

Developing a Vestry Stewardship Statement

Purposes: ❶ To help lead the congregation from a limited view of scarcity to the broader perspective of God's abundance to mankind. ❷ To show the congregation that financial decision-making can be best done with reflection and prayer.

Process:

Before the statement is composed, the Vestry & the Stewardship Team should develop a specific plan for how it is to be used. This plan would determine how the statement would be shared and integrated into the congregation. An ideal statement itself can be drafted in two hours with Bible Study and reflection. A suggested passage would be Matthew 6:24-33.

Initially, Vestry members would hear the passage read aloud, and then would be asked to underline what *God is asking of us in the passage*. Answers would be listed on the left side of an easel. The passage would be read a second time, and the time the vestry would be asked *what God is promising us in the passage*. Answers to the second question would be recorded on the right side of the easel pad. With these two lists composed of demands and promises, the vestry would be asked to divide into three groups.

Each group is assigned to answer one of the following questions:

1. What do I believe about God and money? (*We Believe*)
2. What am I committed to doing about making my faith and my relationship with God a more integral part of how I think and act about financial decisions? (*We Commit*)
3. To what action, process, practice and/or reflection do I want to invite the congregation? (*We invite*)

The statements from each group would be shared aloud with feedback notes made. The goal is to develop a statement that everyone on the vestry can honestly endorse.

Example:

[We believe that] God, who is the giver of every good gift, You are ever present in our lives and in the world. You act through us, your people, to care for and provide for everyone.

[We invite] We pray for the courage to break out of our insecurity and fear around money as we deepen our understanding of our relationship to You and how we use our financial resources to do Your work in the world.

[We commit] We pray these things that we might know You better, that You will increase our desire and ability to give and help others through ministry and friendship and to gratefully commit ourselves to the work You have given us to do. AMEN.

— from Trinity Episcopal Church in Swanton, VT (October 2010)

— from a blog by Rev. Angela Emerson