

Diocese of Western North Carolina

Annual Campaign Stewardship Roundtable with the Rev. Rob Wood August 26, 2025

1. Welcome and Prayer (This agenda is in the chat)
 BCP 827, #38 “faithful stewards of thy bounty”
2. Introductions and Hopes
3. Keeping it spiritual: Book of Common Prayer
 - a. BCP 824, #29 “share the fruits of the earth”
 - b. BCP 259, #III “faithful stewards of your good gifts”
 - c. BCP 388, Form IV “using the resources rightly in the service of others”
 - d. Bible Studies from TENS (below)
 - e. Lunch and Learn with the Rev. Julia Gatta, PhD

Lunch & Learn: the Rev. Julia Gatta, Ph.D.

"Jesus and the Use of Wealth: Teaching Stewardship at the End of Year C"

In the fall season many parishes launch their annual stewardship drives. In Year C, St. Luke offers several parables and stories that dramatize how Jesus regarded wealth. We will take a look at some of these together to see how they might inform teaching and preaching about money management: the parables of the rich man and Lazarus and that of the unjust manager, and we'll conclude with the story of Zacchaeus.

September 2 | 1 p.m. EST/12 p.m. CT | Virtual

INFO & REGISTRATION

4. Resources and Websites
 - a. Diocese of WNC <https://www.diocesewnc.org/steward-gods-gifts>
 - b. previous webinars available there
 - c. The Episcopal Network for Stewardship (TENS)
 - <https://www.tens.org/> Password: Luke1:46
 - d. Spiritual Resources: <https://www.tens.org/resource-library/spirituality-formation/>
 - e. 2025/26 – Tell Out My Soul!

Did you ever have news that was so exciting that you could not wait to share it with others? The Good News that fills our spirits with joy is about the radical abundance, abiding love, and healing power that Jesus shares with us when we respond to his call to follow him. All of the gifts that we have been given are ready to burst forth to serve our neighbors and share our love with a world in need. The *Tell Out My Soul* theme is based on Year C in the lectionary cycle

(over)

The “Tell out My Soul!” Campaign Package includes the following files in English/Spanish:

- Campaign Materials
 - Timeline for optimal campaign performance
 - Pledge cards in pdf and in MS Word
 - Prayers of the People for the campaign season and other liturgical resources
 - Sample letters from clergy, wardens, and stewardship committee
 - Sample thank-you letter for members
- Logos and Artwork for the 2025/26 year
- Eleven Weekly Campaign Reflections / Meditations to cover your campaign season”

Previous campaigns also listed, like

- 2024 – Walk in Love
- 2023 – Rooted in Abundance
- 2022 – More than Enough
- 2021 – Every Perfect Gift

Other helpful TENS resources:

- <https://www.tens.org/resource-library/tools-best-practices/>
- <https://www.tens.org/resource-library/spirituality-formation/>

Other Resources: Episcopal Church Foundation (ECF)

- <https://www.ecfvp.org/toolkits/stewardship>
- <https://www.ecfvp.org/vestry-papers/topic/2/stewardship>

Closing: What support do you need?

A Stewardship Bible Study

Stewardship is not about fundraising. Stewardship is about mission -- God's mission in the world, and our mission as followers of Jesus Christ. Let's take a look at what God is asking us to do as stewards of all God has given to us, through group Bible study and prayer. Here are some suggested texts to study. Following is a suggested Bible study format for stewardship and adult education groups.



Stewardship Bible Study Texts

Genesis 1:27-28 We are made in God's image
 Psalm 30 The world belongs to the Lord and all that is in it
 Malachi 3:7-12 Robbing God
 Matthew 3:1-12 What does our baptism mean for us as stewards?
 Matthew 5:1-12 The Beatitudes and stewardship
 Matthew 6:7-14 Praying the prayer Jesus taught us as stewards
 Matthew 25:14-30 The Parable of the Talents
 Mark 4:21-25 A Lamp on a Stand
 Mark 10:17-25 The Rich Young Man
 Mark 12:41-44 The Widow's Offering
 Luke 12:13-34 The Parable of the Rich Fool
 Luke 12:22-34 Where is your heart?
 Luke 15:1-10 The Parables of the Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin
 Luke 15:11-32 The Parable of the Lost Son
 Luke 18:9-14 The Pharisee and the Tax Collector
 Luke 18:18-27 The Rich Young Ruler
 Luke 19:1-10 Zacchaeus
 Luke 5:1-11, John 21:1-14 Two Fishing Stories
 John 6:1-13 The Feeding of the 5,000
 Colossians 3:12-17 Paul's guidance for living lives as God's Children
 1 Peter 4:7-11 Stewards of the manifold grace of God
 1 Timothy 6: 17-19 Be rich in good works
 1Corinthians 4:1 God loves a cheerful giver

Suggested Bible Study Format – *a modified Lectio Divina*

Opening Prayer: Give thanks or offer a prayer inviting the Holy Spirit to be present during the meeting and particularly the engaging scripture.

Study

- Ask someone to read the passage the first time.
Group Conversation: *What word, phrase, idea, or sentence stands out for you?*
- Ask a different person to read it a second time, perhaps from a different bible translation.
Group Conversation: *What is God/Jesus/this passage saying to you?*
- Ask a third person to read it, perhaps from yet another bible translation.
Group Conversation: *What is God/ Jesus/this passage calling you to do?*

Closing Prayer: Close with prayer for each person, that each of you may become more and more the faithful, loving, generous stewards God calls us to be, that each of us may indeed respond to what God is calling us to do and to be.



Pledge Campaign Letters – Best Practices

“Don’t use that language with me!” It is the plaintive cry when we try to ignore the fact that the best methods of direct marketing can be utilized in creating effective stewardship programs in the parish. Here are several suggestions for writing to folks in the church.

- Always write from the perspective of our need to give and not the needs of the parish
- Highlight the benefits of giving and the end result: how will my giving impact the lives of others?
- Make paragraphs a maximum of five lines
- Ask for the gift or the pledge three times in the letter copy
- Keep the use of humor to a minimum
- Use short words and simple sentences
- Use underlining and "bold" print when needed but keep it to key elements of the letter. Overuse will not get the letter read
- If you save the best for last the results will be less. You aren't writing a novel; don't make folks read the whole letter to find out why you are writing. Most will not read that much
- Remember, no copy is too long but it can be very boring. Say what you need to say. If it takes two pages that is fine. Despite what a stewardship committee may think, longer is better if you really have something to say
- If you have enclosures be certain to mention them in the letter
- One person should write everything. A letter is personal and with the exception of the family Christmas letter I don't share letter writing duties with others. A committee letter always reads like a committee letter

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Principles for Effective Responses – Planning your Pledge Program

1. Organize and Form the Stewardship Ministry Team

The Stewardship Ministry Team should include the Rector/Vicar/Pastor along with a leadership team of four to eleven people (depending on the size of the congregation.) Leadership positions often include:

- general chairperson
- chairperson for year-round education
- chairperson for the annual pledge program
- clerk to maintain minutes of the meetings and assist with communications

Meetings of the Stewardship Ministry Team should always begin with a Bible Study to assure a focus on understanding why we do what we do (growing the Reign of God rather than simply acquiring more money for the congregation treasury.)

Meet regularly and be sure to maintain a rolling 12-month (or even 18-month) calendar of future activities to insure adequate planning for upcoming events.

2. Design/Select the Most Appropriate Program(s)

Remember to keep the main thing, the main thing: bringing people into a closer relationship with God through increased commitment to support God's work in the world through the ministry of their church.

Identify the current conditions in the life of the congregation (consider emotional/spiritual conditions, sense of vision/mission, leadership, energy, recent successes and failures) and design a program/theme that will respond to the current needs of the stewardship journey of the parish.

Consider what's been done in the past 2 - 3 years: don't repeat last year's program.
If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always gotten.

Consider other major programs that will be happening in the life of the congregation and how they might be integrated into the overall program (anniversary celebrations, capital campaign, dedication of new expanded facilities, start-up of new ministry program, etc.)

Identify the ideal time/season of year for your annual campaign. When will there be the greatest sense of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the ongoing annual life of the parish, and when will there be the fewest distractions in the culture? Identify the optimum time of year for the pledge drive based on these considerations.

Be sensitive to the feelings and hopes of all members, considering these hopes and feelings when making decisions the members will be asked to support. This will generate high trust, good morale and mutual support.

Remember that people want to give in order to further God's work, supporting the ministries of the congregation and beyond, rather than simply to give in order to support a budget. Make all your reasons for giving relate to the mission

Ask/Invite everyone to pledge. Every member is entitled to the opportunity to respond to their adoption into God's family. Pastoral interpretation is necessary to identify the level of attention/contact each member will receive. Some may only receive a single letter with an invitation to pledge.

Determine how best to tell the story: personal witnesses (written and/or spoken); a formal printed Vision for Mission; video; any combination of methods.

3. Solicit Vestry or Bishop's Committee Support

Present the program plan to the leadership for approval, and identify the level of involvement that will be expected from each member in order to support the program. Request vestry approval of the program budget. Remember: leaders can fake being interested, but they can't fake being present. Some congregations expect their Vestry members to make their pledges in advance of asking for pledges from the remainder of the congregation in order to be able to report on the response of the leadership in terms of % increase in pledges for next year.

4. Involve Clergy in Pastoral Conversations

If yours is a congregation that has a history of the clergy not knowing the details of your pledge campaign, it's time to rethink that policy. There are two reasons for this, chiefly.

1. Often members communicate through their pledging / giving. This could be about dissatisfaction with the direction things are going, or frustration with clergy that has gone unvoiced. It could also be an indication that something is wrong in a household – a loss of income, a health issue, a change of some other type. If a member in good standing suddenly stops pledging or reduces their pledge significantly, then it could be an indication that something is wrong. The clergy should know, so they can follow up.
2. The clergy may know about a household situation, and a reason that a particular person or family should be handled more delicately in this year's pledge campaign. Giving your a chance to look at the list and to make notes or to take a household off the list and assign it to themselves will be an appropriate pastoral response.

The bottom line here is that *we should trust that our clergy are good at setting and maintaining boundaries*. They see beyond the gift potential of a family and should be made aware of pledge conditions and have the opportunity to inform the campaign.

5. Educate

Year-round education efforts and focused teaching during the annual stewardship emphasis period are both essential. Education events for the annual pledge drive should include some sort of gathering(s) of representatives of at least 25% of the households of the congregation.

Training sessions should provide those who attend with an opportunity to hear the witness of one or more voices from the congregation and/or outside speakers. Also, the training experience should include reflection on these questions:

1. What is it that God is inviting us to do, as revealed in scripture?
2. Just where am I in responding to this invitation?
3. What is it that God is promising me (i.e., eternal life)?
4. How can I be faithful in my response?

6. Send Inviting Messages

Witness statements should focus not on what folks *should do*, but rather on what the person making the witness has to share in regard to

1. What they believe
2. What they do in response to what they believe
3. What difference it makes in their life
4. A message expressing “I invite you to join me...”

7. Response System

Design an appropriate response system for distributing pledge cards, for returning pledge cards, and for tabulating and reporting results. Sample delivery systems include:

- mailing with a letter
- mailing with a letter and a brochure explaining a current vision for the mission or ministry of the parish
- distribution at a parish-wide festive meal event, with follow-up mailing to those who don’t respond at the event
- distribution at multiple small gatherings such as cottage meetings.

Responses are often made by mail, placement in the offering plate, and/or returning in a ceremonial way in the context of a worship service.

8. Acknowledgement

Write personal thank you notes to those who pledge. Handwritten notes are best, and notes from the Rector/Vicar/Pastor are preferable. Include acknowledgment of the amount of the pledge and invite response if the amount doesn’t agree with what the person(s) thought they

pledged. Include appreciation for the various ways in which the recipient makes a difference in the life of the parish.

9. Follow Up on Those Who Do Not Pledge

It is essential to follow through on a timely basis with mail, telephone or a personal visit after the formal Pledge Sunday/Ingathering Sunday/Commitment Sunday. Normally, two weeks beyond Pledge Sunday is a sufficient grace period before beginning the wrap-up effort.

For persons without a history of giving to the church for the past three years, there is probably little need to continue to contact them beyond a single letter which invites their response and participation in providing for the ministry of the parish. For those who have a history of regular giving, you may want to first follow-up by sending a letter with another pledge card and then, if necessary, making a personal contact, i.e., telephone call or visit. Remember: a personal contact does not take place unless one person directly talks to another person; messages left on answering machines do not count as a personal contact.

10. Celebrate and Reward Workers

Those who worked on the pledge program should receive appropriate personal thank you notes, recognition during a regular worship service, and a special festive party event.

11. Evaluate

Assess what you did as thoroughly and conscientiously as possible in a non-accusatory manner. Include your insights and observations. Maintain a written record for the benefit of future generations of leadership and the future Stewardship Ministry Team.

Stewardship Committee Job Descriptions

Whether your church calls it a Stewardship Committee, a Generosity Team, a Pledge Campaign Task Force, or anything else, having a well-trained and highly functioning group dedicated to generosity will elevate the role and results of fundraising in your church. Key to a well-organized and functioning team is having job descriptions for the various roles and responsibilities of the members.



“It was a learning experience, for sure,” said Bill S. of Grace Episcopal Church. “A week before our annual pledge drive started, a member of my stewardship committee quit because she had not realized she would be asked to talk to people about making their gift. I sort of thought that was understood...” We might hear this statement from Bill and agree with him, but we are forgetting that fundraising and talking about money is counter-cultural. It takes a special person, called to do the work of Stewardship, to engage money and meaning. It is up to us to train, support, and recruit the people who will help us.

A companion document to this one is *Forming the Campaign Team: A Clergy Guide* <https://www.tens.org/resource-library/tools-best-practices/forming-the-campaign-team-a-clergy-guide/>. This can also be accessed on the TENS Website.

What follows here are job descriptions for each role on a Stewardship Team.



Stewardship Committee Chair

The Chair of the Stewardship Committee plays an important role in resourcing ministry in your congregation. Ideally, the chair serves on the vestry, or at least is willing to work very closely with the vestry in a liaison role. The work mainly consists of convening the stewardship team and supporting them by making sure they have the materials, training, and time they need to do their work

- Can serve as liaison between clergy, vestry, and committee
- Ideally serves as a member of the vestry
- Serves as convener to the committee – chairs meetings, helps in recruiting the team
- Works with Finance Committee, Vestry, and Clergy to set goals for ministry resourcing
- Can set and meet deadlines and keep the campaign moving forward
- Willing to be a public face for stewardship in the congregation (write or sign letters, be on the website)
- Works with Clergy to help education and form the congregation in stewardship
- Works with all involved in thanking the congregation for their pledges
- Works with Finance Committee and Clergy to manage any stewardship formation budget, including training, books, or other resources necessary for stewardship campaigns

General Skills

- Make your own annual gift to support your church's operations
- Have a passion for the mission of The Church, and for *your* Church
- Understand that generosity and gratitude come from the Gospel
- Recognize God's abundance in all things
- Be connected via networks to your congregation
- Be able to articulate your church's mission in your community – how you are embedded or engaged in your neighborhood
- Ready to talk about faith and money with fellow parishioners.
- Willing to share your story of involvement and support for your church – articulate why you choose to be a member and support with your gifts

- Knows the art of discretion – talking about money is sensitive. Know what information to share, and what to hold
- Can exercise leadership in your church
- Has time to commit to the work of fundraising
- Willing to engage in learning and formation to deepen stewardship practices
- Reveals to everyone through words and action an abiding love for God in the person of Jesus and in the Church



Pledge / Recording Secretary

Some congregations name a person to this role, others invite their Treasurer or Finance Committee to do this work. Whatever the custom in your congregation, having someone responsible for keeping track of the pledge process and acknowledgment ensures transparency and accountability as well as accuracy.

- Tracks the pledge process
- Works with Treasurer and/or Clergy to report progress and final numbers for campaign participation
- Works with Treasurer and/or Clergy to ensure accurate pledge letters, statements, and follow-up
- Connects donors with other resources should they choose to give from donor advised funds, securities, planned gifts, or retirement accounts.

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Events Coordinator

Many pledge campaigns contain at least one event to them. The role of Event Coordinator is an important one in containing this work. As we all know, event planning can take up the time and effort of many people, and having a group dedicated to this work allows the rest of the committee to focus on the other aspects of the campaign. If your congregation is one that has a kick-off, in-gathering, or dinner-church meetings for your pledge campaigns, the event coordinator can help making sure everyone who wants to be a part of an event is included.

- Issues invitations for kick-off, ingathering, or other events
- Works with Finance Committee to manage a budget in applicable
- Maintains enrollment / sign-up lists for events
- Organizes food, beverage, set-up, take-down, and clean-up, including any necessary rentals or vendors

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Communications and Collateral Specialist

The Communications Specialist works with the Stewardship Committee to define the case elements of the campaign and to design them. Creating compelling case materials is key to having a successful campaign. The Communications Specialist works with different ministries, clergy, and volunteers to obtain measures and metrics for ministry, and creates an impact statement.

- Works with Clergy and Committee to design campaign case documents including brochures and narrative budgets
- Works with committee members to put stewardship materials on website and social media
- Participates with Clergy to craft talking points, newsletter articles, or other writing / speaking / video elements of campaign
- Helps to educate members about the ministry talking points of the church
- Coordinates mission testimonials and other direct input from members in articulating the mission of the church

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Member at Large

- Attend committee meetings
- Be willing to contribute and serve on sub-committees and task forces as required
- Find new and exciting ways to contribute your time, talent, and treasure to ministry for the Church
- Inspire your friends and fellow members
- Give cheerfully
- Participate in events, and in the wrap-up / follow-up
- Be able and willing to make personal phone calls to follow-up on pledges
- Maintain and manage a case-load of members to steward through the process of the campaign

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THE ESSENTIAL ANNUAL CAMPAIGN TIMELINE

The Barnabas Project – Web Conference #4

Jan / Feb: Recruit Committee:

- Organizer, Chaplain, and Hospitality Chair
- Organizer begins to develop a timeline and tasks
- Chaplain begins to develop Bible study for each meeting
- Hospitality Chair begins to think about what kind of invitational event may be helpful this year.

March and April: Begin to meet monthly

- **EVERY meeting** begins with prayer for the parish and its ministries, engages Scripture, and reflects on the work of the parish:
 - *Where are we being good stewards?*
 - *Where do we see the spirit of generosity at work?*
 - *With what gifts has God blessed our parish?*
 - *What gifts do we have to celebrate?*
- Begin developing a plan for how you will share these reflections with congregation.
- Historical Data Analysis

May : Pray intentionally for the parish and its ministries, Engage Scripture, Continue Reflection

- Develop theme materials and plan use as part of scheduled activities.
- Decide on invitation method: festive meal, faithful member canvass
- Put dates on parish calendar.

June: Pray intentionally for the parish and its ministries, Engage Scripture, Continue Reflection

- Review calendar of activities and adjust timetable.
- Design invitation event.
- Begin to identify people to serve as discussion leaders at the invitation event.

July: Pray intentionally for the parish and its ministries, Engage Scripture, Continue Reflection

- Complete list of participants for invitation event.
- Design pledge card.
- Finalize details of events for education period

August: Pray intentionally for the parish and its ministries, Engage Scripture, Continue Reflection

- Recruit leaders for training event.
- Design training exercises.

September: Pray, reflect on work of parish, engage scripture, review calendar of activities and adjust timetable.

- Mail letter from Rector reflecting on personal giving and the vision of the parish.
- Begin to publicize invitation event.
- Conduct your training event.
- Plan the liturgical celebration.

October: Pray intentionally for the parish and its ministries, Engage Scripture, Continue Reflection

- Letter from stewardship committee members reflecting on personal giving and the work of the parish
- Conduct invitation event
- Liturgical ingathering
- Follow-up and thank-you
- Celebration

January: Annual Meeting, Budget and Thank You all, again