

The Cultivating Generosity Initiative

VISION:

Transformed congregational leaders who will engage their congregations in faithful, joyful, generous discipleship rather than a guilt or anxiety driven approach to funding the church's ministry and mission.

OBJECTIVES:

To transform congregational leaders, and by extension, the entire congregation through stewardship education and formation.

Individuals

--- Congregational leaders will engage the issues of faith and money using tools such as: Money Autobiography, journaling, scripture study and worship

The Congregation

--- Congregation will engage in discernment of vision, mission and facility needs, unless such study has been completed in the past three years.

--- Congregation will discern ways to begin to move from a culture of obligation and scarcity to one of gratitude and abundance; from fundraising to funding mission and ministry.

LEADERSHIP

Fred Milligan, a pastor with 27 years of parish experience who most recently served as Associate for Stewardship Education for our denomination and is now the principal of The Generous Steward Consulting

--- Fred will employ a teaching/coaching model utilizing annual weekend retreats, a local network of stewardship consulting teams and regular gatherings for mutual support

The Presbytery

--- With the leadership of the consultant, the presbytery will develop a cadre of "teaching congregations" to provide support and share examples of best practices in the area of stewardship education.

Background and Assumptions:

Research on change dynamics emphasizes that while information and education are important, they are not enough to change behavior. Nor is a sense of crisis sufficient to do the job, even when a person is dying and needs to make major changes to survive.

A three-fold approach seems to work best:

- A strong spiritual / emotional component, not just information and admonition but transformation.
- An emphasis on "re-framing" — describing the situation in different terms, and helping people move from the old frame to the new one.
- Continuing support. In medical studies, patients lectured once or twice by their doctors about the need for change did miserably. Those who had an opportunity for ongoing interaction, for support and accountability in an environment of trust did remarkably well in accomplishing meaningful, permanent change.

Process requirements: (Assumes a cluster of participating congregations)

1. Participation in three leadership events (ideally Friday evening/Saturday retreats) one year apart with no fewer than 67% (two-thirds) of active session members in attendance and 100% of the congregation's stewardship committee, ministry group or task force. (You may also wish to include other boards as well.)
2. Completion of a congregational ministry discernment process (or confirmation if one has been done within three years) to include, by way of small group involvement and/or survey or feedback processes, no fewer than two-thirds of active members.
3. Development of a facilities master plan related to short and long-term maintenance and up-grades needed in order to implement the strategic ministry plan as well as planning for capital campaigns, establishment of special ministry reserve funds, etc. as needed.
4. Provide opportunity for leaders to work on their own financial issues as these relate to their pastoral or other leadership roles. This is a crucial component. Since these are often not simply individual matters, spouses would be invited to attend this retreat. Sessions would be asked to designate the pastor's retreat time as work time, not vacation or study leave, and to pay for the pastor and spouse to attend.
5. Assess the congregation's "giving culture" with specific recommendations and on-site consultations with congregational leaders to be conducted by the presbytery resource person and discussed with the congregation's session and/or stewardship committee in a confidential meeting.
6. Promote ongoing conversations between the session and the consultant, noting benchmarks achieved as well as needed mid-course corrections, and agreeing upon ways to celebrate and share what is happening in the congregation with the presbytery and beyond. Much of this conversation can take place online.
7. Establish "coaching" relationship with the consultant for the Pastor/Stewardship Committee Chair of each participating congregation.
8. Plan for mutual support and regular gatherings on a quarterly or as needed basis and the opportunity for teams from several congregations to serve as coaches to other congregations in the presbytery.

PROPOSED COVENANT

Between the Presbytery, the Congregations and the Consultant

Assumes a cluster of participating congregations

- **The presbytery** will provide a Stewardship Education consultant and ongoing help, consultation and support.
- **Sessions and pastors** will agree to a process of spiritual/financial development in their congregations, with agreed-upon benchmarks and accountability.
- **The role of all “team” members**, including the Consultant, the Presbytery Resource Person, as well as Church Financial Campaign Services, Presbyterian Foundation and Board of Pensions personnel will also be spelled out.

YEAR ONE:

In order to develop a comprehensive stewardship strategy for each congregation we must build on solid fundamentals of clarity of congregational vision and mission, commitment of leadership, engagement of your members in ministry and healthy systems of accounting for and communicating about your congregation’s finances.

A Leadership Retreat will begin to frame the issues (addressed above) as well as some of the immediate stewardship needs of the congregation such as strategizing around approaches to the annual campaign, as a means of lowering anxiety and engaging participants in the longer project. This first event will be a Saturday event. All participants will be expected to prepare money autobiographies as well as read an assigned book.

Congregational Discernment Process will be conducted (or reaffirmed). The consultant’s services for this process will be available but not included in this covenant. Such services will need to be contracted in addition to this cluster agreement.

A Pastor and Spouse Retreat will be held on Friday evening before the first leadership retreat. Participants will be asked to prepare for the event by writing a “money autobiography” - a brief description of how their life has been impacted by money. i.e., first learnings as a child, first job, parental teachings, etc. The evening will be used to process these and address other matters best dealt with in the absence of lay leadership.

Giving Culture Analysis and Recommendations will be completed for each congregation utilizing written survey with 10% of congregational leaders and telephone conversations with the pastor and 4 other leaders. Meetings will be held with each congregation’s leadership to discuss these reports on an individualized basis.

Telephone Consultation will be provided for stewardship committees by the consultant

Monthly reports will be written by the stewardship committee chair or some designated person from each congregation, citing efforts undertaken to implement a calendar of activities addressing various aspects of congregational stewardship.

YEAR TWO:

The Second Leadership Retreat will provide an opportunity to celebrate the efforts already taken and assess what the next steps should be. Participant will read a new stewardship related book prior to attending the meeting. The workshop content will focus on how different generational groups reflect different attitudes toward money and giving. We will do check-ins about the discernment process and evaluate the last fall campaign efforts. We will discuss how the congregation is beginning to implement a year-round stewardship model. A Friday evening “catch-up session will be planned for officers who were not part of the first retreat.

A Spiritual Gifts Discernment Process will be implemented in each congregation in order to assist members with assessing their gifts, to assist the church’s nominating committee with placing people in ministry roles and to help the member integration committee with their efforts.

Teaching Churches. Stewardship Committees from congregations that have shown significant improvement after the first year in the program will be invited to serve as “teaching churches” to other congregations in the presbytery in the coming year.

Telephone support will continue to be available from the consultant to project congregations and the teaching congregation committees as they work with others.

Monthly reports will be provided from each congregation and from teaching congregations about each of their contacts.

YEAR THREE:

The third leadership retreat will evaluate the efforts of the previous two years and their implications for the third year’s annual campaign. The retreat content will focus on discovering abundance through lifestyle change and balance. Other content will be designed in collaboration with a representative team chosen from each of the participating congregations. The Friday evening session will be for new officers who were not at the previous two years’ gatherings.

Teaching Congregations retreat. A Saturday retreat for committees from the teaching congregations. They will meet to discuss their efforts to provide assistance to others in the area of stewardship and receive additional training for that work.

Telephone support will continue to be available from the consultant to program congregations and the teaching congregation committees as they work with others.

Monthly Reports will be provided by each congregation and teaching church team to the consultant

COSTS * *

Consultant fees as negotiated

Additional Expenses will include: consultant mileage/airfare, hotel, meals and travel time allocation, photo-copying, books and meals for the retreats and other incidental expenses as may arise.

Additional services may be contracted outside the scope of this agreement, at the consultant's regular rates.

For example: Preaching, teaching classes or training visitors for every member canvasses, leading discernment processes or other components of a congregation's year-round stewardship calendar of activities.

In addition: You may contract with the consultant to guide your congregational discernment process. However this process can also be resourced by your presbytery staff.