

Financial Stewardship in Uncertain Times

Clergy are looking for creative ways to be the church in this quickly changing landscape. Churches are streaming worship services via Facebook Live, holding morning prayer via Zoom, or finding new way to support vulnerable church members. But what about financial stewardship? The vital work that clergy, employees, and vestry members do has not gone away, and neither have the expenses. So what can churches do to maintain support when people are not physically gathered in a church?

1. **Ask.** Don't assume that church members will realize the financial impacts to the church on their own. They need to know that you need their continued support for the church and your on-going ministries to those impacted by this crisis. Remind attendees in your virtual worship services or in your church communications; direct them to the online giving option if available.
2. **Use all tools available** to you (email, texting, social media, phone calls, etc.); make sure your congregation knows you are still there and what you are doing.
3. While some of your members may not be impacted and others may have the ability to work from home, there will be those that will find themselves with unexpected financial hardships. Make sure your church is conveying this **sensitivity in all its communications**.
4. **Digital giving** (such as online and mobile) provides one way for you to reach and engage with your parishioners during this difficult time. A majority of all church e-giving today is done via mobile phones. Visit the diocesan COVID 19 resource page on for an article on how to sign up for a digital account, whether web or mobile <https://www.diocgc.org/concerning-covid19> Please reach out during diocesan staff anytime including our "on-line" office hours to learn more on how to enroll.
5. If your church does not have the ability to work out digital giving at this time, you can direct those that wish to provide support to the Diocesan website (www.diocgc.org). Our "**Donate Now**" button will allow you to give and direct it to your church. Just provide the name and location of the church and we'll make sure it gets to your church.
6. An overlooked area is by using a **Facebook (Live) Donation Button**. To collect donations on Facebook, your charitable organization must have a verified and reviewed Facebook Page that is categorized as either "Nonprofit Organization" or "Charity Organization." You must also complete an application to set up your donations account. Applications typically take 2-3 weeks to be reviewed after they've been submitted.

7. **When in doubt, Google it.** Find out what other Episcopal diocese or churches are doing in regard to stewardship just by doing a Google search. Many organizations are continually adding / modify content as this concern evolves and they learn what works (and what doesn't).
8. **Look what other denominations are doing.** The Methodist Church and the Presbyterian Church also have very good resources and advice around stewardship and giving. For example, "Chuck Knows Church: Things We Can Do" from the Methodist Church has short video clips on a variety of things people can do to stay engaged.
9. It might be helpful to set up a special **COVID19 Assistance Fund** for those impacted by this crisis. Authorize your rector to use this fund to provide assistance to those in need. Encourage people to give to the church as they normally do but also give to your COVID-19 Assistance Fund. Recognize that many in your church will need help BUT also recognize that others will still have the capacity give.
10. There are many additional resources available to churches. Here are a few:
 - ✓ **TENS (The Episcopal Network for Stewardship):** <https://www.tens.org/>. TENS provides training and resources for stewardship leaders across The Episcopal Church. **Diocesan membership (all churches may use): Username: 1PETER Password: FOUR:10**
 - ✓ TENS also provides reduced transaction fees if you sign up with Tithe.ly for your "digital plate" <https://www.tens.org/resources/tithe-ly/>
 - ✓ ECF Vital Practices has articles, blogs, and vestry papers provided to churches including the article - **Funding Ministry During the COVID Crisis:** <https://www.ecfvp.org/blogs/3764/funding-ministry-during-the-covid-19-crisis>
 - ✓ Make use of the many **Webinars** available to assist you (either live or recorded). For example:
 - Church Fundraising in a New Normal: A Conversation for Stewardship and Development Professionals https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x-CRMSdIE_8&feature=youtu.be
 - Don't Feed the Beast: Trusting the Gospel in Trying Times <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RSPKzd9uj5c&feature=youtu.be>