

## Preaching Stewardship: Confessions of a Convert

by The Rev. Dr. David Lose



I love stewardship preaching. Honestly.

But that was not always the case. I used to, if not dread it, at least really not look forward to it. Actually, that is not quite true. I was quite comfortable with talking about stewardship of our time and our talents. It was bringing up our “treasure” that scared me. Why?

All the usual reasons:

- ▶ General unease with talking about money. After all, the three topics you are to avoid talking about in public are money, politics, and religion – which means that the stewardship sermon names not one but two of these taboo subjects!
- ▶ Concern about exposing my own giving to public scrutiny. Even though I was a good giver, the thought of “going public” still made me very nervous.
- ▶ Worry that my preaching would seem self-serving. My salary came from a budget that was, of course, affected by the “success” of our stewardship efforts.

So what changed? Somewhere early in my ministry, I discovered two things.

### Helpful Discoveries

*It's not about money; it's about values.*

Okay, so it is about money. But beneath the money rests the far more important and more interesting issue of values.

We have, I believe, two kinds of values. Our stated, conscious values are those we name out loud when we are talking about the things that are really important to us. Our operative, and often unconscious, values are the ones that

actually guide our behavior.

Wait a second, you protest, shouldn't these be the same? Ideally, yes. But often they are not. And the slight lurch of your stomach each time you go ahead and charge a purchase that exceeds what you promised yourself you would spend tells you so. You know that feeling and so do I. It indicates that something is getting in the way of our stated values and causing us to act in ways that aren't true to ourselves, let alone financially responsible.

It may be that we have gotten caught up in the cultural penchant to equate possessions with status or, more perniciously, with happiness. It may be that we spend to make ourselves feel better when we feel stressed or down. It may be that buying something feels like an accomplishment. (Ebay's tag line comes to mind: “Shop Victoriously!”)

Whatever the reason, our behavior does not always reflect our stated values and this dissonance troubles many of us. One of the gifts stewardship preaching can render is an opportunity to invite us to examine our operative values by looking at our budget or, assuming most of us do not have one, our banking or credit card statements. We all want to live in consonance with what we believe. Stewardship preaching can help us do that.

*People want to talk about this stuff!*

This was the big shocker for me. I assumed most people did not like stewardship sermons. I was wrong. Time and again parishioners have thanked me for bringing up something that is, to put it mildly, a huge part of their lives. Open, honest conversation about our role as God's stewards provides people with a biblical and theological framework that helps them make sense of an important and pervasive aspect of their lives. It provides them one more way of connecting their faith lives on Sunday morning with the rest of their lives and work.

*please see page 9*

# Your MONEY Autobiography

by Pastor Ginger Anderson-Larson



There is a disaster in your community, and opportunities for giving donations abound. What is your response? You receive a cash gift for your birthday. What do you do with it? Have you ever wondered why you respond the way you do to a situation that involves money? How do you make your choices for earning, spending, giving, saving, and investing money?

Through your life you have accumulated many messages about money. These messages have come from your parents and family, advertisers, teachers, the culture around you and your faith community. All of these messages have contributed to forming you in your attitudes, choices, and actions in relation to the role of money in your life.

A “Money Autobiography” is a resource to assist you in reflecting on the story of your life in relationship to money. The intent is to provide a path for you to discover more clearly your relationship to money and how it has been formed during your lifetime. In the course of writing a money autobiography, some discover that money controls them. Others discover that they control money. We can also ask: “Where is God in the midst of this? What is God’s desire for me in relationship to money?” There is a kind of adventure in the discovery process!

The Bible reveals to us that we are children of a generous, gracious, merciful and forgiving God. As those who seek to embrace our baptismal calling, living as children of God, our lives are to reflect the God who loves us, claims us and sends us into the world to live and love each other as God loves us. To love each other as God loves us includes being generous, as God is generous. Our brokenness often causes us to revert to self-centered and selfish ways, contrary to even our own best desires and intentions. Why does this happen? An awareness of our formation in relationship to money can provide some clues to understanding the answer to this question.

As you begin writing your money autobiography, it is important to acknowledge that reflecting on your story may seem uncomfortable. Formation in relation to money often includes

the overt or covert message that you are not to think about these things or talk about them outside the family. But what you remember, answer and ponder in this exercise is only for your own well-being. It is not intended to be shared with others except at your choosing. The gift of self-awareness can, however, be experienced as a key to a new realm of freedom and discovery: “Oh, that is why I do/say/think this way in a particular situation!” Especially as one may seek to grow the capacity to be a “cheerful giver,” this self-awareness can become truly significant.

When the time comes to begin reflecting and writing, begin prayerfully, remembering that God is in the midst of your story. Remember also that the God who created you and loves you longs for your health and well-being even more than you do. Invite the Holy Spirit to lead and guide you, that the insights gained will contribute to your health and well-being. Scripture will also contribute to opening yourself to this process.

Are you ready? If so, you will find the prompts and questions on the next page will help you construct your money autobiography. Remember, this is your story. There are no right or wrong answers; simply note the experiences and feelings that come to mind. Record your responses in a way that is helpful and meaningful for you.

Talking about your money autobiography with a trusted confidant, friend, spiritual director or pastor will increase its potential to bear fruit in your life. You may ask such a person simply to listen and pray, or you may invite questions. Again, remember that this is your story. It is not to be criticized. It is to be received for what it is, to allow the creative and life-giving work of the Holy Spirit to flow so that God may be glorified in your life.

The Holy Spirit promises to be at work in, through and beyond the process for the purpose of attuning your life more closely to Jesus Christ. As we grow in desire and capacity to open our lives to the leading of the Holy Spirit in relationship to money, we know not where it will lead – except we really do. We will be led to reflect all the more the compassionate care and generosity of God as God has been revealed in Jesus Christ. Insofar as past formation (that which causes us to be limited or even bound to the past) is loosened and lessened in power, our lives are freed to let our treasure be with God alone.

*please see page 3*



# Some Questions to Use for Your Money Autobiography

## GROWING UP

- ◆ What were the economic conditions of your family in your growing up years?
- ◆ Describe the first residence you can remember. Did your housing change over the years?
- ◆ What was the prevailing attitude about money in your family? Never enough? Plenty? Not talked about? Talked about openly?
- ◆ How did you come to have money in your possession as a child? Allowance? Ask for it? Work for it? Given as needed? How did you feel about this?
- ◆ Who taught you how to give? What were you taught?
- ◆ Describe a time when you became aware that you had more money than some of your friends and a time when you realized you had less money than some others.

## TEENS TO ADULTHOOD

- ◆ Recall events and experiences from high school that involved things like clothes, cars, friends, etc. What associations do the memories have with money?
- ◆ Did the amount of money you had as a teenager relate to your feelings of self-worth?
- ◆ When did you open your first bank account, and what was the significance of that event?
- ◆ When did you obtain your first credit card? Was it a blessing or problem?
- ◆ How did money relate to decisions about education after high school?
- ◆ Did the experience of paying your own expenses change your attitudes about money? Did you grow more alike or different from how your parents dealt with money?
- ◆ How has career and/or family shaped your current views about money?

## JOURNEY OF FAITH

- ◆ What are the things you remember hearing about giving during your growing-up years – proverbs, maxims, spoken (or unspoken) instructions about money?
- ◆ How were these teachings related to your faith and God?
- ◆ Ponder the legacy regarding money that you have received thus far in your lifetime.
- ◆ What would you like to experience differently in your relationship with money? What prevents you from experiencing it? What inspires you to grow into this new relationship?
- ◆ Jesus teaches that where one's treasure is, there will be one's heart also. Where is your treasure and where is your heart? Are they where you long for them to be?
- ◆ What do you sense the Holy Spirit may be leading you to see differently in your relationship with money?

This article is reprinted by permission from Leading Ideas, a free online newsletter of the Lewis Center for Church Leadership of Wesley Theological Seminary and available at [www.churchleadership.com](http://www.churchleadership.com). It has been adapted from a much longer piece, "A Money Autobiography," *Currents in Theology and Mission*, October, 2009, © 2009 Lutheran School of Theology and Mission.

*Ginger Anderson-Larson is pastor at St. John Lutheran Church in Olin, Iowa, and Zion Lutheran Church in Wyoming, Iowa. Previously she was coordinator of contextual education at Wartburg Theological Seminary. Contact Ginger at [gall213@gmail.com](mailto:gall213@gmail.com).*

# Monitoring Key Indicators of Congregational Health

by Joseph E. Arnold



Imagine driving a car at night and the dashboard lights go out. With the headlights on, you can still see the road immediately ahead of you. But you cannot see the speedometer or any of the other gauges. If it is a short trip, it may not be a problem. But what if you are on a long over-night drive? It is important to

know how much gas is left in the tank to plan appropriately.

Unfortunately, too many church leaders are leading in the dark. Congregational leaders need to develop a dashboard to monitor the basic metrics of their church. And monitoring must be done along the way, not just at the end of the year. If you only looked at your car dashboard at the end of each trip, you would miss the most important signals the indicators are sending.

There are several guidelines when developing a congregational dashboard:

- Keep it simple, up-to-date, and understandable. Whether it is a form to be filled out weekly or a computer spreadsheet, it needs to be something that people can keep up with and understand.
- Share the dashboard with other key leaders. Even if some of the trends are negative, the sooner church leaders know the problems, the better chance they have of reversing them.
- Remember to compare trends over time. We often look at things one month or one year at a time. Take the time to look at the larger, multi-year trends.

## Monitoring People and Their Engagement

What needs to be on your dashboard? One set of key indicators involves people and their engagement with various ministries. A few common metrics around engagement, such as

worship attendance and membership, are often at the top of the list of variables that churches monitor.

**Worship attendance** should be prominent on any church's dashboard. Congregations with more than one service should record the attendance for each service separately, as well as the overall total, so that changes in each service can be noted. A key metric of worship attendance is maintaining a 52-week running

average of attendance that can be compared to the same average a year ago.

**Tracking visitors** is another important task related to worship attendance. Be sure you are greeting, engaging and monitoring new and returning visitors. If there is more than one service, be sure to record visitors for each service. A key metric for gauging the success of your visitor follow-up is tracking the percentage of first-time guests who return for a second time, and how

that percentage compares to last year.

**Membership** is another important element of your dashboard – not just whether the church is growing, declining or staying the same, but how it is gaining and losing members. Are membership gains coming from professions of faith, transfers from within your denomination, or transfers from other denominations? If there are multiple services, how do they compare in terms of generating membership gains? Are membership losses coming from people moving out of the area, changing churches, dying or drifting away? Once your congregation knows these trends, you can develop appropriate strategies to deal with them. A key metric is how many new members have been received so far this year compared to the same time last year.

**Professions of faith and deaths.** Comparing the number of professions of faith to deaths is a way of monitoring those entering the faith and those leaving the church through death. A key metric is the ratio of professions of faith to deaths.

*please see page 11*





**STEWARDSHIP CONFERENCE**  
**JUNE 3-4**  
**CAMP ALLEN**  
**NAVASOTA, TEXAS**



**WHO SHOULD ATTEND**

**CLERGY AND LAY LEADERS**

concerned with deepening the commitment to discipleship, nurturing generosity, enhancing evangelism efforts and invigorating congregational development.

**PARISH STAFF AND LAY MINISTERS**

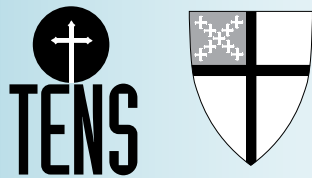
exploring new resources and sharpening skills for stewardship ministry.

**DIOCESAN STEWARDSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT STAFF AND LAY MINISTERS**

growing in proficiency as trainers and/or mentors and/or consultants.

**SEMINARY STUDENTS**

seeking vital new leadership skills.



**EVENT ORGANIZERS & SPONSORS**

This conference is brought to you by TENS - The Episcopal Network for Stewardship

Our Host: The Episcopal Diocese of Texas

Contributing Sponsors:

- ▶ The Episcopal Diocese of Dallas
- ▶ The Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth
- ▶ The Episcopal Diocese Oklahoma
- ▶ The Episcopal Diocese of West Texas
- ▶ Episcopal Church Foundation
- ▶ Saint Francis Community Services
- ▶ The Episcopal Church: Office of Stewardship

*We offer special thanks to our workshop leaders and chaplain who graciously give of their time and expertise.*

**BENEFITS OF ATTENDANCE**

**BE INSPIRED BY PLENARY PRESENTERS**

**The Rt. Rev'd Catherine M. Waynick**, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis, offers her wisdom in reflecting and teaching the theological and practical implications of our baptismal call to be stewards.

**The Rev. Karl Travis**, Pastor and Head of Staff of First Presbyterian Church, Ft. Worth, Texas, offers generational theory in practical ways for parish leadership formation as well as his leadership experience in stewardship.

**Dr. Courtney Cowart**, head of the relief center at St. Paul's Chapel at Ground Zero and a leader in post-Katrina efforts, offers her perspective on how these events have shaped the identity of the millennial generation who see themselves as stewards of God's creation and of one another.

**MASTER NEW SKILLS**

Learn new and exciting ways to build faithful and effective discipleship in your diocese, synod and/or congregation, and return home prepared to lead and share with others for the spread of God's kingdom.

**DEVELOP YOUR KNOWLEDGE**

Clarify your mission and expand your congregation's ministry in your community and the world for the glory of God.

**To maximize the return on your investment in this opportunity, congregations are urged to send a team of clergy and lay leaders. Diocesan (synod) stewardship leaders are encouraged to send both experienced leaders and new recruits.**

**HOW TO REGISTER**

- ▶ Go online and follow the links at <http://www.tens.org/2011IGG/index.htm>
- ▶ Complete and mail the form below to TENS, 345 S. Hydraulic, Wichita, KS 67211
- ▶ Phone 800-699-2669 ext. 1 (US and Canada) or 316-686-0470 ext. 1
- ▶ Fax the form below to: 316-686-9102
- ▶ E-mail [ae@tens.org](mailto:ae@tens.org)

**PRE-CONFERENCE EVENT FOR DIOCESAN STAFF**

\$150 Staff of TENS Member Diocese  
 \$275 Staff of non-member diocese

**TENS CONFERENCE**

Early Bird Registration -  
 Received by May 4, 2011 \$225 (USD)  
 Late Registration -  
 Received after May 4, 2011 \$275 (USD)

**Make checks payable to "TENS" or "The Episcopal Network for Stewardship"**

Registration fees include meals as indicated on the conference schedule plus electronic files of all handouts.  
 Add \$25.00 for paper copies of handouts (see registration form.)

*Please complete one registration form for each participant.*



**BRING A TEAM OF  
 CONGREGATION LEADERS  
 AND STEWARDSHIP  
 PROGRAM LEADERS WITH YOU!**



**Workshop Tracks (Please check one)**

- I'm New to Stewardship
- Expanding Our Knowledge – Perfecting Our Practices
- Building Mentor/Consultant Skills

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred first name for name tag \_\_\_\_\_

Title (and business/congregation, etc. name) \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Fax \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Congregation (name & location) \_\_\_\_\_

Diocese (synod) \_\_\_\_\_ Special dietary needs \_\_\_\_\_

**AMOUNT ENCLOSED / AUTHORIZED**

**PRE-CONFERENCE EVENT FOR DIOCESAN STAFF:**

- \$ 150 Staff of TENS Member Diocese
- \$ 275 Staff of non-member diocese

**CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FEE:**

- Early Bird Registration  
 received by May 4, 2011: \$225 (USD)
- Late Registration  
 received after May 4, 2011: \$275 (USD)
- Paper copies of handouts: \$25.00 (USD)

Credit Card Authorization (Visa or MasterCard)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card #: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name and address on card if different from registration information above:  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**REFUND POLICY**

Cancellation prior to May 4, 2011 – Full fee returned  
 Cancellation between May 4 & May 20, 2011 – Half fee returned  
 No refunds after May 20, 2011.

# PRE-CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

## WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1, 2011

6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. Pre-conference dinner and evening program

## THURSDAY, JUNE 2, 2011

8:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. Pre-conference

## FRIDAY, JUNE 3, 2011

8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Pre-conference

# CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

## FRIDAY, JUNE 3, 2011

12 noon - 4:00 p.m. Registration & Hospitality  
2:00 - 2:15 p.m. Plenary 1: Welcome & Opening Comments  
2:15 - 3:45 p.m. Plenary 1: Opening Worship  
Sermon: The Rt. Rev'd Catherine M. Waynick  
4:00 - 5:15 p.m. Workshop Session A  
5:30 - 6:30 p.m. Dinner with Small Group Questions at Tables  
6:45 - 7:15 p.m. TENS Board Presentation & Video Compilation  
7:15 - 8:00 p.m. Plenary 2: The Rt. Rev'd Catherine M. Waynick  
8:15 - 9:00 p.m. Focus Groups Gathering – Conversation Groups on specific topics of interest to be identified by advance survey  
9:00 - 11:00 p.m. Social/Dance

## SATURDAY, JUNE 4, 2011

7:45 - 8:45 a.m. Breakfast  
8:45 - 10:00 a.m. Workshop Session B  
10:15 - 11:00 a.m. Plenary 3: The Rev. Karl Travis  
11:15 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Workshop Session C  
12:30 - 1:30 p.m. Lunch  
1:45 - 3:00 p.m. Workshop Session D  
3:15 - 4:15 p.m. Plenary 4 & Closing: Dr. Courtney Cowart

### Workshops are grouped in three different sections (tracks):

#### I'm New to Stewardship

**Expanding Our Knowledge - Perfecting Our Practices** (for participants who have attended basic stewardship skills workshops at a previous conference)

#### Building Mentor/Consultant Skills

See Workshop Schedule on reverse for clarification.

Detailed information about workshops and facilitators can be found on TENS' website at <http://www.tens.org/2011IGG/index.htm>

Participants are asked to indicate a choice of workshop track on the registration form.

## JUNE 1 - 3: DIOCESAN STAFF PRE-CONFERENCE OPPORTUNITY

The Diocesan Staff Pre-Conference provides an opportunity to engage in continuing education and great networking exclusively for diocesan staff persons. Follow the information posted at TENS' website for more details of the topics to be covered through presentations, roundtable discussions and resource sharing. The Pre-Conference is a must for those who are responsible for diocesan stewardship and/or development programs.

Dinner (6:00 p.m.) Wednesday, June 1 - full day Thursday, June 2 - through Lunch Friday, June 3. All meals included. Advance registration required.



### PRE-CONFERENCE AND CONFERENCE LOCATION

Participants are responsible for making their own lodging reservations.

**Camp Allen**  
18800 FM 362  
Navasota, Texas 77868  
(936) 825-7175  
FAX: (936) 825-8495

Event Name: **2011 TENS Conference**

Online lodging reservations can be made via the TENS website at <http://www.tens.org/2011IGG/index.htm>

Rates per person:  
Single - \$94.00 per night  
Double - \$74.00 per night

To receive the special conference rate, identify yourself as attending the 2011 TENS Conference.

Availability of single occupancy rooms is very limited. If you will be sharing a room with someone, please designate your roommate when making your reservation. Camp Allen also has lakeside cabins and campsite lodging facilities available. Review your options at the Camp Allen website [www.campallen.org](http://www.campallen.org)

### CONFERENCE CENTER CHECK-IN / CHECK-OUT

Arriving guests may check in any time after 8:00 a.m. The hotel will make every reasonable effort to accommodate arriving guests whose rooms are not yet available. Hotel and cabin check-out time is 12:00 noon.

### TO / FROM AIRPORT TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION

When scheduled in advance, Camp Allen provides shuttle service to/from Bush IAH International Airport at a cost of \$75 one-way for a single rider and \$37.50 each one-way for two or more.

Shuttle arrangements are scheduled based on airport arrival times that you indicate when making your lodging reservations.

For driving directions to/from Camp Allen visit [www.campallen.org](http://www.campallen.org)

# KEYNOTE PRESENTERS



**The Rt. Rev'd Catherine Maples Waynick** became Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis in 1997, previously having served as a parish priest in the Diocese of Michigan and working on numerous diocesan and community committees and projects. As a Bishop she has chaired or participated in a variety of committees, task forces and commissions for the House of Bishops and the General Convention. Bp. Waynick shares her understanding of the wholeness of a life lived as stewards when she says, "Scripture tells us that we are created in the image and likeness of God - and have therefore been entrusted with something of the divine and holy as part of our very being. We don't fully understand exactly what that means....to be made in the image and likeness of God." She challenges us: "If we reflect ...from the perspective of stewardship, we may be able to gain a sense of how living in that image could take shape in our lives. How can we characterize the ways in which God has entrusted stewardship of life to us?"



**The Rev. Karl Travis**, Pastor and Head of Staff at First Presbyterian Church in Fort Worth, TX, since 2007, formerly served congregations in Grosse Ile, MI, and Roswell, NM, and has served at every level of the Presbyterian Church. He is a fourth-generation Presbyterian pastor and a native Texan. A gifted preacher, he is noted for his work with "generations" studies as well as stewardship. Karl points out that, "If our hearts are where our treasure is, our hearts have become adept at practicing discretion. Stewardship, then – almsgiving, giving first, sacrificing, risking, trusting, sharing – stewardship describes a spiritual discipline insofar as its committed practice emboldens our trust in the One who owns our abundance. We are to give because it is good for us." Become further acquainted with his stewardship teaching by searching for Karl Travis at [www.YouTube.com](http://www.YouTube.com).



**Courtney Cowart, Th.D.**, Regional Director of Calling Congregations at the Fund for Theological Education, is a scholar in the fields of Spiritual Formation and American Church history. She is a survivor of 9/11 who served in the recovery of Ground Zero from historic St. Paul's Chapel. She also served as Co-Director of the Office of Disaster Response for the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Before these life-changing experiences she worked at Trinity Church Wall Street and served on the faculty of General Theological Seminary. Courtney is the author of *American Awakening: From Ground Zero to Katrina: The People We Are Free to Be* and a frequent speaker on the subject of sacred activism.



## CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

Final workshop offerings may vary.

Refer to website posting for final details <http://tens.org/2011IGG/index.html>

WORKSHOP SESSION	INSPIRING GENERATIONS IN GENEROSITY					
	I'M NEW TO STEWARDSHIP	EXPANDING OUR KNOWLEDGE AND PERFECTING OUR PRACTICES				BUILDING MENTOR/CONSULTANT SKILLS
	1	2	3	4	5	6
A	Formation, Theology and Practice	Outreach as Leadership Formation and Inspiring Generosity	Listening to God's Call: Creation, Care and Stewardship	Planned Giving Models for Congregations	The Role of Clergy in Inspiring Generosity	Becoming a Stewardship Mentor, Part 1
B	Essentials for Nurturing Generosity	Commitment Program Options and Available Resources	Advanced Year-Round Stewardship Practices	Using Endowed Funds for Mission and Avoiding Negative Impact on Giving	Building Relationships that Inspire Generosity	Becoming a Stewardship Mentor, Part 2
C	Year-Round Education and the Annual Commitment Program	Stewardship and Giving: Increasing Financial Support of Your Church	Generational Theory and Leadership Formation Part 1	Discernment for a Capital Campaign	Leadership Practices for Inspiring Generosity and Faithful Discipleship	Working as a Stewardship Mentor in the Congregation, Part 1
D	Building Relationships: A Key Ingredient in Stewardship Growth	Will Our Children Be Stewards?	Generational Theory and Leadership Formation Part 2	Planned Giving Models for Congregations	Reclaiming the Offering in the Eucharist	Working as a Stewardship Mentor in the Congregation, Part 2

NOTES: Workshop sessions in Column 1 are designed to serve the needs of those who are new to the ministry of stewardship. Sessions in Column 5 are intended as advanced topics for clergy. Sessions in Column 6 provide ongoing training for stewardship mentors who intend to work in congregations. Advance registration is requested.

Further, we need to recognize that there are many, many voices seeking to influence the spending habits and views about money of the adults and children in our congregations, and most often they do not have the best interests of our people at heart. Articulating a vibrant theology of stewardship provides an alternative to the cultural voices about money.

Keep in mind that the opposite is true as well: to not talk about the relationship between faith and money sends the signal that faith does not apply to our economic lives and ends up accentuating the gap many already feel between church and the “real” world.

### Concrete Suggestions

Armed with these two discoveries, I ventured forth into more intentional stewardship preaching and before long actually began to enjoy it. While I won't claim being an expert in the matter, I have learned a few things along the way.

#### *Preach stewardship throughout the year.*

The only way to help all of us realize that stewardship is not fundraising, but rather is part and parcel of our Christian identity, is to make it a part of our preaching regularly. If you keep your eye open for passages in the lectionary that lend themselves to talking about stewardship, you will be amazed at how many opportunities there are.

#### *Tell people about the difference their stewardship is making.*

Preaching stewardship is not just talking about giving. It is also about showing people what is being accomplished through their stewardship, both inside and outside of the church. Newsletter articles are a great way to showcase all the good that is being accomplished through our stewardship, and I have found it helpful to highlight this good work in my sermons as well. By affirming what stewardship is accomplishing, you are actually confirming people in their identity as Christian stewards.

#### *You don't have to do this all alone.*

In fact, you and your congregation will be much better off if you don't.

I will never forget the year the chair of our stewardship committee lost her job. She had planned to resign her posi-

tion because she felt like a hypocrite asking others to give when she knew she would have to reduce her pledge significantly. But when she explained to the church council why she was resigning, another member said, “That's okay. We know you can't give as much this year, so we're giving more. That's what families do.” Trust me, when she shared this story with the congregation, her words were far more powerful than any of the sermons I preached that fall.

And while we are at it, why not open up the pulpit from time to time for people to talk about their own stewardship? I do not mean just doing “Temple Talks” during November. I mean having people talk from time to time throughout the year about how their faith informs their financial decisions and letting that be the sermon. The pastor is, by default, the religious professional. Inviting other members to share their stewardship stories gives people a tangible example of someone “just like them” who is connecting faith and money.

#### *Be honest about your concerns.*

Candor speaks powerfully. If you are worried that by talking about stewardship you will appear self-serving, say it. If you struggle with decisions about how much to give, admit it. Your open naming of these issues not only makes you a more sincere, and therefore more trustworthy, spokesperson, it also models for others how to get about the challenging and rewarding work of connecting faith and money.

Over time, I discovered that stewardship preaching gives us the opportunity to talk about something that really matters and to help people connect their faith and their lives in a valuable way. It may have taken me a little while to make the conversion to embracing, rather than avoiding, stewardship preaching, but now that I am here I wouldn't go back. †

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*David J. Lose holds The Marbury E. Anderson Chair in Biblical Preaching at Luther Seminary, where he also serves as the Director of the Center for Biblical Preaching. He is the author of Making Sense of the Christian Faith (2010), Making Sense of Scripture (2009), and Confessing Jesus Christ: Preaching in a Postmodern World (2003). He speaks widely in the United States and abroad on preaching, Christian faith in a postmodern world, and biblical interpretation. David also serves on the faculty of Luther Seminary and is a frequent contributor to <http://www.workingpreacher.org>, where many of his sermons can be found. E-mail David at [dlose@luthersem.edu](mailto:dlose@luthersem.edu).*

# A Steward Remembered

By Terry Parsons



TENS members mourned the loss of several memorable stewards in 2010. A previous issue of *Networking* remembered Carl Knirk, Board President at the time of his death in May 2010. Now we take time to remember another.

I do not know where Tom VanderWal developed his enthusiasm and passion for stewardship work, but there is no question that it ranked only slightly below his love for his family and adherence to high standards of professionalism in the health insurance business. Tom was a busy man, actively involved in his community through his membership in the Kiwanis. He was a strongly committed professional as a member of American Health Insurance Plans (AHIP), the National Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors (NAIFA), past president of American Health Insurance Association (AHIA), and DVI Citizen's Advisory Committee. He was an active member of St. Anne's Episcopal Church in Stockton, California, past Deputy to the General Convention, and a devoted member of TENS' Board of Directors. One of his annual delights was serving as a Course Marshal at the AT&T Pebble Beach ProAm.

When it looked as though the Diocese of San Joaquin might be moving away from The Episcopal Church, Tom was one of those who organized Remain Episcopal, a model for several other dioceses in similar situations, and when the split came he served as treasurer for the diocese.

The group who organized two Province VIII conferences discovered one of Tom's greatest talents. He was a prime mover in making those events happen, and he turned out to be a masterful negotiator of hotel contracts and arrangements. Not only did he get great rates, but throughout the conference his relationship with hotel staff earned cheerful efficient service and a very pleasant environment. Events ran better when Tom organized the logistics. All of us who have planned events marveled at his skill and will most certainly miss it. Tom died July 1, 2010, after a painful bout with stomach and liver cancer.

*Terry Parsons formerly served as Stewardship Officer of The Episcopal Church and as a member of TENS' Board of Directors. She can be reached via e-mail at [tpsteward@aol.com](mailto:tpsteward@aol.com).*



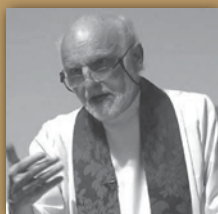
## The Impossible Self as Steward and Covenant Response and Obligation vs. Unencumbered Autonomy

by The Rev. Dr. Walter Brueggemann

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### The Impossible Self as Steward

Sermon at the Opening Eucharist of Grace, Gratitude & Generosity, TENS' 2010 Conference. Recorded July 30, 2010, in Christ Church Cathedral, Indianapolis, Indiana, the Rt. Rev. Catherine E. M. Waynick presiding.  
Video on DVD (25 minutes) \$12.00



### Covenant Response and Obligation vs. Unencumbered Autonomy

Keynote presentation by the Rev. Dr. Walter Brueggemann at Grace, Gratitude & Generosity, TENS' 2010 Conference. Recorded July 30, 2010, Indianapolis, Indiana.  
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## Monitoring Giving

Just as some people have a hard time talking about money, so do many congregations. But keeping abreast of the key indicators of financial health is vital to sustaining ministry. In congregations experiencing decline, money is often what forces the hard choices. Leaders need to know the key facts with regard to money to help their congregations make decisions and changes proactively and creatively, rather than waiting until they are in the throes of a crisis.

Avoid the common practice of dividing the budget by 52 weeks as the standard to know whether the church is ahead or behind on the budget. Rather than coming in 52 equal units, each congregation's giving will follow its own pattern. Therefore, the most effective way to monitor offerings is to calculate the three-year running average of money received through each Sunday of the year and then use those figures to determine how much you need so far to be up-to-date on the budget. A key metric is where your year-to-date income stands in comparison to the portion of income that normally comes in by that same time of year.

Keep in mind that not all income comes from contributions, so track each income source based on what portion of that income normally comes in by the current time in the year.

## Customizing Your Dashboard

Each congregation is unique. Customize your dashboard to reflect other things that are important to your church, be it Sunday School attendance, children and youth programs, mission work, Bible studies or the number of choir participants. All these are examples of things you might have on your dashboard. As you begin to use a dashboard, you will find ways to make it most useful for your congregation. ✝

This article is reprinted by permission from Leading Ideas, a free online newsletter of the Lewis Center for Church Leadership of Wesley Theological Seminary and available at [www.churchleadership.com](http://www.churchleadership.com).

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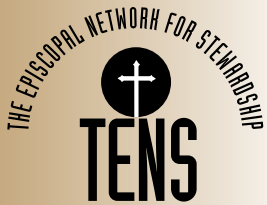
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# UPCOMING EVENTS

**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 and author of numerous books including *Money Matters: Financial Freedom for All God's Children*.

**Inspiring Generations in Generosity – 2011 TENS Annual Leadership Conference, June 3-4 at Camp Allen, Navasota, TX.** See brochure in this issue of *Networking* for all information on the TENS Conference plus the Pre-Conference for diocesan staff which will be held June 1-3.

**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.faihand-moneynetwork.org](http://www.faihand-moneynetwork.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).