



I Intend...

Program Handbook



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This program was conceived, developed and implemented at Trinity Anglican Church in Aurora, Ontario. The concept was provided by Scott Allan, chair of the parish stewardship committee, and the principal author was the Rev. Canon Dawn Davis, rector of Trinity. Significant contributions were also made by David Town, CHRL, the Rev. Canon Eric Beresford, Philip Hamilton and Janet Weiss-Townsend. Special thanks to the parishioners of Trinity who participated in the program and provided feedback.

Original graphic design was done by Kurz Design in Toronto, Ontario.



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Being a Christian is not just about what we believe
—it is a way of life!

INTRODUCTION

Generous, Intentional Living

Welcome to *I Intend ... Generous Intentional Living* an Anglican Church program and resource that gives individuals, groups or a whole parish an opportunity to grow in their capacity to be disciples and followers of Jesus. This resource will help people make practical choices in five areas of their lives to help them live generously, faithfully and intentionally as followers of Jesus.

I Intend was developed by leaders in the parish of Trinity Church, Aurora and implemented as a Lenten program. It is grounded with and aligns well with the Anglican Marks of Mission (p X in the Workbook) and the Baptismal Covenant (*Book of Alternative Services* p. 159).

The *I Intend...* can be used

- As part of a parish program (during Lent, perhaps)
- In a small group (as an initiation program, with a Youth group)
- As individuals (seeking a fresh spiritual discipline)

I Intend... focuses on five key areas of life where discipleship and stewardship decisions are made:

- Environment
- Time
- Talents
- Treasure
- Mental and physical well-being.

I Intend... is a discipleship program that fosters spiritual growth, offers a holistic understanding of the life of faith and proposes practical and specific spiritual practices for daily living. Each area and session gives the individual an opportunity to:

- Reflect on their life
- Ask some key questions
- Discern God's call for faithful living
- Decide on suitable spiritual practices
- Record the practices in Intention Statements
- Begin living generously and intentionally as a disciple of Christ.

Spiritual formation

Spiritual formation involves the outward effort of taking on behaviours that foster inner growth and development. As Robert Mulholland says, spiritual formation is “a process of being conformed to the image of Christ”. Studies show that spiritual growth is influenced by three factors that interact: an innate biological predisposition, familial influences and the individual's personal environment and choices.

We don't have much control over the first two factors, but the last one is all up to us. The *I Intend...* program and workbook helps individuals, alone or as part of a group, make healthy decisions that enable them to grow as disciples of Christ.

At the end of the program, each participant will have created five Intention Statements that serve as spiritual practices. When followed, these practices help align one's life to Christ by fostering generous and intentional living. Together, these Intention Statements serve as the foundation for the spiritual task of forming a Rule of Life.

The I Intend... workbook is most effective if adequate time is given for each section.

THREE WAYS: For Individual Use

As a spiritual formation resource, the *I Intend...* workbook is most effective if adequate time is given for each section. The whole workbook can be completed in one sitting but it is more beneficial to take time for reflection and discernment. The process involves making decisions about changes in behaviour, attitudes and habits, so a longer timeline renders better and longer-lasting results.

Here is a suggested process for individual use:

- Read workbook introduction pages of the workbook.
- Set aside some time to complete the workbook. Each session requires answering questions, prayerfully reflecting on each of the five areas of life, deciding on a specific practice (the Intentional Statement), recording your intentions and establishing an accountability structure.
- Never forget, we live in community! It is likely decisions made by an individual will have some effect on those around them. As well intentioned as these new practices may be, they will likely require some negotiating with others to ensure respectful and effective change. For example, taking on the practice of morning prayer might alter already established schedules for the family. It is recommended that individuals consult with, or at least, inform others who will be affected by the changes brought about by their intentions. In fact, family and loved ones can be great sources of strength and support when making healthy life changes.
- Individuals need to determine how they will hold themselves accountable to the proposed changes they wish to make. Some are motivated by external expectations and accountability, while for others self-monitoring works best. Some require a rational argument, while for others an emotional reason wins the day. A good question to ask is: "When in the past was I able to change my behaviour and make lasting change?" It was Bernard of Clairvaux (1100's) who pithily observed that the way to hell is paved with good intentions, so it is important to play to strengths and be aware of personal temperament when determining the most suitable stewardship practices.
- Regularly review the intentions to recommit, modify or expand upon them, as necessary. Annually might be most practical or to use the themes of the liturgical year as a guide; review these intentions during Advent (the liturgical new year) or Lent (a time of personal reflection).
- The Intention Statement for Session 4: Treasure can serve as the individual's stewardship pledge. It will be important for the individual to share the Treasure Intention Statement with appropriate financial leaders in the parish so that the church can, in turn, practice good stewardship in its budgeting process.

THREE WAYS: For Small Group Use

This facilitator guide provides session outlines and support for leading a small group through the *I Intend...* program over six sessions. It helps individuals make their way through the workbook and determine spiritual practices that will help them live as disciples or stewards. The first session is an introduction to stewardship as a spiritual formation practice grounded in generosity, giving and gratitude. The other five sessions help participants reflect on their lives and choose spiritual practices called Intention Statements. The *I Intend...* small group process is particularly suitable as a Lenten program because it encourages self-examination and responsible, faithful living, however another time of the year might be more suitable in different parishes.

A trusted small group gives individuals the opportunity to express their thoughts, expand their insights and hear God speaking to them through a loving community. The *I Intend* workbook can be facilitated as a six-week program for groups of three to 10 participants. Each session is about 1.5 hours long and should take place in a private, comfortable setting that fosters open discussion. This requires a facilitator who has an ability to facilitate small group Bible discussions.

Here is a suggested process for small group use:

- Introduce the parish to the *I Intend...* a workbook for Generous Intentional Living through normal parish communications (announcements, bulletin, emails – see page...).
- Recruit a facilitator. A facilitator must have some Bible comprehension and be able to facilitate good group dynamics, ensuring individual sharing is safe and respectful.
- Secure a suitable location and setting for the six-week sessions.
- Collect names of participants and communicate times and location.
- Prepare workbooks and ensure there are adequate supplies for each session.
- The facilitator sets up the room, sets up supplies, welcomes participants, leads the opening and closing prayer, leads the process, ensures the processes is accomplished within 1.5 hours, facilitates discussion and monitors group dynamics.
- The facilitator will have to make arrangements with the church office to collect the sealed Treasure Intention Statement in the self-addressed envelopes, secure them in a safe setting and send them out in six months
- The objective of the process is to lead the participants through a process to complete the workbook and determine five Intention Statements.

***The I Intend...
workbook and small
group process can
serve as stand alone
resources or for a
seasonal series in the
fall or Lent.***

The I Intend... program is most effective when it is implemented as a parish-wide program.

THREE WAYS: For Congregational Use

The *I Intend...* program is most effective when it is implemented as a parish-wide program. In this setting the community of faith provides support and ongoing momentum for spiritual formation as faithful followers of Jesus and good stewards.

The key elements of a parish program may involve:

- Sermon series
- Small groups
- Weekly workshops
- Children and Youth programming
- Parish giving program
- Liturgical and lectionary discipleship and stewardship topic themes.

The more people involved in the initiative, the more effort will be required to plan for the implementation of the program and to communicate it within the parish. It might take a month or two to introduce the *I Intend...* concept and workbook to the key decision-makers in order to decide how best to implement the program within the parish.

Each participant in the program should have their own copy of the *I Intend* workbook. It is recommended parishes use their average Sunday attendance numbers as a guide. It is best if the parish bears the cost and considers it a gift to their members as it ensures a higher participation rate. It can be photocopied locally or printed professionally. A sample introductory letter is provided as a guide.

Worship and Sermon Series

Each week the liturgy and sermon is aligned to the five topics of the *I Intend...* workbook. The *I Intend...* Worship Resources [page x] provide possible Opening Prayers, Scripture readings, Prayers Over the Gifts, Prayers after Communion and hymns. Copies of the appropriate section of the workbook will likely need to be provided each Sunday in case individuals forget to bring their workbook to church. At the end of each sermon a few minutes of silence (or music) should be provided to allow individuals a chance to review the Reflect questions and begin to form their Intention Statement.

Depending on the talents and abilities of the people in your church community, you may wish to invite lay people to provide the Sunday service reflection. Many lay people have workplace expertise in sustainable development, human resources, household financial management, time

management, volunteer management, nursing and mental health resources, personal fitness training, etc. The clergy would likely want to meet with these individuals and assess their suitability for speaking in front of the parish. The clergy will also likely want to coach the individuals to help them craft their message.

Parish Giving Program

The parish may decide to sequence the time so that a giving program lines up with Session 4: Treasure. It will be important to communicate that stewardship encompasses all aspects of our lives, especially those highlighted in the workbook. It is, however, important to explore how we share our resources to support the mission of God's church and attend to our relationship to money as it holds such emotional and spiritual significance in our contemporary world. Parish leaders must decide how they wish to collect the Intention Statement from Session 4: Treasure, because this information helps guide the parish budgeting process and facilitates the church's stewardship of resources.

Workshops

A way to augment the program and to go deeper into the topics is to provide weekly workshops. These would preferably be led by volunteer experts from the community. Perhaps they may even be led by the lay preachers for the series.

For example:

Creation and the Environment, an environmental social justice organization, a local spokesperson from Kairos — link, or someone from a local municipality could speak about ways to care for the environment;

Time, a business manager might bring expertise in time management and speak about how they see their time as a gift from God.

Talent, a human resources professional might lead a workshop on skills inventory or an expert in Spiritual Gifts Inventories or an online resource (<https://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Congregations-and-Synods/Faith-Practices/Spiritual-Renewal/Assessment-Tools>).

Treasure, a financial manager might provide a workshop on household budgeting and money as God's gift.

Mental and Physical Well-being, a professional trainer or a mental health nurse could speak about how to care for our mental and physical health.

Children and Youth programming

It would be important to share the *I Intend...* workbook and parish program with the children and youth ministry leaders. The topics are relevant and can be adapted for used in a weekly program so that the whole parish—young and old—participates together.

Clergy, of course, bring a wealth of resources in the areas of prayer, meditation, time management and spiritual gifts.

The more honest we are in facing our strengths and weaknesses, talents and limitations, the more we come to know the God who formed us in the first place.

Planning Timeline

A suggested timeline that you can adjust to your situation

Fall	Introduce the <i>I Intend...</i> Program to the stewardship committee and chair, the appropriate leadership (ordained ministers, wardens, executive, liturgical planning committee, staff and congregational decision-making bodies such as parish council, vestry, session, etc.).
January	Recruit a facilitator(s) for the small groups. (Recruit workshop leaders.) Promote the program in congregational communications (bulletin, announcements, email, etc.). Get copies of the workbook for members/attendees. Collect small-group participant names through sign-up sheets. Book the small-group meeting space. Make arrangements for the handling and sending out of the sealed, self-addressed envelopes.
February/ March	Implement the program.
March/April	Celebrate the completion of the program. Bless the sealed envelopes containing individual Treasure: Intention Statement.
October	Return or mail out the sealed envelopes of Intention Statements to participants.

SMALL GROUP FACILITATOR GUIDE

Session Outlines

The facilitator guide for provides agenda for leading a small group through the six session *I Intend...* Program and workbook. The first session is an introduction to spiritual formation as—that is, developing spiritual maturity by taking on spiritual practices. The other five sessions help participants go through a reflective process that results in choosing spiritual practices called Intention Statements.

The small-group process might serve as a program on its own or as a means of engaging as many as possible in a congregation-wide program which could also be accompanied by other theme workshops and a sermon series. It is particularly suitable as a Lenten program because it encourages self-examination and responsible faithful living, but can be adapted for other times of the year.

The small groups can be as small as three and ideally should not be larger than 10 participants. Each session is designed to take about 1.5 hours. Facilitators will need to review the sessions and assigned times as appropriate. Because of the nature of the reflective conversations, the small groups should take place in a private, comfortable setting that fosters open and trusting conversations.

The facilitator can be ordained or lay as long as they have adequate biblical comprehension and are able to manage group dynamics.

***Christian stewardship
is ... everything we
think, say and do after
we say “I believe”***

INTRODUCTION SESSION

Generous, Intentional Living

Icebreaker

Have each person introduce themselves and ask them to identify a (New Year's) resolution they were able to keep and one they were not.

You will need the following for each participant:

- paper
- pens
- Bibles
- *I Intend...* workbooks

Welcome and overview of the program

Opening Prayer

Creator of the fruitful earth,
you made us stewards of all things.
Give us grateful hearts for all your goodness,
and steadfast wills to use your bounty well,
that the whole human family,
today and in generations to come,
may with us give thanks for the riches of your creation.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

—*Book of Alternative Services*, p. 396

Or

Now the day has come, we are all together in this place.

Captivated by a shining, joyful Light,
drawn to the warmth we find in one another.

May the Spirit stir afresh in our midst.

May our common vision be restored.

May our dreams of daring be reawakened.

We are called to be the church.

We are not alone.

—*United Church of Canada, Stewardship Toolkit, Mission and Service Worship Resources, Worship, Sunday 3: Our Creed Is Our Church's Mission*

...

Homework

- Have each person reflect on ways they prefer to make lasting changes in their lives.
- Have each person commit to speaking with their family members or close friends about their participation in this program, asking for their support and insights.

What does it mean to live generously and intentionally?

Open discussion

- Why do some resolutions stick while others fall by the wayside?
- What behaviours, practices and habits help make lasting change possible?

Invite someone to read the Introduction (p.1) of the workbook aloud.

Discuss.

Highlight the Reflect, Ask, Decide and Intention Statement structure of the upcoming sessions.

Review the steps to complete the Workbook.

Scripture Study

Lectio divina on 1 Corinthians 4:1-8a. Use either the NRSV version or The Message version.

First time reading

- Listen for a word or phrase that comes to mind?
Each participant shares with the group their word or phrase.
Name the word or phrase resisting any further discussion.

Second time reading

- What does it mean to be a steward of God's mysteries?
- How is everything a gift? (verse 7)
- Early Christians were called the People of the Way.
What does the opening line of this section of the workbook mean: "Being a Christian is not just about what we believe—it is a way of life!"
- How does a good and faithful steward/disciple live?

Third time reading

- What is God saying to you about living generously and intentionally?
- Write a prayer to God about this.
(Depending on the trust-level within the group, have each person share their prayer.)

...

Closing Prayer

Christ within us,
Light above us,
Earth beneath us,
Love surrounds us. Amen.

—Celtic Prayer

1 Corinthians 4:1–8a

The Message version

¹Don't imagine us leaders to be some-thing we aren't. We are servants of Christ, not his masters. We are guides into God's most sublime secrets, not security guards posted to protect them. ²The requirements for a good guide are reliability and accurate knowledge. ³It matters very little to me what you think of me, even less where I rank in popular opinion. I don't even rank myself. Comparisons in these matters are pointless. ⁴I'm not aware of anything that would disqualify me from being a good guide for you, but that doesn't mean much. The Master makes that judgment. ⁵So don't get ahead of the Master and jump to conclusions with your judgments before all the evidence is in. When he comes, he will bring out in the open and place in evidence all kinds of things we never even dreamed of — inner motives and purposes and prayers. Only then will any one of us get to hear the "Well done!" of God. ⁶All I'm doing right now, friends, is showing how these things pertain to Apollos and me so that you will learn restraint and not rush into making judgments without knowing all the facts. It's important to look at things from God's point of view. I would rather not see you inflating or deflating reputations based on mere hearsay. ⁷*For who do you know that really knows you, knows your heart? And even if they did, is there anything they would discover in you that you could take credit for? Isn't everything you have and everything you are sheer gifts from God? So what's the point of all this comparing and competing?* ⁸You already have all you need. You already have more access to God than you can handle.

SESSION I:

Creation and the Environment

Icebreaker

Watch the YouTube video of Apollo 8, 1968 Christmas message. The astronauts read Genesis 1:1-10 while they orbited the moon.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J_hRRiXKdqc

Ask the participants to identify the words or thoughts that came to their minds as they watch this video?

Discuss...

You will need the following for each participant:

- laptop or monitor or projector for showing YouTube videos;
- find a sample of a Carbon Fast online
2017 version - <http://www.greenanglicans.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Carbon-Fast-Lent-2017.pdf>

Opening Prayer

Creator of the fruitful earth,
you made us stewards of all things.
Give us grateful hearts for all your goodness,
and steadfast wills to use your bounty well,
that the whole human family,
today and in generations to come,
may with us give thanks for the riches of your creation.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.
Book of Alternative Services, p. 396

...

Review the previous session:

- Did the participants have a chance to reflect on how they are stewards of God's mysteries?
- Did they have a chance to reflect on ways they prefer to make lasting change in their life?
- Did they get any insights from family and friends about their ability to live generously? Discuss...

Read

- Read the introduction for Creation and the Environment (p.2) of the workbook aloud to the group. Discuss.
- Read the **Reflect** section with questions, aloud (p. 2). Give time for the participants to complete their answers and then discuss.
- Discuss the concept of a carbon fast, share a resource found online
- Read the **Ask** questions, aloud (p.3). Give time for the participants to complete the answers and then discuss.
- Read the **Decide** questions, aloud (p.3). Give time for the participants to complete the answers and then discuss.

Prayer for Intentional Living

Almighty God, we come before you with open and willing hearts. Help us to see and be thankful for your abundant blessings. Give us insight, courage and conviction as we choose to be good stewards of your creation. Bless our intentions, empower us with your Spirit and infuse us with Christ's redeeming love. Amen.

Read

- Read the Intention Statement section aloud (p.3).
Give time for the participants to complete the answers, then discuss.

Final Word

Watch Archbishop Desmond Tutu's comments on our responsibility toward God's creation.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rlh_ptOljkg

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Closing Prayer

Christ within us,
Light above us,
Earth beneath us,
Love surrounds us. Amen.

—Celtic Prayer

Stewardship is the responsible use of God's gifts in light of God's purpose

Homework

- Begin implementing their Intention Statement.
- Preparation for the next session: Ask the participants to notice and jot down the amount of time they spend each day:
 1. Speaking with someone they love;
 2. Watching a screen;
 3. Thinking about past hurts.

SESSION II:

Time

***I came that they may have
life, and have it abundantly.***

—John 10:10b

You will need for each participant:

- a workbook, pen and papers.
- Select a suitable spiritual gifts inventory survey – <https://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Congregations-and-Synods/Faith-Practices/Spiritual-Renewal/Assessment-Tools>.

Opening Prayer

Eternal God of time and space. The numbers of our days are known only to you. May we use our time wisely and in your service, honouring the gift of life in each day, and using the opportunities you place before us to live and love as Christ taught us. We ask through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Or

Holiness revealed in human form,
Love expressed with a human voice,
we are called to be the church.
We pray for the Spirit of Pentecost
in this time of worship—
inspiring, enlivening, emboldening us.
Called from lonely isolation
into acts of daring selflessness,
may we see that sacred spark in one another.
Called from fearful silence to proclaim
the good news in every language,
may we hear the Spirit calling us by name. Amen.

—United Church of Canada, *Stewardship Toolkit, Mission and Service Worship Resources, Worship, Sunday 3: Our Creed Is Our Church's Mission*

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Review past session and homework

- Ask the participants how they are feeling about last week's Intention Statement? Discuss.
- Ask if they noticed and jotted down the percentage of time they:
 1. Spoke with a loved one;
 2. Watched a screen;
 3. Thought about past hurts. Discuss...

Read

- Read the introduction for Session 2:
Time (p.4) of the workbook aloud to the group. Discuss.
- Read the **Reflect** section with questions, aloud (p.4). Give time for the participants to complete their answers and then discuss. Identifying key goals of life can be very challenging. A possible prompting might be, "What are the things you would like said at your funeral?"
- Read the **Ask** questions aloud (p.4 and top of p.5).
- Give time for the participants to complete the answers and then discuss.
- Read the **Decide** questions aloud (p.5).
Give time for the participants to complete the answers and then discuss.

Prayer for Intentional Living

Almighty God, we come before you with open and willing hearts. Help us to see and be thankful for your abundant blessings. Give us insight, courage and conviction as we choose to be good stewards of our time. Bless our intentions, empower us with your Spirit and infuse us with Christ's redeeming love. Amen.

Read

- Read the Intention Statement section, aloud (p.5).
Give time for the participants to complete the answers and then discuss.

...

Closing Prayer

Christ within us,
Light above us,
Earth beneath us,
Love surrounds us. Amen.

—Celtic Prayer

**Christian Stewardship
is how we invest
God's 'stuff' for God's
mission in God's world.**

Homework

- Begin implementing their Intention Statement.
- Preparation for the next session: Ask the participants to complete a spiritual gifts inventory of your choice (<https://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Congregations-and-Synods/Faith-Practices/Spiritual-Renewal/Assessment-Tools>) to determine their spiritual gifts.

SESSION III:

Talent

We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

—Romans 12:6-8

You will need for each participant:

- a workbook, pen and papers.
- A copy of the spiritual gifts inventory – www.elca.org/Our-Work/Congregations-and-Synods/Faith-Practices/Spiritual-Renewal/Assessment-Tools.

Opening Prayer

Mighty and tender God,
In your loving purpose help us to use
and share the gifts
you have given us to contribute to your mission.
In all things give us the grace and wisdom
to accept your will. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

—United Church of Canada, *Stewardship Toolkit, Mission and Service Worship Resources, Salt and Light*

Or

O God of steadfast love, as Jesus your Son turned water into wine, help us to transform our hearts, that by your Spirit, we may use our varied gifts to show forth the light of your love as one body in Christ. We ask through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

...

Review past session and homework

- Ask the participants how they are feeling about their past Intention Statements? Discuss.
- Ask the participants if they completed the spiritual gifts inventory.
- Were there any confirmations, insights, new information? Discuss.

Read

- Read the introduction for Session 3: Talents (p.6) of the workbook aloud to the group. Discuss.
- Read the **Reflect** section with questions, aloud (p.6).
Give time for the participants to complete their answers and then discuss.
- Read the **Ask** questions, aloud (p.7).
Give time for the participants to complete the answers and then discuss.
- Read the **Decide** questions, aloud (p.7).
Give time for the participants to complete the answers and then discuss.

Prayer for Intentional Living

Almighty God, we come before you with open and willing hearts. Help us to see and be thankful for your abundant blessings. Give us insight, courage and conviction as we choose to be good stewards of our talents. Bless our intentions, empower us with your Spirit and infuse us with Christ's redeeming love. Amen.

Read

- Read the Intention Statement section, aloud (p.7).
Give time for the participants to complete the answers and then discuss.

...

Closing Prayer

Christ within us,
Light above us,
Earth beneath us,
Love surrounds us. Amen.

—Celtic Prayer

"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."

—Winston Churchill

Homework

- Begin implementing their Intention Statements.
- Preparation for the next session: Ask the participants to review their bank statements and notice the percent of their money that goes toward:
 1. food;
 2. shelter;
 3. entertainment and leisure;
 4. gifts;
 5. church, charity and benevolence;
 6. other.

SESSION IV:

Treasure

Specific financial information is confidential. There should be no expectation to share financial details or amounts. Concepts, percentages and values are what can be shared with the group.

You will need for each participant:

- a workbook
- Bibles
- pens
- decision-making tools such as a Pre-Authorized remittance Form - http://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/resources/form_par-authorization.pdf; Proportional Giving Chart (p 12 of the *I Intend* Workbook)
- Optional: Copies of pages 11 and 12.)

Opening Prayer

Generous God, in abundance you give us things both spiritual and physical. Help us to hold lightly the fading things of this earth and grasp tightly the lasting things of your kingdom, so that what we are and do and say may be our gifts to you through Christ, who beckons all to seek the things above, where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Or

Loving, ever-present God,
we gather in worship as your people in the world.
We are called to walk with each other,
to talk in faith, and share in love.
Guide us in the way, so that we may be able
to shine brightly in the world. Amen.

—United Church of Canada, Stewardship Toolkit, Mission and Service Worship Resources, God Colours

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Review the past session and homework

- Ask the participants how they are feeling about their past Intention Statements? Discuss.
- Ask participants if they were able to review their bank statements and if they noticed what percentage of their money went toward:
 1. Food;
 2. shelter;
 3. entertainment and leisure;
 4. gifts;
 5. church, charity and benevolence;
 6. other.

Scripture Study

Lectio divina on 2 Corinthians 9:6-9 (NRSV or The Message version)

First reading

- What word or phrase comes to mind? Share with the group the word or phrase. No discussion.

Second reading: Verse 6

This seems counter-intuitive for the common understanding is that the more you give away the less you have.

- What do you think Paul means by this statement? Verse 7 seems to suggest that faithful living requires being intentional.
- How does being intentional make you cheerful? Verse 8: A spiritually mature life is marked by being both “responsible” and “trusting.” Explain.

Third reading

- What is God saying to you about living generously and intentionally with respect to your finances?
- Write a prayer to God about this. (Depending on the trust-level within the group, have each person share their prayer.)

Read

- Read the introduction for Session 4: Treasure (p.8) of the workbook aloud to the group. Discuss.
- Read the **Reflect** section with questions aloud (p.8). Give time for the participants to complete their answers and then discuss. Discuss the statement, “God gives. We share.”
- Read the **Ask** questions aloud (bottom of p.8, top of 9). Give time for the participants to complete the answers and then discuss.
- Review the **Decide** section (p.9). Ask each participant to find a confidential place to complete the form. (You may wish to bring photocopies of pages 9 and 10 so the participants can complete the process without revealing confidential information in their workbook.) (Remind participants that if they are not single and live as part of a household they should do this process along with other decision makers of the household budget.)

2 Corinthians 9:6–9

NRSV version

⁶The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. ⁹As it is written, “He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.”

The Message version

⁶Remember: A stingy planter gets a stingy crop; a lavish planter gets a lavish crop. ⁷I want each of you to take plenty of time to think it over, and make up your own mind what you will give. That will protect you against sob stories and arm-twisting. God loves it when the giver delights in the giving. ⁸God can pour on the blessings in astonishing ways so that you’re ready for anything and everything, more than just ready to do what needs to be done. ⁹As one psalmist puts it, He throws caution to the winds, giving to the needy in reckless abandon. His right-living, right-giving ways never run out, never wear out.

Prayer for Intentional Living

Almighty God, we come before you with open and willing hearts. Help us to see and be thankful for your abundant blessings. Give us insight, courage and conviction as we choose to be good stewards of our treasure. Bless our intentions, empower us with your Spirit and infuse us with Christ's redeeming love. Amen.

Read

- Read the Intention Statement section aloud (p.10).
Give time for the participants to complete the answers and then discuss.

...

Closing Prayer

Christ within us,
Light above us,
Earth beneath us,
Love surrounds us. Amen.

—*Celtic Prayer*

Homework

- Begin implementing their Intention Statements.
- Preparation for the next session: Ask participants to commit a few minutes each day to listing three things they are thankful for.

SESSION V:

Mental and Physical Well-being

You will need for each participant:

- a workbook,
- pen, papers and envelopes.
- copies of the Intention Sheet. (Make arrangements for the completed Intention Sheets in the sealed envelopes to remain sealed and sent back out to the participants six months after the completion of the program.)

Opening Prayer

We rejoice, O Christ, for in your tender compassion, you shoulder our burdens and ease our heavy hearts. Keep us ever mindful that as Children of God, you call us to show compassion for ourselves, as well as for others. We ask through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

...

Review past session and homework

- Ask the participants how they are feeling about their past Intention Statements? Discuss.
- Ask the participants if they took the time to think of three things they are thankful for, each day? Discuss.

Read

- Read the introduction for Session 5: Mental and Physical Being (p.11) of the workbook aloud to the group. Discuss.
- Read the **Reflect** section with questions aloud (p.11).
Give time for the participants to complete their answers, then discuss.
- Read the **Ask** questions aloud (p.11).
Give time for the participants to complete the answers, then discuss.
- Read the **Decide** questions aloud (p.12).
Give time for the participants to complete the answers, then discuss.
- Read the Intention Statement section aloud (p.12).
Give time for the participants to complete the answers, then discuss.

In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.

–Matthew 7:12

The Intention Sheet

- Hand out a copy of the Intention Sheet and ask the participants to record their intention statements on the handout and on the Intention Sheet of their workbook.
- Ask the participants to place the completed Intention Sheet handout in the envelope provided.
- Ask participants to put their name and address on the outside of the envelope and place it in the centre of the group (possibly on a table or in a basket) for a blessing. (Make arrangements for the envelopes to remain sealed and sent out to the participants six months from the time of completing the program.)

...

Blessing Prayer for Intentional Living

Almighty God, we come before you with open and willing hearts. Help us to see and be thankful for your abundant blessings. Give us insight, courage and conviction as we choose to live intentionally as good stewards. Bless our intentions for the environment, our time, talents, treasure and our mental and physical being. We ask you to empower us with your Spirit and infuse us with Christ's redeeming love. Amen.

Words of Blessing

Go in peace and grace.

Startle the world with the power of your story,
the sound of your joy, and the signs of your love.

Blessed to us is the journey before us.

Blessed to us the friends who travel with us.

Blessed to us the company of Christ on the way. Amen.

—United Church of Canada, Stewardship Toolkit, Mission and Service Worship Resources, Worship, Sunday 3: Our Creed Is Our Church's Mission

Worship Resources

The liturgical resources listed below have been pulled together from various Anglican, United and Lutheran sources. They are suitable for a Eucharistic service but do not necessarily require it. It is really important to modify or adjust these resources to suit the specific context of the worshipping community you serve.

Opening, Gathering Prayer or Collect

Session 1: Creation and the Environment

God of the living, with all your creatures great and small we sing of your bounty and your goodness, for in the harvest of land and ocean, in the cycles of the seasons, and in the wonders of each creature, you show your generosity. Teach us gratitude that dispels envy, that we may honour each gift as you cherish your creation, and praise you in all times and places. We ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Session 2: Time

Eternal God of time and space. The numbers of our days are known only to you. May we use our time wisely and in your service, honouring the gift of life in each day, and using the opportunities you place before us to live and love as Christ taught us. We ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Session 3: Talents

O God of steadfast love, as Jesus your Son turned water into wine, help us to transform our hearts, that by your Spirit, we may use our varied gifts to show forth the light of your love as one body in Christ. We ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Session 4: Treasure

Generous God, in abundance you give us things both spiritual and physical. Help us to hold lightly the fading things of this earth and grasp tightly the lasting things of your kingdom, so that what we are and do and say may be our gifts to you through Christ, who beckons all to seek the things above, where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Session 5: Mental and Physical Being

We rejoice, O Christ, for in your tender compassion, you shoulder our burdens and ease our heavy hearts. Keep us ever mindful that as Children of God, you call us to show compassion for ourselves, as well as for others. We ask through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Scripture Readings

Parishes that are accustomed to using the lectionary may have to make an exception for the five Sundays of the program and assign alternative readings below. This allows for cohesive worship experience as the readings then reflect the five areas of stewardship of the *I Intend...* workbook. Here is a suggested list of alternative readings:

Session 1: Creation and the Environment

Genesis 2:4-17 or Numbers 35:33-34, Matthew 6:25-34

Session 2: Time

Colossians 4:2-6, Luke 10:38-42

Session 3: Talents

1 Corinthians 12:4-11, Matthew 5:13-16

Session 4: Treasure

Ecclesiastes 5:10-20, Luke 16:13-15

Session 5: Mental and Physical Being

Romans 12:1-2, Matthew 11:25-30

Prayer Over the Gifts

Session 1: Creation and the Environment

All Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation: through your goodness we have this bread and wine set before you, which earth has given and human hands have made. Let them become the bread of life and the cup of salvation for us. Amen.

Session 2: Time

God of faithfulness, accept our offering this day, and give us grace to witness to your truth and live as faithful stewards, now and always, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

And they came, everyone whose heart was stirred, and everyone whose spirit was willing, and brought the Lord's offering...

–Exodus 35:21

Session 3: Talents

Gracious God, we know your power to triumph over weakness. May we who ask forgiveness be ready to forgive one another, in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord. Amen.

Session 4: Treasure

Gracious God, you offer your love generously. Accept our offering in the same spirit, with thanksgiving and praise, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Session 5: Mental and Physical Being

God, our refuge and our strength, receive all we offer you this day. Make us self-compassionate and discerning stewards, strong in body and in mind, that we may follow in the teachings of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer After Communion

Session 1: Creation and the Environment

Prayer after Communion Please stand

All God you clothe the lilies of the field, feed the birds of the air and abundantly bless our lives. Equip us as your stewards to help renew the face of the earth. Amen

Session 2: Time

Living God, may we who have shared in these holy mysteries, use our time in your service, honouring the love that we have been given, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Session 3: Talent

God of love, we have been grafter together as one, unified body through this Holy Communion. Continue to weave our varied gifts together for the building up of your Kingdom here on earth. Through Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

Session 4: Treasure

God of generosity, may the boldness of your Spirit transform us, may the gentleness of your Spirit lead us, may the grace of your Spirit allow us to share and give from a sense of abundance, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Session 5: Mental and Physical Being

Lord God, you feed us with living bread ; renew our faith, strengthen our bodies and calm our fears that we may act with love, for ourselves and for others, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Suggested Hymns

Hymn selections from *Common Praise (CP)*, Anglican Church of Canada and *Voices United*, United Church of Canada

	Common Praise	Voices United
Session 1: Creation and the Environment		
Let All Things Now Living	403	242
God of the Sparrow	414	229
All Things Bright and Beautiful	415	291
Session 2: Time		
How Clear is Our Vocation, Lord	466	504
Take My Life and Let it Be	435	506
Lord of All Hopefulness	506	
Session 3: Talents		
God Who Gives to Life Its Goodness	428	260
Will You Come and Follow Me	430	567
King of Love, O Christ We Crown You	451	
Session 4: Treasure		
A Spendthrift Lover is the Lord	177	
God, My Hope on You is Founded	529	
God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending	601	
Session 5: Mental and Physical Being		
We Cannot Measure How You Heal	292	613
Lord, You Give the Great Commission	433	512
Guide My Feet	513	

Sample letter

[Address]

[Date]

Dear Friends,

Jesus calls us to follow him. We are baptized with promises made (Baptismal Covenant). As Anglicans we are challenged to live by the Marks of Mission. Living this way is called discipleship or stewardship.

- But what does that mean?
- How do I live my daily life in a way that lives into being a follower of Jesus?

One way is to prayerfully consider the various aspects of one's life and how to align them more closely with that discipleship. The program *I Intend ...* is an opportunity for each of us to do just that.

The workbook and accompanying program is designed by Canadian Anglicans to help you respond to God's generosity in your life. It covers five areas:

- the environment,
- time,
- talents,
- finances
- our mental and physical being.

Over the coming weeks we are inviting you to consider these areas of intentional living. Each Sunday we will focus on one of these topics in the sermon. Small groups are available to help you to go even deeper. Saturday morning workshops are also available.

You are encouraged to work your way through each session by reading the material and responding to the questions. At the end of each session you can record an Intention Statement.

At the end of the process, you are invited to write out all your intentions on the last page of the workbook. Tear it out and send it back to the church in a self-addressed sealed envelope or drop it off on a Sunday in the collection plate. Your intentions are between you and God and therefore the Intentional Sheet is a confidential agreement. Only you will see the commitment you make to yourself. We will hold it for you and mail it back to you in six months, so you can keep track of how you are doing.

We are pleased to provide you with your own copy of the *I Intend...* workbook.

Discipleship or Stewardship is an acknowledgment of God's love. When we practice good stewardship of time, talent, treasure, the environment and our physical selves, we are responding to God's lavish generosity. It is not the stuff we accumulate that will make us happy. It is the relationship with God, how we follow Jesus and how we respond to God's spirit in the world that brings the most meaning and joy.

Thank you for taking the time to live intentionally and generously.

Yours faithfully,
(insert name of Ministry Leader)

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General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada
80 Hayden Street, Toronto, ON M4Y 3G2
Tel: 1-416-924-9192
Email: abcpublishing@national.anglican.ca
www.anglican.ca/gtp