

## Faith Matters:

### The Holy Ordinary

by Suzanne Guthrie

**B**y the fourth century, you could become a Christian without risking your life. Church inevitably became entangled with private clubs, government posts and social networks. The urge to offer oneself wholly in martyrdom never diminished, however, and a movement was born. Men and women left civilization for an adventure of “living martyrdom” in the deserts of Egypt, Syria and Palestine.

So what did the abbas and ammas *do* once they made their big break and settled into their caves or huts? Despite occasional extraordinary encounters with animals and miracles of self-generating bread or oil or communion wine, they lived mundane lives. They wove baskets or reed mats to sell at market. They made sandals. They formed collectives for worship and for selling their crafts, for gathering food and water and fuel. They tended gardens, and they struggled to get along with each other.

A monk who had been stealing the wares of his neighbor monk confessed on his deathbed, “Lo, these many years, I’ve stolen your work and passed it off as mine!” “Yes, my dear brother, I know. But, you see, because of you I’ve become a saint!”

Western monasticism emerged from the passion to give oneself wholly, followed by a life of mundane work and the struggle to coexist. The dramatic flight from civilization resulted in a simple embrace of the ordinary.

My husband and I live with Episcopal nuns on an organic farm. I love my thrillingly dull life. We grow food. We pray. We love the story of the two monks: we accuse each other of making us saints.

Recently while we were all gathered around a table admiring a cross-section of radish, another new community member and I



simultaneously experienced a sense of absurdity. We locked eyes and burst out laughing.

Embracing the ordinary takes some remedial adjustment. After having spent a lifetime multitasking, strategizing, practicing “triage” on my calendar, and squeezing to “get the most” out of every moment, stopping to admire a cross-section of radish seems way too funny. We’re learning how to fit less into a minute, not more. A slice of radish is as much a portal into the sacrament of the present moment as singing the divine office – but you have to show up in the present just as you have to show up for chapel.

In *A Poetry Handbook*, Mary Oliver says, “If Romeo and Juliet had made appointments to meet, in the moonlight-swept orchard, in all peril and sweetness of

conspiracy, and then more often than not failed to meet – one or the other lagging, or afraid, or busy elsewhere – there would have been no romance, no passion...” She goes on to remind writers that they have to show up for their appointments to write. She could be reminding us about prayer.

The monastic life is a life of appointments: meditation, lauds, Eucharist, work, noon prayers, rest, work, Vespers, meditation, Compline. Day after day. Bells call you to gather and again to focus, call you from the task at hand to a never-ceasing appointment with the Divine. They call you from worrying about the past or future into giving yourself generously to the Eternal Present. The ordinariness is designed to help you show up. As one sister says, “We’re called to live in absolute detachment in order to live in absolute connection.”

I’m an apprentice to the paradox of slowing down to see more. Live as if the world will end tomorrow, but live as if the

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# GROWING YOUR CHURCH

## When Economic Conditions are Hard

by Kathy Copas



Economic times are dreary – as if any of us need a reminder! And one of the most common questions I receive as I travel about, working with our parishes [in the Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis], is “How can we grow our church when we don’t have any money to commit to advertising ourselves?”

The truth is, with the exception of your web site, the traditional trappings of brochures, ads and other marketing tools *aren't* proven to grow churches. Statistically, 80% of the people in Episcopal churches today are there for one reason: another Episcopalian asked/invited them!

Your goals, then – especially in these tougher times – are to prepare your parish inside and out to receive guests (and notice we call them “guests” and not “visitors!”), focus on one-on-one invitations, and then effectively assimilate guests into the life of your parish. These things don’t require dollars. They *do* require passion and commitment.

Though some of this may be familiar ground, it never hurts to ask yourself, “What’s going well with our sense of welcome in this parish? What could we perhaps do better? And what type of help could we enlist as we seek to grow?”

For now, some no-cost ideas:

### **Get together and commit as a total parish to orienting yourself to real hospitality.**

This means orienting absolutely everything to your guests, from where you park on Sunday mornings to how you do your worship bulletins and answer the telephone, to how greeters and ushers function, to what your web site is like. It means examining every aspect of your parish life from the standpoint of your guests.

### **Develop a parish covenant about how you speak to one another about your parish on Sunday morning and otherwise.**



This has to do with the language you use to describe yourselves and holding one another accountable for how you talk about things. It means consciously working on being positive and not defaulting to negative or minimalizing language in how you describe yourself as a church. It means avoiding phrases like “We used to be xyz but now we’re just...” “We really don’t have enough (money, people, kids, volunteers, parking spaces, people who will do coffee hour or teach church school – insert your favorite)” And it means realizing that Episco-speak (that Episcopal language we often use to describe places and practices in our church) can exclude people or create barriers if we don’t consciously attend to that.

### **Work at a strategic exercise to help people begin to articulate their faith stories.**

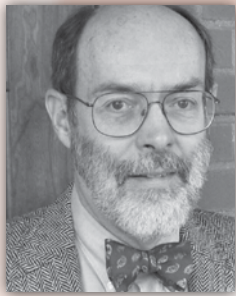
One model begins by pairing off people in your parish during church school. Involve the kids in this, too. Ask people to pair off with someone they know the least. Invite them to go off with this other person for thirty minutes and listen to each other tell their personal faith story, what they believe and why. The procedure is, while a person is telling their story for fifteen minutes, the other is listening silently; then the roles reverse. Consider doing this two or three times, mixing up people in your church. Talking about these things out loud is a bit of a learning experience for most. People learn about themselves in the context of sharing their own story. And most folks say it becomes easier to describe what they believe the more they actually do it.

### **Work with members of your parish on what I like to call the “30-second elevator pitch” to the questions.**

“So I hear you go to St. Runamuck’s church. What’s that place like?” and “Well, so what’s an Episcopalian anyway?” Develop these questions as opportunities to turn conversation into invitation, instead of times to be self-deprecating, as in, “Well, we used to be a big church several years ago but now we don’t have too many people or too much money and we’re struggling and most people are now going to that megachurch out on the

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# Sharing Your Story: The Greatest Gift You Can Give



The phone rang in my office one day. I was a banker back then. It was over 25 years ago, but I still remember the phone call as if it were yesterday. The voice I heard on the other end of the line was that of The Rev. Dr. Thomas H. Carson, at that time the Episcopal Church's Executive for Stewardship at the Church Center in New York City. I heard him asking me

if I would agree to become a Stewardship Area Representative – STAR – the term his office gave to adjunct stewardship consultants who assisted dioceses and parishes all around the Episcopal Church.

I was honored to be asked! Dr. Carson and some of the other STARS had assisted our diocesan stewardship commission, and I had learned much from him and the other STARS. But I found myself stuttering and stammering that I did not feel I knew enough or was equipped enough to step into the role Dr. Carson was asking me to serve. “What can I possibly bring to this ministry?” I found myself asking.

Dr. Carson, in his deep voice and southern drawl, responded, “Bruce, just go where we ask you to go, be yourself, and tell your story.” It is the best advice he could have given me, and I still thank God for it, for I found I've been trying to follow it ever since. Whenever I'm invited somewhere to do stewardship formation work, I find myself beginning by telling my story.

You see, those of us who work in the stewardship vineyard can dazzle people with ideas for stewardship financial commitment programs and year-round stewardship formation ideas, but the most important gift we can give is the gift of our story. In fact, I'm convinced that the most precious gift one person of faith can give to another is the gift of one's faith journey. The story of one's spiritual journey tells how we see God working in our lives, how we are striving to use the gifts God has entrusted to us to do the work God has given us to do, and how we are striving to be the stewards God created us to be.

Ever since Dr. Carson and I had that conversation – and thanks be to God, ever since I accepted his invitation – I have

felt privileged to serve in the ministry of stewardship formation. I've long since left the world of banking to work as a diocesan financial officer and assistant to the bishop for stewardship in two dioceses. And while I've retired from my work as diocesan financial administrator, I continue in semi-retirement to serve as a stewardship missionary in the diocese of Western Massachusetts and in the larger Church. I like to say that I used to work on one side of the street, but now I work the other. At first I worked the side of the street that claimed scarcity and encouraged people to hold onto their financial wealth as a means to security and happiness. But now I work on the other side of the street, God's side of the street, the side that claims abundance and encourages people to share what God has entrusted to them out of the sure knowledge that there is indeed enough, and that we receive through what we give.

One of the most important ways in which we can encourage people to find the happiness of living in God's abundance is by telling our stories, telling how God is indeed blessing us as we strive to be loving thankful stewards of all that God entrusts to us. I would never have begun the journey of stewardship – of embracing the critically important spiritual disciplines that led me to become a loving, joyful, thankful steward who knows how to give sacrificially – had I not heard the many wonderfully encouraging and energizing stories told by others who were embracing the spiritual disciplines that were enriching and bringing joy to their lives. It was those stories that jump-started my own spiritual journey. It was their stories that caused me to embrace the spiritual disciplines – yes, including tithing! – that brought joy and meaning to my life. And it is the story of that transformation in my own life that is the best gift I can offer to others.

So if you are wondering how you can encourage others to be the kind of stewards God is calling each one of us to be, consider telling your story. It's the best gift you can give. You may be wondering how in the world you can begin doing that. Some of you may think, at this moment, that it seems impossible to tell your story. Allow me to offer some suggestions about how you might, one day, accomplish it.

✿ First, think about what you believe about stewardship. What  
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words can you find to talk about God as the creator and giver of all things? How do you describe God's incredible generosity? How do you feel blessed?

- ♣ Once you have formed some statements of belief, think about how you strive to be a faithful, generous, loving steward. What spiritual disciplines do you embrace in your journey toward being the person God created you to be? How is your gratitude to God expressed? In what ways are you generous? How do you express your love and thanksgiving to God through words and actions?
- ♣ Finally, how does your journey feel to you? Are you making progress? Are there things you are doing and feeling that you wish others could experience as well? How would you invite others to join you in this wonderful spiritual journey of striving to be the loving, generous, thankful steward God created each of us to be?

You may want to write down your thoughts as you ponder the questions of these three general areas. You may then want to try sharing what you've written with one other person. Or beforehand, try speaking the words before a mirror, or when you are all alone.

I recall the very first time I shared my story with friends. As I was speaking the words, I could feel my hands and knees

trembling a bit, and I could even hear a little quiver in my voice. I knew I was scared and nervous, doing something I'd never done before, but I continued to speak. And when I finished telling my story, the response from my friends was so affirming that I experienced the grace of God in a way I'd never experienced it before.

Soon others were sharing their stories as well. Before we closed, we prayed, giving God great thanks for the love and the grace that each one of us had felt.

It was that very positive experience that confirmed the great wisdom of Dr. Carson: "Bruce, just go where we ask you to go, be yourself, and tell your story." That advice has sustained me in my lay ministry of stewardship formation. It has been life-giving. It continues to transform my life.

Thanks be to God!



*Bruce Rockwell, a long-time TENS member and former president of TENS' Board of Directors, continues to be in demand as a speaker, workshop leader and consultant. He can be contacted at [brockwell@comcast.net](mailto:brockwell@comcast.net). The story of Bruce's faith journey as a steward, and a well-known example of how to tell your story, is documented in his own words in [Spirituality and Money: 7 Questions That Saved My Spiritual Life](#), the booklet that set a record as TENS' best-selling resource. Order it from TENS today!*

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world will never end. Live as if the present is paradise, but don't neglect to muck out the chicken house. Drop your sense of time when the chapel bell rings, and hurry to your appointment with the Eternal Now.

Is it possible that we'll live to see the orgiastic consumer culture crumbling? If so, our human need for beauty might help us dissociate from the compulsion to possess it. Maybe when we can't enjoy the cheap adrenaline rush of going to the mall to purchase a pretty frill to bring home and wear once, we'll lose our curse of boredom. When it is financially prohibitive to acquire a glittery object to keep for a year, we won't suffer over the guilt that our shiny thing will end up on a poisonous trash pile in Guatemala to be picked apart by sick children to trade for food.

Perhaps then more of us will rediscover a passion for ordinary. We'll strive to practice finding the beauty at hand – in nature and imagination, and through exploration of the complex symmetry of the soul. But to absorb this beauty we'll need to reclaim the skill of slowness, of noticing. Each person already possesses the field in which the treasure is buried. The merchant knew to look within to find the romance, and had the common sense to sell all he had to secure that one field.



*The Rev. Suzanne Guthrie and her husband Bill Consiglio live with the sisters of The Community of the Holy Spirit at their convent and organic farm in Brewster, New York. Suzanne is an Episcopal priest and the author of [Praying the Hours](#) and [Grace's Window](#). She creates a weekly online retreat based on the coming Sunday's Gospel at her web site <http://www.edgeofenclosure.org>.*

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# Money and Liturgy: Some Things to Do with the Plate



By The Rt. Rev. Gregory H. Rickel



In the midst of liturgy is the stewardship of our relationships, our life together, our call to be in and minister to the world. While we tend to focus on money when we speak of stewardship, money is actually only a very small part of this way of life for us. However, since we are in that “pledge season” at the moment, I would like to discuss the place of money in our liturgy.

One thing I really noticed when I moved to an ordained role in the church was how infrequently the plate came to me. It was as if I was now “off the hook.” I eventually asked that it be passed to me so people could see me putting in an offering. I am happy to say it happens at our cathedral now, since I asked about that some time ago. I see at some diocesan conventions and other church events that ushers bypass all of the robed “professionals.” I usually make a scene when this happens.

Last year I was part of a ceremony in which I was vested in the pews as a board member. Our prior two days of meeting time with the board was all about our financial situation and the fact that we had to “lead” on turning it around. Yet in this service the bypassing happened as usual. I stood up and quietly asked those around me if they had intended to place an offering in the plate. Indeed many of them had planned to do just that, and so I began collecting money from the robed throng. In a few short minutes I had hundreds of dollars in my hand, and I rather unceremoniously carried it back to the shocked ushers standing at the rear of the nave, waiting to go forward.

People offer many reasons for the bypass: “You have vestments on so we think it might be difficult for you to get to your wallet!” “It seems rude to ask our board to give.” On the contrary – all should be offered the chance to give alms and to tangibly offer ourselves.

Money is one of the only tangible things we now bring to liturgy as a body. In earlier times the bread and wine brought to the service to share actually came from the homes of those who brought it forward, which is sometimes true today, but not nearly as much. What our money symbolizes is the “sweat” of our lives. We put ourselves on the altar, for every one of us has

given part of our lives in order to have that money, no matter the amount, which has gone forward and is offered to God.

We often seem to shy away from this. In my travels I once actually witnessed a service in which the offering was brought forward by the ushers. It was veiled, covered up so no one could possibly see the money. It was raised up from about 25 feet away from the altar, the priest gave the sign of the cross from the distance, and then the offering was whisked away to an office just off the nave. I could actually see the money being counted as we said our prayers. Odd, to say the least.

It has always been very important for me to place the offering on the altar and to have it present there throughout our prayers. This symbol makes it clear that we do not see it as offensive or dirty or something we must apologize for in our Christian life. In fact, it is truly the offering of ourselves: it is us on the altar.

Equally, when we don’t do this, it also symbolizes something, even if words are never said. Failing to place the offering on the altar signals that perhaps we should apologize for this part of our life together. One correlation I could make is a celebration of labor I often called for in my parish on Labor Day weekend. People were invited to bring some symbol of their vocation. (We would always joke that if you drove a forklift, please just bring the keys!) It was always powerful to see all of the symbols surrounding the altar and the church. We do the same thing every week in the form of offering what we have been given in return for our labor.

I encourage you to look for other ways we symbolize scarcity in our liturgy, and devise ways we can instead make a sign for abundance. Let’s talk about money and our feelings about it in the liturgy and celebrate the giving of that money – the offering of ourselves to God. ✝

*The Rt. Rev. Greg Rickel was elected Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Olympia (western Washington) in 2007 and is a member of TENS’ Board of Directors. He has worked in the past as a consultant in stewardship as well as additional leadership issues, and is a strongly outspoken advocate of environmental issues. Greg has a reputation for making a scene – and making sense. Contact him at [Grickel@ecww.org](mailto:Grickel@ecww.org).*

# STEWARDSHIP CONSULTANT/ MENTOR TRAINING MANUAL

July 2010 Edition

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# Why I Wish My Church Offered Online Giving

by Barbara Green



**A** few years ago, when I first heard about churches accepting donations via online giving, I thought it was a nice idea, but something I was not personally interested in. I attend a rural, historical Presbyterian church where, depending on the weather, average attendance is 85 - 150 people. (You know the old joke: Our attendance can be up or

down. Up in the mountains or down at the beach.) My church still passes out a crisp box of envelopes in January, and I write a check twice a month, place it in the envelope, and allow my eight-year-old to place the envelope face down in the plate for our family. Following the Sunday service, you can hear the tapping of the ten-key as the deacons sit in the back room, counting donations and filling out a bank deposit slip. The treasurer then drives to a separate location and places the money in his business safe until it can be deposited on Monday morning.

With this kind of simple arrangement for collecting and counting donations, why would I ever consider online giving?

In the past two years, circumstances in my life and finances have made online giving much more enticing for me. In fact I'm going to find a way to automate my giving even though my church has not made a provision for this.

**Busyness:** Our family grew by one child, a stray dog, and a horse. (Free time? Please, don't make me laugh.) I can never find those darned envelopes on Sunday morning as I'm trying to get children out the door to church and remember the diaper bag, the older child's stuff, my purse, my sheet music for the service, and whatever it was my hubby asked me to grab off the kitchen table for him.

**Too much mail and other paperwork:** I have no earthly idea how many trees die each year so that my post office box can be filled with magazines and junk mail. Despite the fact that I've filled out Junkbuster forms to reduce junk mail, the important things often get lost between the post office and my kitchen counter. (I've actually opened a birthday card from my mom a month late...but don't tell.) To cope with this, I spent a Saturday evening signing up to receive bills and investment statements

electronically. In fact, I canceled the two credit cards that did not offer electronic statements. I just don't have time for it. In every case except for my tithe and my son's school lunches, I now pay bills and donations electronically, and, in most cases, they are set up as automatic drafts so that I don't have to remember them. I also receive as many statements as possible electronically.

**Heightened compassion for the ministry my church is involved in and gratefulness for my church community:**

I answered the phone one evening recently. The man on the other end wanted to speak with my husband (his pastor). The man's voice was breaking. He could not afford his wife's medication for the month and he was desperate. As a last resort, he was seeking help from his church. It usually takes heartache like this to open our eyes to the blessings God has given us. As the economy struggles we hear heart-wrenching stories of people with no income, people losing their homes and struggling to get basic medical care or supplies. Our neighbors, friends and family, and even we, become the news stories. Because of this, I don't want to miss an opportunity to tithe. I don't want my tithe to come in late and affect the church's ability to meet ministry needs and financial obligations. I want to give more consistently, even if I'm out of town.

**I don't carry cash:** No, seriously. I just can't keep it in my wallet. Just ask the lady at Burger King who graciously (and without judgment) accepts my debit card each morning for a \$1.54 cup of coffee. (I know. I need to cut this out, but caffeine improves my writing.)

**I don't carry a checkbook:** My husband and I share a checkbook, which means neither of us knows where it is.

Many churches are finding methods for allowing members to give online. Some set up kiosks, ATMs and software tools like AccessACS's Online Giving to allow members to set up automatic and recurring donations. Ben Stroup, coordinator of LifeWay Christian Stores, says that "the trend in e-giving is a cultural move as fewer people of the younger generations carry cash." He goes on to say that "we live in a plastic, online banking world where growing numbers of people prefer to exchange funds electronically

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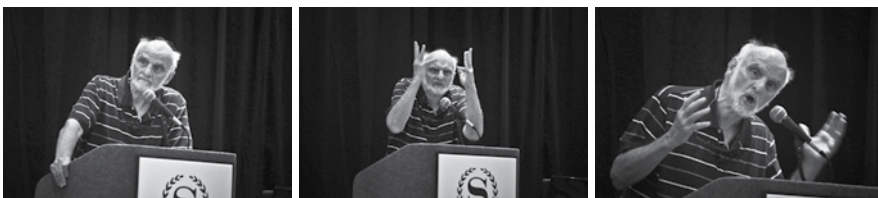
# GRACE, GRATITUDE & GENEROSITY

**2010 STEWARDSHIP CONFERENCE | JULY 30 - 31, 2010 | INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA**

The theme of TENS' annual conference was set at the opening Eucharist with the sermon preached by the Rev. Dr. Walter Brueggemann, the internationally-known theologian and author who is acknowledged by many as the greatest influence on contemporary theology and biblical exegesis. Dr. Brueggemann's opening plenary address, presented at the session immediately following worship, expanded and built on the foundation laid by his sermon.

The 180 participants, workshop presenters and TENS staff in attendance, aware of Dr. Brueggemann's volumes of written works and his renown as a preacher and lecturer, were excited and eager for the opportunity to hear him, and they were not disappointed. He addressed the need for the Church to "disentangle" the Gospel and the American Dream, asserting that anxiety is caused by ambivalence between the two. "People need truth-telling and guidance about generosity and parsimony, giving and accumulating," he said.

Additional plenaries at this year's TENS conference were offered by: the Rev. Bob Honeychurch, Officer for Congregational Vitality, The Episcopal Church; Kate Gillooly, Minister for Christian Formation and Program at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Cleveland Heights, Ohio; and Richard L. Klopp, M.A., Associate Director of the Lake Institute in Indianapolis. In addition to TENS and our host, the Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis, conference sponsors were the Episcopal Dioceses of Michigan, Ohio, and Southern Ohio, Saint Francis Community Services, Christ Church Cathedral in Indianapolis and the Episcopal Church's Office of Stewardship.



## 2010 TENS Conference DVDs

DVDs of The Rev. Dr. Walter Brueggemann's sermon and plenary session, as well as all other plenary sessions from the 2010 TENS conference, will be ready for distribution soon. Go to <http://tens.org> for information regarding the availability date and pricing.

The offering collected at the opening Eucharist of the 2010 TENS conference was forwarded to the Diocese of Olympia's Carl Knirk Memorial Scholarship Fund, which will provide scholarships, at the recommendation of the Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Olympia, to assist with the expenses of volunteers and participants in two areas of service: disaster emergency response mission trips and stewardship ministry training through workshops sponsored by TENS.



Carl, a joyful saint of God, served as the Canon for Planned Giving, Stewardship and Evangelism in the Diocese of Olympia and was a long-standing member of the TENS Board of Directors. His untimely death on May 29, 2010, is a stark reminder of one of Carl's frequent comments in his legacy stewardship presentations that "we never know when our time will come."

The total offering collected on July 30 was \$2812.66. Additional gifts to this memorial fund should be designated "Carl Knirk Memorial Scholarship Fund." Checks may be made out to TENS and mailed to the TENS office. Contributions may also be made by phone, FAX or e-mail. TENS will forward your gift in its entirety to the office of the Episcopal Diocese of Olympia.

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EPISCOPAL CHURCH CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITY RATES	
AGE	RATE
55	5.0%
60	5.2%
65	5.5%
70	5.8%
75	6.4%
80	7.2%
85	8.1%
90+	9.5%

*Online Giving – continued from page 7*

rather than carry a checkbook or cash.” ([Lifeway.com](http://Lifeway.com) August 26, 2008.)

Furthermore, Pew Internet and American Life Project reports that in 2009, 73% of American adult Internet users use the Internet on a daily basis. ([PewInternet.org](http://PewInternet.org), 2009)

For people already using online banking, the decision to donate to their church electronically may be an easy one. Like others, I have considered how this would affect my ability to provide or set an example before my children about tithing. I also had concerns about my family's participation in the worship service, because online giving removes the physical act of placing an envelope or cash offering in the offering plate on Sunday morning. In response to this, some churches make gift cards available to members and guests to place in the offering plate. These cards notify the treasurer that the person submitting it gave online and allow people to continue to participate in the ritual of giving.

If my church announced online giving tomorrow, I'd sign up. And as a result my church would receive my tithe on a consistent basis. As I have examined my motives and my behaviors, I realized that worship is an external expression of an internal devotion. When I'm quietly paying bills online, I have more time to consider my family's finances. Often I find that we can be more generous than when I'm hastily writing a check as I go out

the door (or while the Offertory is playing.) Online giving would allow my family to make tithing our first priority in our finances.

As for setting an example before my children, it is like many other things. It will be up to me and my husband to communicate how that takes place just as we must communicate other matters of the heart that are unseen to our children. My son is well aware of the fact that I pay bills online. We recently sat down together and made an online donation to a charitable organization that his school encourages project participation with. He was amazed at the pictures on the web site, and the images made his project more important to him. It generated a wonderful discussion about the children receiving those gifts. This new experience of donating online gave me a gift I wasn't expecting. ✝

*Barbara Green is the manager of Information Design & Development for ACS Technologies. She is a pastor's wife and a mom to two kids, two dogs, an ornery cat, and a gentle horse. She has served in various churches as a volunteer musician, and currently serves at Union Presbyterian Church (PCA), in Salters, SC*

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highway....” The heart of the matter is getting parishioners to learn to articulate what their personal passion is – exactly what it is that prompts them to get out of bed on Sunday mornings and show up!

**Develop a genuine system for guest assimilation.**

This means a plan (with follow-up tracking six months to one year out) to help turn intrigued guests into involved members. The secret: it is all about affiliation. Even more so than “God,” this is what the great majority of your guests are initially seeking from their visit with you. Don’t leave good assimilation to chance or expect the rector, the guest or some other party to be responsible for it. Helping your guests begin a timely journey to becoming assimilated into the life of your parish is an area where *everyone* in your congregation has a very important role.

**Set a parish-wide agreed-upon standard for your members in giving priority to guests.**

It isn’t about smothering people or being intrusive. It is about basic kindness and openness. One possible simple covenant you can try as a standard: ask everyone to agree that, before they begin to congregate with their friends or family at coffee hour, they will make it a point to briefly greet at least one person they haven’t met or know very little about.

**Work very hard at helping members of your parish stay informed about the most basic information about your church.**

Examples: When is your office generally open? When is your next church social event? Where is the nursery? Where do people go for church school and coffee hour? While these types of things may seem like no-brainer assumptions, in one visit to a parish I heard a member share with a guest who asked them that they thought the church had stopped doing coffee hour some time ago. Actually, that parish still offered it just down the main hallway every week!

**Explore Percept (starting with a FirstView report on [link2lead.com](http://link2lead.com)) to determine what issues your local community is most concerned about.**

If you don’t have the volunteer base to begin to address those issues, at least establish your parish as a place for the community to unpack the issues and envision strategies for solving them. Research has established that mission, mission, mission is one of the primary ways churches grow – finding a need and filling it.

★ **Put a person or group of people in charge of making the exterior of your building look as compelling, interesting and different each week as possible.**

Let the external appearance of your building non-verbally reflect what you are trying to communicate about what goes on inside. Example: to say non-verbally that you are a kid-friendly church, get children’s art projects out on the front lawn for passers-by to see.

★ **Get as many people into your building as possible for community events, meetings or absolutely anything.**

Then take the second step of having a member of your parish leadership go to the event or meeting, welcoming participants, and extend an invitation for Sunday mornings. As Episcopalians we’re often good at letting groups use our facilities, but sometimes aren’t so good at making real connections between these groups and our church family.

**Involve community groups, leaders and kids into your liturgy.**

For example, when a child is invited from a local school orchestra program to play a cello solo on Sunday morning, your congregation inevitably comes to include that child, his parents and grandparents, siblings and usually an assorted aunt or uncle. This is one of the ways we can grow the numbers of children and families in our midst. There are many talented, skillful people in each of our communities who could add much to enrich our liturgy through music, art, dance and other creative endeavors. Often all it takes is asking them!

**Begin a community recognition program.**

A small start: invite your mayor to be presented with a certificate in appreciation for their work on a particular community issue. Take a photo and send it to your local newspaper. Create a good buzz with community shapemakers in this way.

★ **Extend your community recognition program by asking someone (or some group) to be responsible for going through local newspapers.**

The purpose is to seek out individuals who have achieved something (an award, promotion, etc.) and sending them a personal note from your parish congratulating them and including an invitation to visit your church. This could be an excellent task for one of your shut-ins who has a desire to stay active with your growth as a congregation.

*please see page 11*

Growing Your Church – continued from page 10

**Develop total excellence, and explain yourself, when it comes to funerals and other large public worship services.**

A funeral offers you the rare opportunity to get a large group of local people into your building, experiencing your liturgy for the first time.

If you decide you want to unpack and explore some of your issues, call me at 502-345-6406 or drop me a note at [KathyCopas@aol.com](mailto:KathyCopas@aol.com). There are all sorts of ways to help you energize your welcome! ✝

*Kathy Copas is Coordinator of Communication and Evangelism in the Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis, where her blog, Evangelism and Communication, can be found on their web site [www.indydio.org](http://www.indydio.org). Kathy manages electronic and print communication for the diocese, as well as assists parishes with telling their story, strengthening their hospitality and growing their church.*

## Welcome Back! David Rushton Re-elected to TENS Board of Directors

A Financial Development Consultant working primarily in the Christian community in Canada for nearly two decades, David Rushton currently serves as a consultant to the Anglican Church of Canada. He retired in 2002 after eleven years as the Diocese of new Westminster's Planned Giving Officer and in 2003 began the first of two consecutive terms on TENS'



Board of Directors. When David went off the Board in 2009 his expertise was greatly missed, and he was re-elected at the July 2010 Board meeting held in Indianapolis. David and his wife reside in Vancouver, BC, where he is active in the stewardship and planned giving programs at his own parish and also frequently acts as stewardship and development consultant to area congregations.

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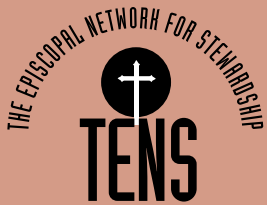
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# ★ UPCOMING EVENTS

## **Ecumenical Center for Stewardship 2010 Leadership Seminar, November 29 - December 2, St. Pete Beach, FL.**

Mike Graves, Professor of Preaching & Director of Continuing Education, Saint Paul School of Theology, Kansas City, MO; Barbara Fullerton, Stewardship Development Officer, The United Church of Canada, Toronto, ONT; Janet Jamieson, Associate Professor of Accounting/Business, and Philip Jamieson, Associate Professor of Pastoral Theology, both from the University of Dubuque in Dubuque, IA; and Chip Richter, singer-songwriter. Accommodations at the Sierra Beach Resort and Conference Center Hotel not included in registration fee of \$375 (group discounts available). For more information go to [www.escladershipseminar.com](http://www.escladershipseminar.com).

**"Money Follows Mission: Stewardship Practices for the Body of Christ," 2011 Northeast Ecumenical Stewardship Conference, March 18-19, 2011, Holiday Inn in Marlboro, MA.** Sponsored by the Northeast Ecumenical Stewardship Council. Plenary speaker is the Rev. Mike Slaughter, Chief Dreamer of Ginghamburg Church, a catalyst for change in the worldwide church. He is the author of numerous books including *Money Matters: Financial Freedom for All God's Children*. More information to be available soon.

**Faith and Money Network** offers workshops and retreats that equip people to explore the many aspects of their relationship with money within the grounding of their faith. Workshops can be programmed to fit evening and weekend time periods. At the core of Faith and Money Network events is the space and freedom to ask questions and find one's own answers. The atmosphere of trust and confidentiality that is created empowers people to get in touch with their beliefs, attitudes and actions regarding money. People at a Faith and Money Network event can engage with experienced, faithful leaders and other thoughtful participants around the deep issues of money and faith. See our eight-week *Faith and Money Study Guide* for small groups. For more information visit [www.faithandmoneynetwork.org](http://www.faithandmoneynetwork.org).

★ **TENS will publicize your events in this space and on our website.** Please contact Tom Gossen or Ann Elizabeth Bishop by calling the TENS office or sending e-mail to [tens@tens.org](mailto:tens@tens.org). *Networking* is a bimonthly publication, so send your information as early as possible.

**Sponsorship/Hosting Opportunities for future TENS events are available.** If interested in participation in the planning of a national or regional event, please contact Tom Gossen at [tom@tens.org](mailto:tom@tens.org).

*Networking*, the official newsletter of The Episcopal Network for Stewardship, Inc., is published six times annually. Requests for membership information are welcomed. For information you may: Visit our home page on the Internet at: <http://TENS.org> • Telephone 800-699-2669 (toll-free in US and Canada) or 316-686-0470 • Write to 345 S. Hydraulic, Wichita, KS 67211 • Fax: 316-686-9102 • E-mail: [TENS@TENS.org](mailto:TENS@TENS.org) © 2010 The Episcopal Network for Stewardship ~ We know you're going to copy material from this publication. Please acknowledge this newsletter as the source document so that others may find their way to become members of TENS. And if you yourself are not a member, please join TENS today. TENS is an independent, not-for-profit 501(c)3 corporation. ✦ Printed in the USA