the combination with good coffee, a candle and prayer is unbeatable.

As a recovering work-a-holic from an alcoholic family, I need to do things which center me or I make terrible decisions and make even worse choices. I can see the lives of people who say they have no time for prayer; and what I see makes me scared-straight back into my prayer routine. That is not judgementalism – that’s awareness and discernment.

After 45 years of trying to grab at what I thought I wanted, I find that part of the salvation God is giving me is to be found in some corn bread, butter, coffee a candle and a bit of time with the One Who Loves.

**Blackwater Bluff Corn Bread**
(serves 8 …or me 8 times …sometimes 5 times)

4 tbsp bacon grease or butter
1 c. flour
1 c. course cornmeal
1 tsp salt
4 tsp baking powder
¼ tsp soda
1 ½ c. butter milk
2 large or 3 small eggs

1. preheat oven to 425 and melt butter (or bacon or duck grease) in pan or skillet in the pre-heating oven
2. mix dry ingredients and sift
3. add buttermilk and eggs, stir briskly
4. Remove hot pan with hot fat (carefully!) from hot oven
5. pour hot grease from hot pan into batter, stir and immediately into the batter, then pour the batter into skillet or pan 9X12 or so.
6. bake 20 – 25 minutes
Cooking up a campaign – a year’s worth of blogs on Campaign basics and spirituality

My favorite recipe is for a quick Cassoulet. I know that cooking and especially Cassoulet enthusiasts will raise eyebrows and twist their face into that sour-puss judgementalism we usually associate with unhappy liturgists, sufferers of hemorrhoids and rigid church know-it-all patriarchs, but never mind. I like my Cassoulet. It was my mother’s recipe (a rigid church matriarch who converted in old age to “gentle church lady” with a twinkle in her eye and a mischievous, secret smile.)

A Cassoulet is an old, French recipe indicated by its, well, French name. But the truth is that where there was meat, starch and veg cooked together in a pot over a low flame for a very long time – days and days sometimes - there was Cassoulet - even if by another name. In Asia they call it Conge, America we call it Navy Bean Stew and in England they call it … dinner. The point is that though in today’s high-end restaurants, a bowl of Cassoulet is said to have been sweat over for hours in meticulous layering of flavors and sold at $40 per bowl…it still only costs $2.00 per bowl to make and is the food of the financially poor. It has been, for about 10,000 years, little more than a pot over some coals with a starch in it, into which meat scraps and leftovers are placed to slow-cook until “leftover night.” It may sound low-brow but it is heavenly comfort-food as the fats and meat juices drift between the grains and beans and the veggies dissolve to form a buttery gravy of yumminess. I saw a Martha Stewart version which required flying things in from all over Europe and using a staff of 20 to build a dish for four people over as many days. And it is just that kind of thing that gives Cassoulet a bad rap. People look at that – all those culinary bells and whistles and freak out. They recoil and get scared and the fear immobilizes them.

In my experience as a fund raiser, master potter, monk, parish priest and Diocesan Canon (I know…I am tired and old!) stewardship campaigns have many of the same qualities as the good ol’ Cassoulet. Fund-raising, spirituality-deepening and soul-converting (the combination of which is what we often call “stewardship work” in church-speak) is just as old, just as simple, just as wholesome and just as terrifying when it is made into something terrifying by those whose over-functioning infects the process. A Cassoulet is basic ingredients: beans, herbs, vegetables, meat and broth. It goes into the pot in stages so that the flavor builds. It takes time to work in the pot over a long, slow ember-bed; and if made too fast, tastes a salty-burnt grayish-tan.

Managing a pledge campaign is much the same thing. Waiting until mid-summer, having a freak-out and rushing a shallow plan simply to check the “we did a campaign” box on the clergy “to do list” may indeed raise money and may even raise enough to fund the budget; but “keeping the lights on is” a flaccid vision for being church and not in keeping with the passion of Holy Week’s self-offering nor the pleasure of Easter’s vision of a new heaven and a new earth.

A stewardship campaign, pledge campaign, intended-gift campaign, cornucopia campaign – call it what you will – the work to raise money for God’s mission on earth and for the converting of souls around money, ownership, materialism, self-offering and social narcissism is holy work and takes time and planning. Like the Cassoulet, it is a loving
layering of flavors and a series of interacting dynamics which produce something much greater than the sum of its parts.

I travel around the church as well as working hard in my own Diocese and I laugh every time I hear someone passionately and earnestly respond to a stewardship campaign plan with the words “Oh, that sounds very thorough Charles, but (and here they lean in close and whisper rather conspiratorially) what you need to realize is …. (pause, look around to be sure no one is listening…lower voice even more) …our church is…well…different.” As I muster all my energy to stifle a snicker, they go on to explain that only a few of the steps I have outlined (after raising 60 million dollars over 20 years) are really needed by THEIR church seeing as how “special” and “committed” and “welcoming” they are.

Here is where a church fundraiser must shift from prophet and campaign designer to pastor and lover-of-souls. Like the alcoholic who is sure they are “different” and can have the occasional bender without returning to alcoholism, the church leader who is convinced their church is “different” from all other non-profits in Christendom and beyond is bound to shirk their responsibility. But the job is not just to raise the minimum amount of money to keep things afloat. The job is to lovingly, firmly, mischievously, prophetically and courageously help people in the richest and most greedy society every to have existed, to allow the Holy Spirit to change their hearts regarding what they think they own and what they think God has provided and what they think they need to spend and give away. The work of stewardship campaigns is year-long and slow because our work is not to raise money but to change hearts (and raise money as a side benefit.) We are not greedy people, we are scared people and our greed is just our way of emitting a scream. (When I die – please write this on my tombstone! Along with “He was handsome, thin and smelled nice”)

So being educated in the winter about the best practices and then planning the campaign year (Spring to Spring) in the spring and recruiting and writing and printing and sermon drafting and designing bold adult forums on money & greed and event planning in the summer and running all the basics with joyful creativity (and lots of good food!) throughout the fall and managing collections and thank-you’s and program evaluation in the early winter – that is a Pledge Campaign!

Like the Cassoulet, it can be intimidating if you let it, but the long, simple recipe is always the best!

Over the next few months my blog for TENS will cover the ingredients of a simple pledge campaign based on our New Hampshire Stewardship Pledge Campaign Manual on our website at www.nhepiscopal.org under “Congregational Life” and “Stewardship” but for now, relax, pour a glass of something luscious, take a sip, and plan to make this recipe! Bon-appetite!
Anne LaFond’s Simple Cassoulet

Serves 6-8 with bread and salad (Ps. increase beans and sausage a bit for more. Pps. This dish is best the longer it rests, so cooking it in advance and reheating it is just fine – so if freezing it in portions!)

Ingredients:
2 lbs polish sausage sliced
1 lb sweet Italian sausage
10 ½ oz can beef broth
clove garlic minced
½ cup chopped green pepper
1 cup chopped celery
tsp dried leaf thyme
bay leaf
4 cans of white beans rinsed & drained or 2 cups of dried beans left to soak overnight and boiled till firm-soft

Instructions:
1. Place cut sausage (1 inch) in large casserole
2. add ¼ cup of broth and place in 450 oven for 10 min
3. add remaining beef broth and all other ingredients except beans and bake uncovered at 350 degrees for 30 minutes
4. stir in beans
5. bake 30 minutes – covered
6. if it is not the constancy of stew, then add some broth
7. add salt at last minute and garnish with chopped parsley
Appendix 22: Retreat Menu

The Rev. Canon Charles LaFond
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The following retreats are prepared and available by request of the churches of the Diocese of New Hampshire. Churches outside the Diocese of New Hampshire may request retreat leadership based on time availability.

Retreat Menu
1. They shall know we are Christians by our love:
A five part consideration of how we are loved by God, how we are loved my each other, how we are called to love as clergy and how we can experience God’s love with more fluidity in our vocations, families and lives.

2. Renewal, resistance and resurrection:
A five part consideration of what the church and our own lives would be like if we redefined spirituality as “a relentless attachment to truth.” This retreat considers themes of vow-taking as Christians and the ramifications of those vows. We will consider how we resist our baptismal vows as persons and as a church. And finally we will consider antidotes to our vow-breaking so that resurrection shines through our lives unimpeded.

3. The potter and the clay:
The retreat will occur around a potter’s wheel and the meditations will be given, in part from a potter’s wheel using it and the metaphor of clay as a starting point to consider our malleability, fragility and vulnerability in the hands of a loving master. Clay is formed because of rotting vegetation, water and creativity. It is then fired with intensity. There are many parallels in which our own spiritual lives could be infused by just a bit more willingness to be molded, stretched and fired.

4. Bringing Holy Order to Busy Lives: How to write a Rule of Life:
In this retreat we will explore the ancient tradition of using a “Rule of Life.” We will begin a conversation which considers how we can bring order and structure to our lives. Often we intend to do things such as rest or diet or exercise or prayer of the nurturing of friendships; but life gets busy and our intentions become overwhelmed with life’s business. Making a Rule of Life which we reference as part of our daily lives is an ancient monastic trick to bring order to individuals, communities and families. This retreat will help you to identify areas of your life which need more structure and to write a small “rule” to help form your hope for bringing order to the chaos which gets in the way of your hopes. By writing the Rule, we honor the mini-monk and nun inside each of us – that part of us which seeks intimacy with God and order in our lives.

5. Our Greed is just our scream:
A five part meditation on what it means to live both with God and with the relative wealth of our society. Clergy often ask how they can better help their parishioners to handle the
difficult conversation we are being called to have around our money and our spiritual live. How much is enough? How can I live so well in a world with so much poverty? What does Jesus mean when he suggests we give it all away? Where is fear playing a role in my giving or withholding? How do I manage the juxtaposition of daily offices, a daily prayer routine and one sermon on Sundays against messages every seven minutes on television in Technicolor? We will deal honestly with money, wealth, spending, gratitude, advertising, marketing, bounty, scarcity, human frailty, family conversations about money and many more subjects which unlock our own “stuff” around money so that we can more effectively lead our parishes in this conversation with integrity and honesty.

6. Fear Factor: Facing the biology and spirituality of fear in the context of an economic down-turn:
A three hour seminar about how fear works, what it does to the brain, how to teach and preach and manage liturgy in the context of fear and how the church can pastorally help people with their fears. The retreat can be expanded into a series of sessions in which simplicity of life and adoration are proposed as antidotes to the fear present in our culture.

7. Quietly Waiting on God:
What Mary does when the Angel Gabriel comes to her to announce the conception of God in flesh as the Christ-child. The announcement should bring the terror of unwed-motherhood and death-by-stoning. But rather, the announcement brings Mary’s peaceful response: “be it unto thee according to your word.” This retreat is based on the tenderness of God towards us as seen in the icon of Jesus kissing Mary Tenderly (The Eleousa Icon) and will include worship, silence, meditations and time to consider our lives.

8. The Visitation:
A series of meditations on the exchange between Mary and Elizabeth during the visitation in which Mary sings the Magnificat. This retreat considers our own response to Mary, to a surprise visit and to the call from God. A series of meditations including Biblical exegesis and commentary on the visitation are available as well as a series exercises which help us to connect to the crisis of joy through which God can and does break into our own lives.

9. "Possessions, Prestige and Power....some temptations never change!" A retreat considering each of the temptations of Christ and how they both play out for Jesus and play out for each one of us. This retreat is designed for clergy but could be adapted for other uses.

10. A Retreat on Transition:
Often an interesting combination of light and darkness transition is a vulnerable part of every day and every life and comes in big doses and small ones. There is light coming from the work or place or person or ministry to which one is going or being called. But there is also darkness from the grief of having left what must be left behind – people, places, work, ministries as well as the real possibility of darkness in the future of the call – beyond the present light of the newness of a choice.
Modern Americans self-anesthetize against pain but in this retreat we spend time with the Transfiguration story and icon “praying our lives” and looking at things left behind as well as the vulnerability of change. The transfiguration is an example of what it means to live into a reality which has both intimacy and loneliness; darkness and light; glory and suffering; logos and silence.
11. In the company of the Saints: A retreat on icons and iconography:
After many visits and hikes among the monasteries and sketes of Mount Athos in Greece, I have come to a deep love of and understanding of the use of icons in private and corporate worship. Over the years I have worked with an athonite monk to have 12 icons written which represent images which inspire and encourage my spiritual life. This retreat uses all 12 icons or some assortment of them (based on retreat length). A power-point presentation of images from Mount Athos and from the monastic life as well as digital representations of the icons being used will augment the use of the actual icons as we wander through the canon of iconography, its history and praxis and spend some time using them individually and in groups. The opportunity to respond to the icons in writing and in groups will also be present.

12. Conflict Transformation: Changing Conflict into Hope:
Conflict is a natural part of life in any group, family or individual life. Conflict transformation is a process designed by members of the Mennonite church which walks family members, friends, co-workers, small groups and large congregations through a process which leads them out of conflict and into peace and stability. Topics to be addressed will include:
The nature and role of conflict
Self-assessment in times of conflict
Interpersonal peacemaking skills
How to be effective when people are angry
Congregational conflict identification and transformation

13. Holy Listening: Prayer, Voices and Choice-making:
This retreat helps attendees to consider the way we make decisions in the context of a belief that God has an opinion about what we do and say and speaks through the Holy Spirit. How do we hear God? How do we decide between what is our ego talking and what is God’s voice? What are the ancient truths about listening for God and how do we make decisions once we have heard a call? Every day we make thousands of small and big decisions. The outcomes affect our lives, the life of our parish and the bringing of the Kingdom of God into the world in which we live. This retreat gives us the opportunity to discuss such things as prayer, silence, holy listening, decision-making skills and the nature of God’s call.

14. An ear to His chest: A retreat in which consideration is given to the “Beloved Disciple” of John’s Gospel.
This icon of love and intimacy between Jesus and a close friend was the primary image used by the Celtic Christian Church and was the foundation on which the Augustinian idea of human depravity was challenged by the theology of human goodness. Using the Johanine image of the beloved disciple, this retreat will help retreaters to consider how they are basically good and only streaked with evil rather than the other way ‘round. This is a retreat of creative and theological re-imagining.

15. Beauty and the Spiritual Life:
This workshop considers Christian and Buddhist views on the nature of beauty – how it works, what it is, how we recognize it and what counterfeits it. We will consider beauty in our lives and the difference between the Greek notion of beauty as we in the west have inherited it and Eastern notions of beauty which lay diametrically opposed in form and philosophy. We will share experiences of beauty and consider ways to see and appreciate
beauty in our lives. We will also consider what scripture says about beauty and what New England poets have to say on the subject of the natural beauty around us.

16. In Praise of Slowness:
This retreat considers the speed and activity of life and considers ways to slow down and to simplify. In no way is this a manifesto against technology or active living – it simply asks how much should we be doing and how fast should we be moving. The retreat looks at the history of the human time management and the use and values of time since the industrial revolution. The retreat considers what the church mothers and fathers have to say about slowing down and about managing the incoming demands and messages with which we are inundated. The retreat considers how speed and business can be anesthetizing to the work of healing and also considers the place of discernment and discretion in considering what we are each and what we are collectively called to do. The group considers various types of life management and spiritual disciplines which can assist us with the modeling we choose to do as Christians in living balanced, centered lives.

17. I Wonder As I Wander:
(This retreat can be a companion to the Non-violent Communication Retreat)
Employing spirituality and art from both the east and the west, the Epiphany Retreat will look at what it means to gather at the stable in the presence of the Christ. As shepherds meandered their way to the place to which the star seemed to point, they walked in silence and in conversation. We will be looking at silence as well as at conversation.
We will look at why we say the things we say and, more importantly, how we say those things. We will learn technology of ego identification as well as techniques for non-judgment, non-attachment and non-resistance in how we live and speak with each other.
Using western understandings of Christian peace-making and Eastern icons from Mount Athos as touchstones, we will consider what it means to be community - as person in God, as couples in marriage, as friends in conflict and as a church in mission.
And like the Magi of the Epiphany story, our encounter of each other and the Christ will invariably send us home changed, with new life-skills by, as scripture says, "another way."
This retreat will include a series of meditations punctuated by periods of self-reflection and meditation. It will, as the year begins, be a time to look deeply inside ourselves and consider how we participate in God's work of reconciliation and redemption, one word and one action and one tone of voice at a time.

18. The Spirituality of Leadership in Generational Change:
What does it take to lead well in the church and in the early 21st century? What does it mean to face the end of church attendance and support by the World War Two Generation and handover of financial support from the Baby Boomer Generation? What does it mean to face the beginning of the leadership and philanthropy of the Generations X and Y who will not pledge, no longer give by affiliation and whose philanthropy is based on return-on-investment in the not-for-profit sector? The church has always used either manipulation or affiliation to raise money? What happens when the church, after 2015 AD, will have to “deserve” the money and what does that mean to newer generations? And what does it mean to lead in the age of the internet – an age of caffeine and overstimulation, exhaustion and computer ‘friendning’? This retreat looks hard at leadership in the church in the “fourth turning” and in generational and social change.
19. Disaster and Pastoral Care Care-givers Retreat:
We believe in a God who would come to be among us in the form of Jesus – a radical message of Word and presence-making. In keeping with that most central pastoral event in the life of humanity, this retreat offers care for the care-givers of any pastoral care situation. Caregivers may be as dramatically identified as those caring for people after a flood or a quietly identified as those caring for people at a bedside, in a parish or for a family member. This retreat will help attendees to tell our stories and listen to a series of meditations on presence-making as well as teaching materials about self-care and leadership as care-givers. The inaugural version of this retreat was for care-givers in the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont, repeated five times over three days in care of the respondents to the flooding from tropical storm Irene in 2011.

20. Congregational Communications Strategies Workshop:
God comes to humanity as the “Word made flesh” which means that communication is important to a God whose desire is to be “with” us. The Latin root of the word “communication” is “com” meaning “with” making rather more clear why we call our Eucharist “communion” or “union with each other (and Jesus at this meal.)” And so there is a sacramental quality to communications because it brings people together when it is done well.

The Congregational Communications Strategies Workshop will teach the basics of effective communications including the following:

- Designing a communications plan
- The differences between internal and external communications
- Drafting a press release
- Managing media
- Designing marketing for an event or program
- Leadership communications
- Effective letter-writing
- Modern communications on a shoestring budget
- The role and job descriptions of a communications committee
- Communicating with generations X and Y (people under 35)
- Basic use of advertising
- The power of signage
- Identity standards

We will leave this workshop with plans, strategies and resources which will suite small to large churches in this essential work of bringing people together. The workshop leader, The Rev. Canon Charles LaFond directed communications and marketing at the Corporate Office of the YMCA in Richmond, Virginia, increasing membership from 50,000 to 90,000 in eight years and raising public awareness to fuel annual, planned and capital giving to raise more than $26 million and inspire 80 planned gifts of more than $10 million.

21. Four-part Meditation Series
Silence: Going back to scripture and early Christianity which were both developed in a time in which silence was the norm, we will look at what the great mystics and leaders have said about silence and what we might do to find forms of silence in our busy lives. We will leave this session each having drafted one rule of life around silence keeping in our lives.
Peace: Using materials in which psychology and spirituality overlap in their disciplines, we will look at what constitutes peacefulness in our lives and what disrupts peacefulness. We will look at how the ego works in our brain chemistry and consider what remedies scripture has for dealing with our egos and the things we do which are motivated by them.

Sabbath: Going back to the creation story in which Sabbath was created by God as a gift both to the earth and to God and then looking at what gets in the way of modern forms of Sabbath-keeping, we will consider why God made keeping a Sabbath into a commandment and how we might live within the integrity of that law with joy and self-care.

Prayer: Using techniques for four different kinds of people (active, contemplative, restless and physical), we will look at the Eastern Christian, Celtic Christian, Western Christian and Buddhist traditions of prayer techniques so that everyone can find a way to make prayer a part of their lives which fits well within their way of being in this busy world.
Appendix 23: Workshop Menu

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Stewardship:

The Stewardship Institute: (4-8 hours) covering all aspects of basic parish leadership in the planning, management and philosophy of the annual stewardship of finances campaign.

The spirituality and philosophy of giving: (4 hours) covering the Biblical and early church writings merged with the work of modern spiritual and temporal leaders on the subject of giving, ownership and self-offering.

Planned Giving: (2-8 hours) covering all aspects of basic parish leadership and development on planned giving, its philosophy, tools, pitfalls and marketing.

Capital Campaigns: (2-16 hours) covering all aspects of campaign planning, design, management, implementation and evaluation.

Stewardship Communications: (2-4 hours) covering the managing of communications, awareness raising and marketing of an integrated program which includes annual campaigns, capital campaign management and planned giving programs.

Case Development: (2-4 hours) covering the strategic planning, community involvement, vision-making and communications inherent in the development of a case-for-support which is inclusive of the input of donors, compelling to donors and moves a parish forward in both campaign success and strategic planning.

Fear Factor: Raising money in a recession (2-4 hours) covering the biology, sociology and pathology of fear; explaining how it works in the brain, how media uses it to sell and how to guard against its immobilizing forces. This workshop ends with a section on adoration and worship which is proposed as an antidote to fear.

Major Gifts: Asking for large gifts can be a daunting task regardless if it is being done in the context of a large capital campaign, a meeting about planned giving or the recruitment of a special gift to meet a specific need. In any case, there is an art and a science to asking for a major gift, be it for $1,000 or $100,000 or anything in-between. This workshop deals with the preparation, management and follow up in asking for a major gift. It involves how to
design “the ask,” and how to be sure that the meeting meets the needs and expectations of all concerned. This workshop is pivotal to anyone in leadership in any non-profit organization or parish church.

**Organic Stewardship: Raising Money and Deepening Soul. (1.5 hrs. or 4 hrs. or day-long)**

Spiritual depth, asset management, congregant pledging, church vitality and membership growth are all connected in the body of a church - just as the stomach, lungs, circulatory system and mental/emotional wellness are connected in the body of a human. This workshop will weave a Celtic knot among stewardship, vitality, membership growth and spiritual depth providing attendees with the resources needed to lead a holistic program for churches of all sizes, from all sorts of locations and from all “sorts and conditions” of people in the context of a series of generational shifts which will demand that we change how we do church leadership. Attendees will be provided the latest manuals on Church Growth Campaign Management, Year-round Pledge Campaign Management, Vitality Assessment Management and “The Three S’s Campaign” management for Spiritual Depth as presented by their author and designer.

**Parish management:**

**Strategic Planning:** (2-4 hours) covering basics in strategic planning beginning from a place of spiritual discernment using Ignatian strategies and moving into basic data gathering, evaluation and management towards the creation of a strategic plan with identified outcomes and measurable objectives.

**Discernment:** (2-6 hours) covering in-depth Ignatian discernment tools which create a culture of planning and management based in prayer and spiritual exercises.

**Conflict Resolution:** (2-6 hours) covering basics in family systems, conflict identification, small and large group conflict transformation and the basics of mediation and mediation program management.

**Vestry/ Board Leadership and Development:** (2-4 hours) covering leadership identification, recruitment and management.

**Crisis Management:** (2-8 hours) covering the spiritual, intellectual and logistical demands of managing a parish, non-profit or diocese in the midst of a crisis including emergency response preparedness, resource development, crisis communications, integrations with governmental and ecclesial emergency services and tam management/self-care.

**Parish Vitality Evaluation:** (2-4 hours) covering four primary models for varying levels and kinds of parish vitality and using indicators to design strategic planning towards movement between models.

**Principles of training for volunteers and employees:** (2 hours) covering the care and nurturing of lay volunteers and employees including job descriptions, assessment tools and wellness programming.
Parish Spiritual Leadership:

Creating a culture of prayerfulness: (2 hours) covering all aspects of re-orienting parish leadership away from corporate management styles to a management based in a commitment to corporate prayer and individual spiritual depth.

First Time in Prayer and Quiet: (2 hours) covering the teaching and care of a congregations’ prayer life including teaching on meditation, centering, retreat-taking, vigil-making and creative opportunities to expand liturgical pace to include silent prayer.

Clergy and Lay-leadership Wellness: (2 hours) covering the integration of proven spiritual disciplines with physical and emotional wellness so as to encourage leadership with spiritual depth, emotional balance and corporate accountability.

Learning Non-violent Communication Skills: (2-8 hours) Most of us communicate the way we were trained to communicate in our childhood and our upbringing. That communication often involves competition, judgment, demands and diagnosis in such a way that our communications is dealing with what seems “right” and what seems “wrong” to us at the time and from our own perspective. This kind of communication creates walls leading to anger, frustration and even emotional, social, relational and physical violence. Using the technology of Marshall B. Rosenberg, Ph.D. and other leaders in peace-making, this workshop seeks to promote a process of communications which transforms thinking, speaking and judgment into a more open and mutual communication which, in turn, deescalates tensions and opens pathways for mutual understanding resulting in empathetic listening, mutually satisfying outcomes, diffusion of anger, and heightened mutual trust between groups, families and even within an individual.
Biographical Statement

The Rev. Canon Charles LaFond is the Canon for Congregational Life in the Diocese of New Hampshire in the Ordinary Staff of The Bishop of New Hampshire.

Charles began his vocation in the corporate no-profit sector as a Senior Corporate Vice President for Financial Development and Communications/Marketing for an urban corporation of 14 YMCAs where he raise more than $20 million in capital and planned giving assets and increased annual giving from $200,000 to more than $4 million per year. More recently Charles has eight years’ experience as a parish priest and lived for the three years as a novice and monk at the monastery of the Society of St. John the Evangelist where he did spiritual direction and led retreats.

Charles’ current ministry combines a decade as a fund raiser and a second decade as a priest and monk. Charles comes at stewardship, congregational development and spiritual conversion of live not solely as logistical issues, but also as pastoral, spiritual and theological issues. We live in a church which has exchanged being a movement for being an organization. We also live in a culture weighed down by wealth and power, in a world weighed down by poverty and illness and in a church which seems unable to have a bold conversation around money and spirituality. We live in a society over-whelmed by words, over-caffeinated by stimulants, over burdened by schedules and anesthetized to the ways our material and financial life gets in the way of our relationship with a Savior who loves the poor.

Charles treats formation around stewardship as a combination of spiritual reflection, conversion of life and the provision of the latest tools being used in the church and non-profit sector to encourage increased giving. Charles has consulted with more than 20 dioceses and 200 parishes and is currently developing curriculum for small –parish stewardship programs. Charles is an adjunct professor at Virginia Theological Seminary teaching a winter term in stewardship, fundraising, strategic planning and communications and Chaplain to the New Hampshire State Senate.

Charles is on the national Board of Directors of TENS (The Episcopal Network for Stewardship) http://www.tens.org/ and is a regular blogger on their web site at http://www.tens.org/blog/Cassoulet Charles’ interest is in calling the Church to a deeper awareness of how much we are loved by God and to a simpler and more aware life in that context. A master potter of 25 years (for a gallery of Charles’ Eucharistic, production, Raku and gallery pottery or to see the farm called Blackwater Bluff go to http://www.charleslafond.com, Charles lives on a farm with a pottery in the woods of New Hampshire with his black lab named “Kai,”

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