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December 6, 2006

What is this Companions on a Journey all about? It is a Stewardship Initiative for the Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island that has been developed by our Stewardship Resource Development Group. We have been assisted in this initiative by the Anglican Church of Canada through the Letting Down The Nets (LDTN) initiative. One of the components of LDTN is stewardship education. Our Diocese was selected by LDTN to be a pilot Diocese and as such we have embarked on this Journey.

Now we are reaching out to Regions of our Diocese to be pilot Regions as we work to bring effective and exciting Stewardship Education programs to each Parish within those Regions. Fort Sackville, Eastern Shore and Cobequid/Cumberland have been selected for the initial work. They will begin with workshops for training Parish Stewardship Representatives early in 2007. The hope is that all Parishes in our Diocese will be partners of our Companions on a Journey by the end of 2009.

The subtitle of Companions on a Journey is “the Journey from Scarcity to Abundance”. This initiative is an education program for us to celebrate what we have and to proclaim this by word and action. Our Stewardship Resource Development Group intends to publicize our efforts as we journey with you and to that end will be using this medium as one way to keep you posted. We will, from time to time, link you with helpful stewardship materials, as well as sharing progress from Regions and Parishes.

Companions on a Journey Stewardship Resource:

For a brief reflection on the Sunday Revised Common Lectionary readings as seen through a stewardship lens, please check out

[http://www.ontario.anglican.ca/stewardship/sunday\\_by\\_sunday\\_c.html](http://www.ontario.anglican.ca/stewardship/sunday_by_sunday_c.html).

### **January 3**

From "Speaking about Money" by Mark L. Vincent, Herald Press, Scottdale, PA, 2001. One copy available in the Resource Centre.

"Money is a universal language, but sometimes we don't know how to speak it. Go ahead! Talk about it! Tell stories about it! Who taught you to manage money? How was/is money discussed in your family? How was/is money discussed in your church? What is your current money situation? What are your financial goals? Where did we get our information about money? How did our parents spend money? What is the first echo from their habits to your life that you remember?"

Church renewal in managing money resources must start with the leaders. Pastors/clergy, elders/council members, deacons/lay leaders and others need to tell their life stories around money. Money questions in the congregation must be addressed by the spiritual leadership, simply because money is such a powerful force. Don't be silent! Don't skip this step in your plan for congregational renewal." (Vincent, p.32)

Workshop: “Money Autobiography Retreat” available soon from the Stewardship Resource Development Group as part of Companions on a Journey: A Journey from Scarcity to Abundance, the Diocese of NS & PEI Stewardship Initiative.

**January 10, 2007**

**How you use your money reflects your care for God's creation.**

Imagine if a \$20 bill could only be used once. You walk into a store, pay for a basket of fruit and vegetables, and the clerk puts the bill through the shredder right before your eyes. "No wait! That can be used again," you would say. But too late. By the time the words are out of your mouth, your hard earned money is confetti.

In a way, this is what happens when we use our money to buy products we use only once, then toss in the trash. When resources are wasted, so is money.

There is a link between how we use our money, and how we care for God's creation. The person who uses it and throws it away is a consumer. The one who practices prudent care of money and natural resources is a steward.

Sometimes, in the church, we talk as if there is more than one kind of stewardship: money, environment, time, health, talents. But stewardship is an all encompassing word. As followers of Jesus Christ, we understand it to mean only one thing: everything has been entrusted to us by God and our responsibility is to care for it. Wisely. Carefully. Generously.

To be generous with our time and money, our energy and possessions, does not mean being wasteful, even when our generosity gives unexpected results. I think of someone I know who likes to give money to projects within the church for youth and for educational events. She is generous with her money, like a farmer casting seed onto the soil. She knows that not every penny she gives will attract a crowd, just the farmer knows not every seed will bear fruit. But this doesn't stop the donor or the farmer from casting generously because sometimes the gifts gives a remarkable result in one small corner of the field.

God created the earth and all the earth produces. Humans have devised money as a way to distribute the earth's abundance. How you use your money – today, in the years to come, and even beyond the end of your life – is a reflection of your care for God's creation.

Don't waste it. Don't be stingy. Be generous.

The Rev'd Kevin Dixon  
Chair, Stewardship Committee, Diocese of New Westminster

**Jan 17, 2007**

The classic definition of Stewardship is the following: "Stewardship is receiving God's gifts gratefully, cherishing and tending them in a responsible and accountable manner, sharing them in justice and love with others, and returning them with increase to the Lord." Stewardship is a complete lifestyle of total accountability and responsibility acknowledging God as the Creator and Owner of all. Stewards as disciples of Jesus Christ see themselves as caretakers of all God's gifts. Gratitude for these gifts is expressed in prayer, worship, action and offering by eagerly sharing these gifts out of love for God and one another. From "A Programme To Encourage

Sacrificial Giving In Your Parish” by the Anglican Diocese of Toronto.

Excellent Parish Resource available free at  
<http://www.toronto.anglican.ca/images/up-2SacrificialGivingMaster.doc>

From John Wesley, “On the Use of Money”, 1760

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

**January 24, 2007**

### **Stewardship Principles**

Trying to develop a Stewardship programme in your parish? Here are some principles to keep in mind.

- 1 Jesus is forever knocking – inviting us into a deeper relationship.
- 2 Stewardship is a spiritual issue – not a money issue.
- 3 Money problems in a parish are symptomatic of other problems.
- 4 People don’t care how much you know, until they know how much you care.
- 5 People are willing to support a clearly understood project/mission/vision.
- 6 Don’t expect growth and a bountiful harvest if you are only willing to nurture for growth once a year.
- 7 We have not all come to know God in the same way.
- 8 Love and grace are better motivators than guilt!

**February 7, 2007**

“It was a moment of real spiritual awakening for a guy who had gone to church all his life but never really understood what spiritual health and maturity was all about. It happened during the Eucharist at a stewardship conference I was attending. The gospel had been the story of the Rich Fool, the parable Jesus told about the person whose crops were so abundant that his barns were not large enough to store his harvest, and who was obsessed with building larger barns to hoard the crops. During the homily, I became aware that the preacher was asking several questions of the congregation.

*“Do you ever worry about money? ... about having enough? ... about keeping what you have?”*

*“Do you sometimes envy what others earn, have inherited, or have been able to do because of money they have and you don’t?”*

*“Do you ever get anxious about what inflation has done to depreciate your savings and your preparation for retirement?”*

*“Do you ever equate your value as a person with what you earn?”*

*“Is bill-paying stressful for you?”*

*“Has money ever been the source of an argument or misunderstanding with a loved one?”*

*“Do you ever spend more time in any one day thinking about money than you do in prayer?”*

I don’t remember the first part of the sermon, but he got my attention with those questions. ...

The preacher concluded with,

*“If you have answered Yes to some of those questions, you may be having a love affair with money, and this affair is buying your soul, taking away your freedom, paralyzing your creativity, debilitating your peace of mind, destroying friendships, breaking up your marriage, destroying your freedom in Christ, and threatening your very salvation!!!”*

From Spirituality and Money: Seven questions that saved my spiritual life, by Bruce Rockwell published by TENS, 2005. If you are interested in Bruce’s answers to the questions, and how he changed his life in response, the booklets are available from the Stewardship Resource Development Group for \$2.00 each.

## **February 14, 2007**

Thanksgiving for those who love us! February 14 is one day of the year to focus on those who love us. The commercial venture promotes chocolates, flowers and hearts – all good things – as symbols of love. But they are only symbols. Perhaps they could also point us to a much greater Love. The God who loves us enormously, created us and continues to bless us. When we are connected to that Love, we also can love, even when the warm fuzzy feelings may be in short supply.

I have recently read the book “Speaking about Money: Reducing the Tension” by Mark Vincent. (Available in the Resource Centre and from on-line book sellers as well) One section of the Chapter called “Communicating about money management” is called “Love Funds”! There were also the usual general funds, memorial funds and building funds, but a Love Fund? Well, under that heading I found the following on page 115:

- 1 Mutual Aid Fund: The purpose of this fund is to carry out mutual aid among our membership; and secondarily, to meet community needs.
- 2 Aid to widows and orphans: This fund assists families who temporarily or permanently lose members.
- 3 Revolving Loan Fund: A revolving loan fund for high-risk situations. This fund is available to members and regular attendees. The purpose of this fund is to provide assistance at low interest rates for people who have special needs at special times.
- 4 Seminary Education Fund; This fund assist seminary students who are completing their education.
- 5 Short term Mission Fund: From time to time, someone in our congregation participates in a short term mission assignment. This fund helps us assist with the expenses of the one serving.

Indeed this is love in action not in chocolate! For those who have been blessed by God, what a great way to share our blessings with others!

How does your parish live out this kind of Love? Could you identify some of your funds as “Love Funds”? Making such funds known might well encourage folks to contribute to these funds as a way of sharing the love of God with those in particular need.

This Valentine’s Day, acknowledge those people who love you, thank the God who loves you and sent Love to live among us, and share love in practical ways with those who need it.

+Sue

### **March 7, 2007**

The Offering:

“ ‘Now friends, I want to report on the surprising and generous ways in which God is working in the churches in Macedonia province. Fierce troubles came down on the people of those churches, pushing them to the very limit. That trial exposed their true colours: They were incredibly happy though desperately poor. The pressure triggered something totally unexpected: an outpouring of pure and generous gifts. I was there and saw it for myself. They gave offerings of whatever they could – far more than they could afford! Pleading for the privilege of helping out in the relief of poor Christians.

This was totally spontaneous, entirely their idea, and caught us completely off guard. What it explains it was that they had first given themselves unreservedly to God and to us. The other giving simply flowed out of the purposes of God working in their lives.’ (2 Corinthians 8:1 –5 from The Message by Eugene Peterson, 2002)

Here we find a group of Christians from Macedonia who gave themselves to the Lord and then to the apostle Paul’s ministry. The result was an eagerness to financially participate in Paul’s ministry. They actually pleaded with him to contribute to a relief effort for a suffering sister congregation. Their example invites us to consider whether we share their commitment – and whether we can make it the habit of a lifetime. The answer, of course, is yes – if we live within our means. Doing so helps us increase our cash flow, which in turn helps us increase in assets and giving.” from Money Mania: Mastering the Allure of Excess, by Mark Vincent, MMA Stewardship Solutions, Goshen, Indiana, 2005.

Now available from the Diocesan Resource Centre.

### **March 21, 2007**

What is this “Companions on a Journey” all about? It is a Stewardship Initiative for the Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island that has been developed by our Stewardship Resource Development Group. We have been assisted in this initiative by the Anglican Church of Canada through the Letting Down The Nets (LDTN) initiative. One of the components of LDTN is stewardship education. Our Diocese was selected by LDTN to be a pilot Diocese and as such we have embarked on this Stewardship Journey. The SDRG sees itself working in partnership, or traveling as a companion, with regions and parishes who choose to embark on the journey.

\* Using our Regional strategy, we have completed the Introductory workshop for lay leaders and clergy on the Eastern Shore on February 24, 2007. The evaluations were very positive. A Companions on the Journey presentation was made to Cape Breton Regional Council on March 13, 2007. There is a presentation scheduled for Cobequid/Cumberland Regional Councils on April 24, 2007. Fort Sackville’s Introductory Workshop for lay leaders and clergy is scheduled for May 5, 2007.

\* In 2010, we will celebrate 300 years of continuous Anglican worship in Nova Scotia. The

2010 Anniversary Committee asked for an educational project to mark the Anniversary. Some of you will remember the educational program from the Bicentennial Anniversary of Charles Inglis in 1987. Those educational pieces looked back to our past and asked questions about our past and our present. The SRDG asked the 2010 Committee if the educational program for 2010 could ask each parish to look to the future. They agreed. So the 2010 educational program is being developed by the SRDG. It will help each parish to develop a vision, choose a mission statement, and to lay out ministry plans to help the parish move forward in building the Kingdom of God in their part of God's world. This material is being written now, will be pilot tested in April, and will be available in May for parish use.

\* The subtitle of *Companions on a Journey* is "the Journey from Scarcity to Abundance". This initiative is an education program for us to celebrate what we have and to proclaim this by word and action. Stewardship may be defined as "what we do, with what we have, all of the time", so Stewardship is a spiritual issue, not a financial issue.

### **March 29, 2007**

"I've heard people talk about:

- \* Spending more time in their van between soccer practice and dance class than inside their homes;
- \* Having to schedule fun times with friends weeks in advance because there's no time for spontaneity;
- \* Buying lots of technological gadgets that promise to make life more manageable, yet often make it more complicated;
- \* Suffering from frequent stress-related health problems;
- \* Working longer, resting less, and having little spare time to do anything restorative for their souls.

But, what concerns me most is how many people are experiencing a personal detachment from God. They feel alone.

Living that way is warped –twisted and contorted from God's original design. And like most things that become warped –think of a plastic lid that gets caught in the wrong part of your dishwasher – our ability to fulfill God's original purpose becomes severely handicapped or even incapacitated.

And the most significant casualty from our time-warped lives is an eroding relationship with God – the One who gave us a life time in the first place.

What about you? In the midst of your time-warped life, do you know God? Are you growing more intimate in your knowledge of him, your devotion to him, and your life in him?

A lot of resources about time management are available today. The central message of nearly all of them is maximize your productivity! They promise you a treasure chest full of strategies for getting the most out of yourself, more from others, and more out of life itself. You will learn

more, do more, have more and be more.

But larger questions loom. Do more of what? Have more of what? And ultimately, become more of what?

The Bible offers a different way. A better way.

Instead of teaching us how to do more (time management), the Bible calls each of us to do less, and consequently, to receive more peace and rest with God (time stewardship). Reversing time-warped living is about restoring our relationship with the Time Giver. The core biblical principle is: By doing less, we can have more of God.”

From Time Warped: First century time stewardship for 21st century living. By Steve Ganger, MMA Stewardship Solutions, Goshen, IN, 2004 Now available in the Resource Centre.

#### **April 4, 2007**

What can we give to our God who has given us everything? The magnitude of the gift of God in Jesus, the Son, sinks in during Holy Week. At Christmas, there is the amazing reality of God coming among us in the flesh. That particular baby, Son of God, son of Mary, offers hope, joy, new life – bright, positive images. We can eagerly embrace this beautiful baby. In Holy Week, the reality that God came among us, becomes real in dark and difficult images. The few who acknowledged Him and loved Him stand in contrast to the many who cursed and rejected Him. The willingness to empty Himself so that we might be forgiven and live includes suffering and death. These we do not so willingly embrace. Yet these will be part of all our lives.

We are challenged to respond to God’s incredible gifts in some way.

“And here we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies...”  
The gift of ourselves, freely given, that is what we can give to our God who has given us everything.

#### **April 11, 2007**

A narrative budget tells the sacred story of the ministry and service of God’s people in a congregation/community setting. One of the understandings of the narrative process is that it takes into consideration that donors don’t give their money TO the church...they give THROUGH the church to touch the lives of people in their community and beyond.

People will give generously when they know their money is making an impact. Pictures and diagrams are easier for most people to understand and use than line item budgets. We need to be holding up ministries and telling the stories of how mission is being done by the church in the community –by people using their time, abilities, and money to do God’s work. This is what stewardship is about, the gifts of God changing lives!  
Stewardship is not about fund raising! It is about discerning God’s will and plan for our ministry, developing a parish vision and ministry plan, and then putting the resources forward to make it happen! Visioning resources available in May from Stewardship resource Development Group.

Resources on narrative budget preparation on our diocesan web site under stewardship.

**April 18, 2007** – Narrative Budget (worth repeating)

**April 25, 2007**

When is enough, enough?

From an article by Shane Stanford in Giving, Ecumenical Stewardship Centre, 2006

When is enough enough? Answering this question represents the first step in developing real, workable core values to guide us in handling our personal finances. If you look at your bank statement or your cheque book where does most of your money go? What does that tell you about your core values? Stanford identifies 6 biblical core values that can guide the use of your resources. These principles are not exhaustive of all the Scriptures teach about stewardship, money or resources. However, they provide a framework.

“1. The Principle of Enough. (Hebrews 13:5) What happens when consuming becomes our God? The writer of Hebrews encourages us to be satisfied with the indispensable promise of God’s faithfulness. Regardless of the ebb and flow of the world’s gifts, God’s gift will never rust, fade, or slip away.

2. The Principle of proper Perspective. (Matthew 6:24) We cannot serve two masters; God does not give us that option. What seems like a stark declarative statement actually provides a clear point of reference by which we can understand God’s plan in our lives.

3. The Principle of the Good Steward. (Matthew 19:16-22) In a world where “good” is defined in terms of accumulation of material possessions, Jesus counters that “good” is a matter of care and stewardship, even to the point of giving away things that we treasure. Most financial problems come when things we possess in reality possess us! Part of being a good steward involves understanding the temporary nature of the material goods we possess.

4. The Principle of the Shrewd Manager. (Luke 16:1-18) Clearly, Jesus is not endorsing the manager’s dishonest practices. Rather, he is teaching us that, like the manager, we are called to be shrewd managers of the resources that God gives us. The parable might be paraphrased, “If only we were as wise and shrewd in achieving eternal things as those who are intent on possessing dishonest things.” Of course, this requires focus, planning and a faithful heart so that we may adequately respond to God’s kingdom plans. Only when we spend as much time and effort preparing our lives (and resources) for kingdom good as we do for pleasure, will we experience a true measure of God’s enormous potential in both our earthly and eternal lives.

5. The Principle of the Widow’s Mite. (Mark 12:41-44) What does it mean to give out of our poverty? Jesus understands that trusting God is much easier in times of abundance than in our times of need. Some of life’s greatest lessons are learned from our commitment and response as we experience times of hardship and sacrifice.

6. The Principle of the Faithful Giver. 1 Timothy 6:17-18) Be ready to share. Paul's command highlights the nature of why we give – because God expects us to do so. Our resources serve as another opportunity to be part of the work of God in this world, and to do good things in God's name. We do not share our resources for pride or personal gain, but because God covets the whole of our lives, including our earthly possession, to be offered in God's service."

What principles guide your use of the resources God gives you? Do you have enough?

**May 2, 2007**

### Conference Report

From March 16 - 18 I attended the Episcopal Church's Province One annual conference on Stewardship, Evangelism, and Congregational Development in Westborough, Massachusetts (just outside Boston). The theme was "From Fear to Grace: Welcome to the Promised Land". This was my first stewardship-type conference, and I really enjoyed it. The three keynote speakers were all excellent, though very different - it was very interesting to see the different styles & topics yet find them all very worthwhile.

The second speaker was James Lemler. He is the Director of Mission for The Episcopal Church. His topic was Leadership and Healthy Congregations. The key thing I took away from this talk was his list of 'marks' for a healthy congregation and a way to use that as a Parish Council activity. This was along the same lines as an activity that was done by Alice Mann at our Diocesan Synod a few years ago. The marks he talked about were:

- Mission Focus and Clarity
- Experience of Spiritual Transformation
- Awareness of Context, Environment, and Congregational Dynamics
- A Learning Community
- Evangelism Plan and Action
- Transformational Worship and Preaching
- Lay and Clergy Leadership Development
- Dealing Directly with Conflict
- Hopeful Climate and Flexible Attitudes
- Caring Community
- Compassionate Service
- Faithful Stewardship

The handout he provided had a brief description of each item. He suggested providing this handout at a Council meeting and having each member take two minutes to mark the two s/he thinks the parish does really well. That is then discussed for a few minutes in the larger group. Then each person marks two items they think the parish needs to work on. This is then discussed by the larger group. It is intended to be a short exercise to help Council members focus on what's important in the life of the congregation. If you'd like a copy of the full handout, please e-mail me, Tanya Moxley, at [tanya.moxley@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:tanya.moxley@ns.sympatico.ca).

**May 9 & 16, 2007**

## Tanya's quotes from the Stewardship Conference

- The beginning of leadership is naming the good. This is an echo of the work being done with appreciative inquiry in our Diocese.
- Every contact we have with non-members is a chance to tell our story. Take advantage of those opportunities. Know why you love your congregation and be able to express that when others ask about it.
- Growth requires intention, recruitment, and change - you need at least one person or group dedicated to evangelism (plan + action) - call it whatever you want, but that's the mandate.
- Leaders are people who open their eyes to see things as they really are, and then act on what they see, faithfully and responsibly.
- The term 'leader' is not limited to professional / paid clergy – it applies to everyone in a leadership role in the congregation, some of whom may not have a title that implies leadership, but who act in ways that make them leaders in the congregation.
- Leadership must be able to state why they care about this particular congregation - what is precious here? This is the energy that drives mission.
- We must, as lay leaders, own our capacity to lead.
- Since God has called us, clearly God has given us the resources to do so - God doesn't call the equipped - God equips those who are called (e.g. everybody who's baptized).
- There are three components to mission: 1) heritage, 2) vision & strategy, and 3) the values, actions & context of the present. Leaders must be aware of all three areas in order for mission to go forward effectively.
- "A leader cares about the organization, for those who are touched by it, and is willing to make that caring count." From Robert Greenleaf in [Servant Leadership](#)

## May 23, 2007

From a story by Joanne McFarlane, St. Albert, Alberta

“As I pondered the word “Stewardship” and what it means to me, I asked myself, “Why is my commitment to God and to the church so important to me? Why is it primary? Non negotiable?” My mind turned to relationships. When I was a child, my parents provided for all my needs. They gave me of their time, their energy, and their finances because I was their child and they loved me. They did it out of love. In adulthood, when I became a parent, I in turn did the same for my family, also out of love, commitment and responsibility. But not only did I want to do my best for my family, I also desired to give back to my parents. I was then able to recognize what they had given up for me. It comes with maturity.

And now the same thing is happening in the next generation. My daughter has given me permission to share this story that illustrates what I am trying to say. It was my birthday and, returning home from church, my daughter called to say she wanted to drop by for a few minutes. She drove over with a birthday card and gift - a beautiful inspirational calendar with a little note, “Sorry you can't use it right away!”

Just before she arrived, I had learned from my husband that she had returned pop bottles that morning to buy ingredients for lunch for her children. Just like the story of the poor widow, my

daughter had given out of her lack of funds, not out of abundance. Why? Because she loves me and, in her maturity, she recognizes what I gave her, so she wants to give in return.

As she was leaving, I said, “I am going to transfer some funds to your account tomorrow.” She looked a little surprised, and then realized her Dad had shared the story of the pop bottles. She replied, “You don’t need to Mom, tomorrow is pay day.”

The point is this: I, the loving parent, didn’t want to see her struggle. I wanted to provide for her in the same way that God our loving parent, doesn’t want to see us struggle. God wants to provide for us. God does provide for us.

And so I ask the question, “Why is my commitment to God so important? Why is it primary? Non negotiable? The answer comes to me – because God first loved me. We have a relationship. Jesus gave his life for me, and I love Him and want to give back. Thank you God.

**May 30, 2007**

*“And here we offer ourselves, our souls and bodies...”*

### **Celebrating the Offering**

#### **What happens at the offertory?**

We offer to God ourselves, as represented by the gifts that are offered – bread, wine, water, food, clothing, offers of time, offers of skill. How are these offered in a way that acknowledges the various gifts? The Stewardship Resource Group is developing a handout for congregations. What we have received already is included below. Please send further concerns/ good ideas from your parish to [smoxley@nspeidiocese.ca](mailto:smoxley@nspeidiocese.ca)

#### **What sometimes happens in congregations:**

- \* Bringing up the offering is routine, mechanical, and dull.
  - \* It seems to be a part of the service to move through quickly.
  - \* It slows down the liturgy.
  - \* Focus is on collection not offering because people collect the gifts.
  - \* Offering is whisked away from the altar, not honoured.
  - \* Some people leave the liturgy to count the money during the liturgy.
  - \* Small altar can not accommodate offering plate or other gifts.
  - \* Some clergy prefer “less clutter” on the altar
- \* Put a note about a good/charitable action from the past week/for the next week in offering plate
- \* BCP offering prayer, “All things come of thee...” Hymn “We Give Thee but Thine own...” have become routine
  - \* Put all offerings on the altar
  - \* Money offering goes on the floor under a chair
  - \* Food box is brought up by the children

\* Introduction of Pre Authorized Remittance means some people have nothing to put in the offering basket- seems to take some of the joy out of offering.

### **How it could be:**

- \* Joyful celebration, not rushed.
  - \* It could recognize the work of the people, the service offered, and food for those in need.
  - \* Self offering, e.g. Sing hymn “All that I am...” at offering
  - \* Bishop Fred’s story from Africa, where the offertory is a joyous occasion, singing and dancing as people bring forward their offering themselves.
  - \* Sunday School children bring up their offering in a special plate/basket.
  - \* Special space/low table in front of the altar for food/money/ gifts
  - \* Sing offertory song with gusto. Is the song about offering? Does the song go with the readings?
  - \* Liturgical Dance
  - \* BCP offering prayer, “All things come of thee...” Teach about it. Mean it when saying it.
  - \* Put all offerings on the altar
- \* Raise high the offering plate and joyfully sing the Doxology along with praying the offering prayer for the day.
- \* Include in the sermon, the principle of generosity as a cornerstone of spirituality.
  - \* Acknowledge all acts of generosity by members of the congregation in the bulletin or on a poster.

### **What needs to happen to change from routine to joy-filled?**

- \* Train sides people in this role of bringing forward the offering joyfully.
- \* Liturgical planning required
- \* Remind people that what they put in the offering is their gift to God. It is a symbol of their gratitude to God.
- \* Find a way to mark the Pre Authorized remittance offering.

**June 13, 2007**

### **Giving our time, talent and treasure**

Can you imagine what your community would be like without the outreach of churches? We need to give serious consideration to the breadth of work done – mostly by volunteers – that changes lives on a daily basis. If it were all to stop tomorrow, we would all be far worse off. And that includes the thousands of people who never set foot in one of our churches!

What comes to mind when you think of outreach? Food bank? Day care? Housing shelter? Toy drive? Blood donor clinic? Car pool to the cancer treatment centre? Fund raising for disaster relief? Marching with others to end violence against women? Volunteering at the youth drop-in centre? Sending letters to MP’s, MLA’s about affordable housing? The list is seemingly endless.

We give of our time, our talent, our treasure to make God's dream of justice and joy for all God's children a reality.

**June 20, 2007**

**Share some of your 168 hours a week!**

“Successful stewardship needs both a Scriptural underpinning and a careful education plan to help congregations understand that giving is about more than money,” says John Robertson Anglican Church of Canada staff.

Speaking at a Stewardship Conference, he recalled his early days as a priest in a northern British Columbia fishing village. “The able-bodied men of the village would fish all day long. At the end of the day, they would put the fish into large baskets. They would walk through the village with the day's catch, stopping along the way at the homes of widows and the disabled, allowing them to select the first fish from the catch. They worked hard and they offered the first fruits. I have never forgotten that sense of community and their willingness to make a difference in people's lives.”

He told the workshop that stewardship is not about money alone. “Everyone is given 168 hours in a week. The practice of stewardship asks us to share something of those hours to make a difference in the lives of others.”

“We need to share our gifts,” he said. It is what helps us to grow and blossom spiritually, and we need to do that for our own well-being. In each of our churches, there are people with expertise and resources to do the work of God.”

Robertson related a story. “Right after my sermon –which was about the various ways of giving to further the work of God –a young woman jumped up and said, 'Stop! Not long ago, my family kicked me out because I became pregnant. I had nowhere to go, no one to turn to. But I saw you people were here so I came in. Someone gave me dinner. Someone found me a place to stay. Someone found me a job. I want to say, 'Thank you. You're my family. I love you!' You could hear a pin drop. It was certainly better than any sermon I could have preached.”

What is needed is for everyone to understand that time, talent and treasure are for sharing. This changes churches. Share some of your 168 hours a week!

**June 27, 2007 & July 4, 2007**

**Update on Companions on a Journey: The Journey from Scarcity to Abundance**

Since the Stewardship Resource Development Group (SRDG) reported to Synod in October 2007, much has happened. Eastern Shore, the first region to volunteer as a pilot project has held 3 workshops and tackled topics such as, developing stewardship definitions, responding to the video “The Joy of Giving”, dealing with negative attitudes toward stewardship, initiating a visioning process, learning to tell their personal stewardship story. Fort Sackville has held their first workshop and has a second planned for October 2007. Cobequid and Cumberland regions

have invited the Anglican Parishes of Pictou County to join in their first two workshops. The Companions on a Journey theme song has become “Side by Side”. The words reflect how the parishes within regions, and the parishes with the SRDG, walk “side by side” to develop an approach to stewardship that will work in our various regions.

Resources are being added to our diocesan web site as well as links to other sites. If your region is not yet involved, speak to your Regional Dean. Why should your region not benefit from the excellent work being done?

**July 25, 2007**

### **Daily Prayer and Readings for a Stewardship Mindset**

Many of us have excellent intentions for daily prayer and scripture reading. Now could be an excellent time to begin!

Simple is best. One approach takes a few minutes twice a day:

Begin by asking God for what you need. (You might also ask on behalf of others). There may be particular material things that you need. Example: “Give us this day our daily bread” There may be bigger, more spiritual things. Example: “Grant us your peace” There may be things that fall somewhere in between. They are all good things to bring to prayer.

\*Extra Credit: Ask God particularly for all the things that you intend to buy for yourself-an ice cream, a sweater, a car. Imagine God as a very kind, wise, slightly indulgent mother or father. Imagine that God wants you to have everything that gives health to your body and joy to your spirit, and nothing that is shoddy or craven. Then receive all good things from God’s hand-and turn away, with God’s help, from the rest.

End the day by giving thanks. Take a look back at the day. Did you get what you needed? Did you get through the day? Were there unexpected blessings along the way? Give thanks to God-and take a moment to appreciate it all.

\*Extra Credit: Take time to dwell on particular blessings of the day- some small beautiful thing; some kind word or smile from a stranger; some disaster you feared that didn’t happen. Recognize God’s hand in every little thing. As you give thanks for the blessings of the day, notice how the half-empty glass of your life gradually becomes a cup overflowing.

It is only in the moment of giving thanks that we truly receive God’s gifts.

From *A Reluctant Giver’s Guide to the Practice of Stewardship*.

**August 1, 2007 & August 8, 2007**

### **Will Our Children Be Stewards?**

What are we teaching our children about stewardship? is becoming a critical question for our church. The fact is we are teaching very little. The baby boomers whose parents passed out nickels, dimes and quarters for children's hands to place in the offering plates are not passing that instruction along. How many of our parents taught us to tithe? If we are not careful, we will soon have a generation of gospel consumers who have not been formed to contribute something of their own substance to the proclamation of that gospel in the world.

Stewardship is using the gifts God has given us to do the work God has given us to do. Our giving is our thankful response to all that God has given us. Part of the work God is calling each of us to do is support the life and work of our congregation. God calls us to give of our substance, not a portion of the leftovers. Our gifts to God come first, before we spend on ourselves.

Including our children:

- \* Make sure there is an opportunity for children to give each week.
- \* Give offering envelopes to every child who wants them.
- \* Honour every gift, record their offerings and give them regular statements along with parents.
- \* Teach parents how to teach their children. E.g. talk about childhood memories of giving to church or other organizations.
- \* Incorporate a discussion of stewardship into confirmation class.
- \* Most importantly, cherish the children. They are one of the best gifts God has given us.

*Excerpt from Terry Parsons keynote address , Province 1 Conference on Stewardship and Evangelism 2004.*

**August 15, 2007**

Christian Stewardship is ...

grateful and responsible use of God's gifts in the light of God's purpose as revealed in Jesus Christ. Christian stewards, empowered by the Holy Spirit, commit themselves to conscious, purposeful decisions.

Stewardship is lived out in:

- \* living and telling the Good News;
- \* sharing with God in seeking justice, peace, and the integrity of creation in an interdependent universe;
- \* wisely employing God-given human resources, abilities, and relationships;
- \* sharing the material resources we hold and giving them in service, justice, and compassion;
- \* providing for future generations;
- \* sharing in the life, worship, and responsible stewardship of the Church and of its mission

Both for the individual and for the community, stewardship is a joyful act for the sake of God's

world.

*From the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas*

**August 23, 2007**

**Stewardship Food for Thought: What do you do with the leftovers?**

When do you eat the leftovers? – In our house it is usually on those days when we come home late, or when there is a meeting at the church in the evening, or when only some of the family will be home for supper.

Would you serve leftovers to an invited guest? – Maybe, if it is a close friend coming over for the evening, or a relative who stops by a lot, somebody we do not consider really special.

But would you serve leftovers to a special guest like Jesus? – If Jesus is not important enough to us, there's a chance we are going to serve him leftovers.

During this week as you prepare and enjoy your meals think also about these questions:

- \* Does Jesus get the leftover time you have?
- \* Do you use any of your best talents and abilities for Jesus?
- \* Is your giving to the Lord based on what you have left over?
- \* If you belong to Jesus, then he is already in your house. Is it possible that you could remember to pass the dinner plate to Jesus first instead of letting him eat the leftovers?

*From [www.stewardshipforum.org](http://www.stewardshipforum.org)*

**August 29, 2007**

The Stewardship Resource and Development Group (SRDG) is beginning its plans for Fall 2007. We offer a workshop program called Stewardship 101 and follow-up sessions. We are planning to meet Sept 15 with the Eastern Shore Region and Nov 3 in the Cobequid/Cumberland Region. We are also in the planning stages for a follow-up with Fort Sackville and introductory sessions with Western Shore and Cape Breton Regions.

Please refer to our website [www.nspeidiocese.ca/stewardship/index.htm](http://www.nspeidiocese.ca/stewardship/index.htm) for more information and downloads. The next meeting of the SRDG group is Sept. 12. If you would like any further information or would like to something discussed during our meeting please send your questions or comments to Wendy (committee member) [wendyanne@eastlink.ca](mailto:wendyanne@eastlink.ca)

Thanks for your interest in stewardship. More news next week!

**September 5, 2007**

Questions to ask yourself about your Christian stewardship journey:

**Companions on a Journey: Stewardship Ministry of Diocese of NS & PEI**  
**Revised October 2007**

Where did you learn about money? About creation? About your abilities?  
What do you remember being told/shown about creation, use of time, about wealth, as a child?  
Has anything really changed about that?  
What is God's role in your relationship with your time? Your skill? The environment? Money?  
If you go through your daily planner, where do you spend most of your time?  
If you go through your bank statement what would be the top three items on which you spend your money?  
What is the reason you give to anything? To your church? To God?  
For me, stewardship is...

**September 12, 2007**

**Reflections on tithing:**

The church is empowered by faithfulness, not by money.

Faith, of course, has a financial component. This is expressed in the challenge of the tithe. When faithful people give 10% of their income to support their parish they are practicing a spiritual discipline that breaks the power of money dependency in their lives. It shifts their trust from their wallet to the grace of God. They no longer live in fear of scarcity, but realize God's abundant blessing far transcends what money can ever provide.

The challenge of faith is to tithe. The church acts with greater power as faith increases people's ability to give in a spirit of gratitude and of partnership with God.

Our church strives to do as much ministry as we can with as much money as faith releases to our common life.

Our church is grateful for each and every person who gives to support our shared ministry. Those who tithe or who are working toward a tithe provide the fundamental strength of the parish. Their tithe is followed up with commitment to prayer and leadership that empowers ministry.

Faithful stewardship is not transactional, but transformational. The Kingdom of God advances through a faithful response to Jesus' call to follow Him.

The challenge for many parishes is to open a dialogue about money and its relationship to personal faith so all can experience a transformation from scarcity to abundance.

*-Excerpts from Saint Timothy's Episcopal Church, California*

**September 19, 2007**

Our Offering

Our offering is an act of worship. Like the ancient people of God in the Old Testament, we bring into our congregation the "first fruits" of our labour. As they brought grain and animals, today we bring money to offer, and we make our offering right in the middle of the worship service.

We make our offering as an act of worship. Like our Old Testament ancestors, in our worship we seek to love and honour God. We express our love and devotion by sacrificing something of value.

We make our offering as an act of liberation. We know the temptation of permitting money to hold sway over our lives. In the face of that temptation, we nevertheless break the hold of money and release it- freely and with joy.

We make our offering as an act of community. Our ministry is shared with all the people of God. My offering is released into the care of the wider congregation, so my ministry becomes part of the congregation's ministry. My offering is an expression that my identity is now part of the church.

We make our offering in imitation of Christ. We are generous because Christ is generous, in his work and in laying down his life and we strive to be like him.

Our offering proclaims we follow Christ. Before our dollars ever get to our church, our offering has already done great things. Our act of offering itself has already worked its inspiring and transforming power.

*An excerpt from the Evangelical Lutheran Church website [www.elca.org/treasurer/](http://www.elca.org/treasurer/)*

Please refer to our website for further information and downloads on our Diocesan website:  
<http://www.nspeidiocese.ca/stewardship/index.htm>

## **September 26, 2007**

Do you want to learn more about stewardship? Did you know that our Diocesan Resource Centre has more than 120 stewardship related materials to borrow?

Some of the topics include: Stewardship education and Bible studies, church growth, financial development, Sunday school resources, information for teens as stewards, visitation programs, planned giving information, determining your spiritual gifts and the stewardship of creation.

Please refer to the resource website to see a list of all materials available to borrow:

[http://www.nspeidiocese.ca/resources/resource\\_centre.htm](http://www.nspeidiocese.ca/resources/resource_centre.htm)

## **A Stewardship Prayer:**

Generous God,

I give thanks to you for the gifts you have given me-  
My life, my family, my friends- time, talents and material possessions.  
All that I have comes from you.  
Help me to remember this and rejoice in your goodness.  
Walk with me, my God,  
Help me on my spiritual journey, so that I may constantly renew my relationship with You and  
all the good people in our parish and throughout our Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward  
Island.  
Renew in me your Spirit,  
Give me the strength and courage to become a better follower of Jesus, to be a disciple.  
Help me hear the call to "Come, Follow Me."  
I give glory to you, my God, as I make stewardship a way of life. Amen

### **October 3, 2007**

Stewardship is one dimension of our Christian life of faith. It is not a program, not an annual pot-luck supper, not a fund-raising campaign and not an occasion for people to vote whether they like how the church spends their money or treats them.

Stewardship is what we do after we say Credo, we believe, that is after we give our love, loyalty, trust and obedience to God, the God of our faith.

As stewards of God we are invited to join in God's actions, God's mission in the world. We are Christ's body, God's sacrament, so that Christ can be present through us in human life and history. It is for this sacramental purpose that God calls us into the church.

We remember this Thanksgiving weekend:

We are to live our lives in the interest of fulfilling God's will. We need not feel guilty for having abundant food, so long as the energy and joy we receive from it are devoted to the needs and happiness of the hungry. "Bless this food to our use and use us to your service, while keeping us ever mindful of the needs of others," we pray.

Stewardship begins with a recognition that God is a generous giver and we are called to be grateful, responsive and responsible people.

*Excerpts from Grateful and Generous Hearts by John Westerhoff.*

### **October 10, 2007**

#### **ARE YOU A TIPPER?**

You've had dinner at George's Steak House or Swiss Chalet or the local Big Stop and the bill comes. It's probably more than you thought it should be, but then you add on 15-20% for the "tip," a personal reward to your server. (The word "tip" is derived from To Improve Performance.)

Tipping is an accepted social practice. But sometimes I worry that there are church people who view their giving to the church as something like giving a "tip" to God for good service. If I feel like God has been particularly good to me this week, if the weather was good and the work wasn't too much of a hassle and I've been feeling good and the Maple Leafs are playing well and the kids stayed out of trouble, I'll give generously. But if God has not served me well this week, if it rained every day and the boss was grouchy and my bum knee has been killing me and we got called in for a meeting with the teacher then the church better not count on me to put much in the offering plate.

It's no way to run a railroad or a church or a life. That offering you put in the plate is not a tip. It is your commitment made out of gratitude to God in thanksgiving for the gifts that surround you and hold you up every day. You don't give because God needs the money. The author and owner of the universe really doesn't depend on your offering. You give because you need to give. Giving touches a need in you to express your gratitude for the blessings of life. It's not a tip given in the hope that God will treat you better. It's your thanksgiving for what God has already done.

As you give your money out of gratitude as a sign of thanksgiving, so also you give of your time and your ability. God has made us a diverse people with diverse skills and interests. There are gifts that you have that no one else at your Church has. How will you use them to the glory of God?

*An excerpt from Steve McKinley, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary*

### **October 17, 2007**

This week we are sad to announce the passing of our friend, mentor, member of the Planned Giving Committee, Leap for Faith Campaign and member of our Companions on a Journey group- Rev. Canon David Reid.

For those of you who were blessed to have known David you know that his passion was Stewardship. For those of you who didn't have the chance to meet Canon David he would want you to know that all we have comes from God. In response to our relationship with God it is important for each of us to give our time, talents and money. It's not about the collection of money but about making an offering.

Our prayers are with Patti and her family. In honour of David's devotion to our Diocese our Companions on a Journey group will continue to offer workshops and opportunities for learning about Stewardship throughout the Diocese. Coming soon to a region near you.

### **October 24, 2007**

**Working Definition of Christian Stewardship:** Christian stewardship is grateful and responsible use of God's gifts in the light of God's purpose as revealed in Jesus Christ. Christian stewards, empowered by the Holy Spirit, commit themselves to conscious, purposeful decisions.

**Stewardship is lived out in:** Living and telling the Good News;  
Hearing God in seeking justice, peace, and the integrity of creation in an interdependent global world;  
Wisely employing God-given human resources, abilities, and relationships;  
Sharing the material resources we hold and giving them in service, justice, and compassion;  
Providing for future generations, sharing in the life, worship, and responsible stewardship of the Church and of its mission  
-both for the individual and for the community, stewardship is a joyful act for the sake of God's world.

**Stewardship has also been defined as:** What I do, with all that I have, after I say, "I believe."  
and Using the gifts God has given us, to do the work God is calling us to do.

*From the Episcopal Church [www.stewardshipresources.org](http://www.stewardshipresources.org)*

## **October 31, 2007**

### Two World Views: Ruffles and Doritos (Scarcity and Abundance)

Several years ago there was a Ruffles potato chip ad showing two Eskimos sitting in the midst of a vast, uninhabited, frozen wasteland. One fellow was having a wonderful time eating the contents of his bag of Ruffles, while the other was looking longingly in his direction. In reply for his request for a chip, the first man declares to his lone companion, "But if I gave you one, I would have to give one to everybody."

At the same time, there was an ad for nacho cheese Doritos running which employed comedian Jay Leno as philosopher-spokesperson. After extolling the chips' great flavour and radical crunch, Leno gave us Doritos eaters free rein: "Crunch all you want...we'll make more!"

The Christian theology of abundance is more Doritos than Ruffles. Share all you have. God will provide! We live in abundance. We just need to open our eyes and realize it, open our hands and share it!

*From: Rev. Eric M. Williams, The Episcopal Network for Stewardship, September 2007*

## **November 7, 2007**

### Let God lead ...as we help those in need.

Thanks be to God for your generous gifts in support of the mission and ministry of this church. Your offering makes a significant difference as we continue Christ's work in and through the church. Within our congregations there are children to teach and youth to mentor. Adults need to hear words of hope. We all need to be fed the nourishment of the communion table and hear the words of salvation at the font. The sick and shut-in need to be visited and to be told that there is a whole church community ready to support them in their need. Those who grieve should not walk alone. Within our communities, there are people who need to be fed, clothed and guaranteed a warm place to sleep. They should not have to fear poverty, violence and oppression. In the wider world are those who wait to hear the good news of Jesus Christ and to see his gospel in action. They have a right to fresh water, adequate food, opportunities for education, freedom from

disease, war and disaster. Jesus cares about us. He also cares about what we do in his name.

**Challenge:** Reach out and touch the lives of God's people. Give prayerful consideration to how you can increase your giving and expand the work of our church.

From Tom Brook, Stewardship Consultant, Evangelical Lutheran Church

## November 14, 2007

### Offering Vs. Collection

One of the pieces of the Companions on a Journey workshops is a reflection on our weekly givings as a contribution to the "collection" plate or an "offering" in response to faith. Think about the language you use in your family regarding this part of your worship service.

What prayer do you say as the gifts of the people are brought to the altar? This special part of our liturgy may be sung or said by a choir or the congregation during collection or at the presentation of the offering.

What does the offertory sound like in your church? Is it the same every week? Is it said or sung? Does it mean something to you?

During the coming advent season year, why not take more notice of the rituals surrounding your offertory? Are new people asked to bring the gifts forward? Perhaps someone in your congregation would like to bake the bread or bring their home-made wine! Recipes for the bread can be found in books or on the Internet. Try searching for 'Communion Bread recipe'. Change the style. Invite the Sunday school to be involved. Highlight the offering as an important part of our liturgy.

## November 21, 2007

### Six Steps in Christian Giving:

**Survival:** *I give a bit when I'm asked because the church ought to be there in case I need it.* The need is survival and there's a chance that the church might help. The relationship with the church is that I know it's there if I need it — all being well, I won't!

**Supermarket:** *I'm happy to pay towards the cost of the bits of the church that I want and enjoy.* The need is safety and by treating the church on my terms I feel safe and unchallenged. I see myself as a customer.

**Support:** *The work of the Church is important and so I'll support it.* I have a need for belonging. I see myself as a member of the supporters' club.

**Subscription:** *I see myself as a member and I wish to contribute to my fair share of the costs.* The need is identity — I'm recognised and I'm playing my part.

**Submission:** *My understanding of being a disciple is that I should put God first in my life.* I see a deeper meaning in life and my giving responds to God and not just the needs of the Church.

**Sacrifice:** *God gave His Son Jesus to die for me, so I need to respond to His generosity.* My Christian calling is to be Christ-like and so naturally I give joyfully and sacrificially — following Christ

From Robin Stevens, National Stewardship Officer, Church of England

**November 29, 2007**

What God Gives is God and What is God is Giving

Archbishop Rowan Williams describes stewardship and Christian giving in terms of our participation in the action of God. We receive an energy of sharing and movement. We don't receive objects or lumps of something from God. We receive a life that pushes outward. God gives us life that is given to us to be givers. Think of it as a small rocky crevice halfway down Niagara Falls trying to hold onto some of the water. You really haven't got much option. It falls on you and bounces off, that's what waterfalls do!

It is given to us to be givers, to pass on an intensity of outpouring. What is given us- the world, each other and whatever we have accumulated- if we really see it as from God, it has a restlessness about it, it won't sit still. People sometimes talk about money as burning a hole in your pocket-it's the same sort of thing. God's gifts are restless. They wait to be put to work in the giving life of God.

So in this season of Advent let that hole burning in your pocket create an outpouring of God for others!

*An excerpt from a talk given by Archbishop Rowan Williams to the Stewardship Network in 1996.*

**December 5, 2007**

Take Back Christmas

Have you ever asked your children, spouse, parents or friend what they want for Christmas? And in turn, did they ask you the same thing? Do we then start trying to think of something we want and don't have?

The Christmas season actually seems to make our consumer needs seem stronger. When we are asked to come up with things we don't need so that people will know what to get us it seems counterproductive to the meaning of Christmas. We forget that most people we know already have all that they need, but we buy them more because its Christmas.

Why not take back the real reason for the season? At Christmas we celebrate a gift of immeasurable worth. In giving us Jesus, God has given us everything: life and hope, salvation and deliverance, joy and peace. Our response can only be to give in return- to God, to one another, to the furtherance of justice, to the cause of peace, to the betterment of the world.

Instead of wracking our brains to think of something we don't need, let's find out what others really do need. This season can be a time of great spiritual openness as people get in touch with their hunger for something substantial. Often it takes very little to make a big difference in the world.

Resist the tide of commercialism and take back Christmas.

**December 12, 2007**

A Stewardship Prayer As We Serve Others This Advent Season

We offer, O God, a gift for your church,  
a gift for your people and your creation.  
As we await with wonder the birth of Christ,  
we know that others wait with hope  
for us to reach out to them.  
Accept the goodwill of our hearts,  
our best intentions and efforts  
to serve others, to care for the world,  
to seek justice, and to love you.  
Amen