



THE EPISCOPAL  
NETWORK FOR  
STEWARDSHIP

# Is Your Campaign Ready to Launch?

## Best Practices & Tools

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The Episcopal Network for Stewardship



# Learning Objectives

- ▶ Sobering Statistics
- ▶ Walk in Love– Theme Overview
- ▶ How to use the TENS Resources for your campaign
- ▶ How to talk about money and faith
- ▶ What is unique about 2024?
- ▶ Your Questions Answered

*Introduction*

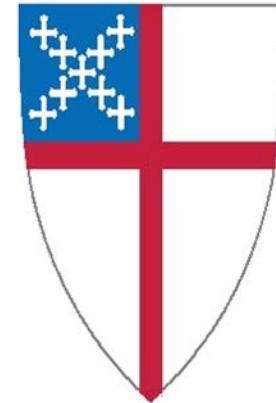


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# Sobering Statistics

- ▶ Since 2021, the Episcopal Church has witnessed:
  - ▶ 3.5 % decline in membership
  - ▶ 36% decline in Sunday attendance
- ▶ However!
  - ▶ 8.3% increase in contributions
  - ▶ 3.3% in average pledge amount
- ▶ This is an unsustainable trend

*Examining the Trends*



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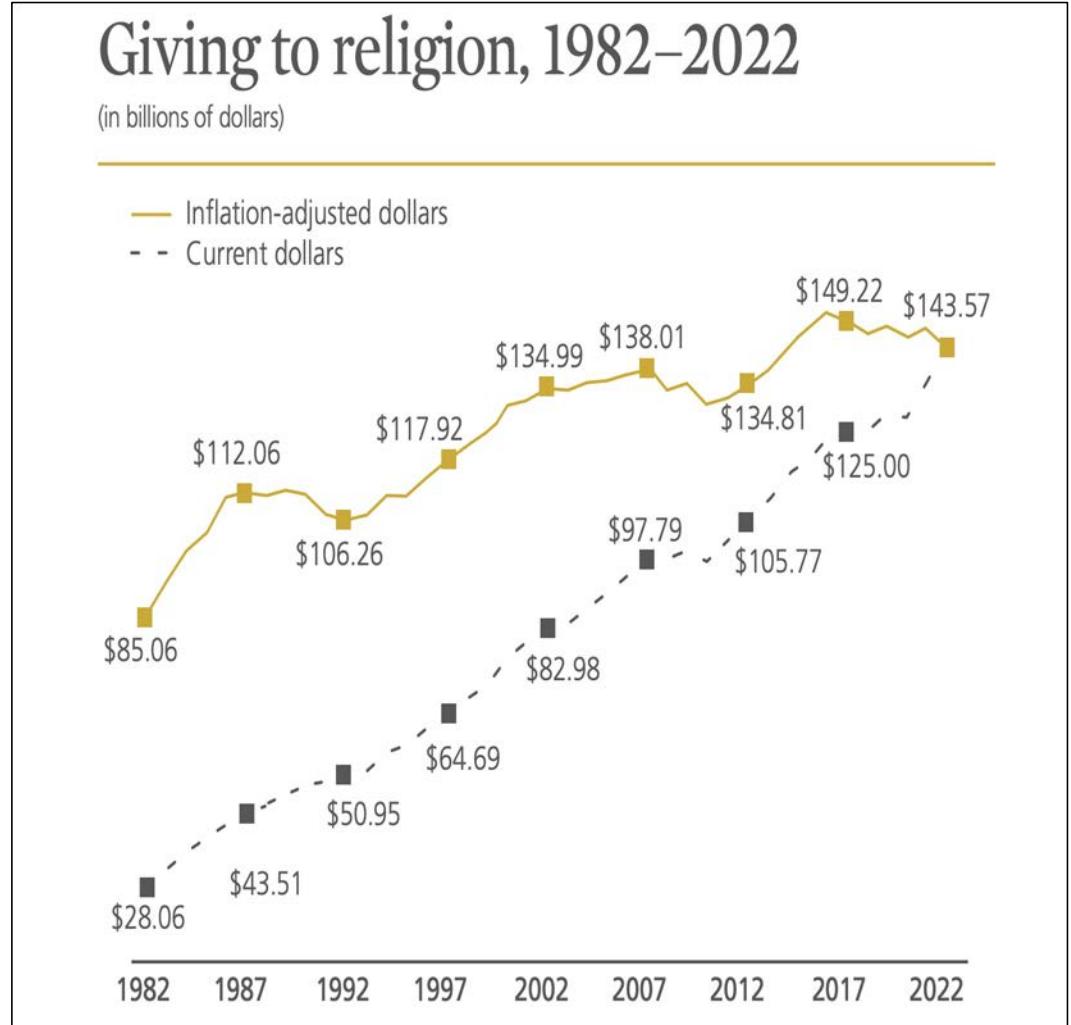
# Sobering Statistics

Since 1982, giving to religion has increased steadily.

Adjusted for inflation, in the US we moved from **\$85.6B to \$143.57B in 40 years**

Source: Giving USA 2023 *Key Findings*

*Examining the Trends*



# Sobering Statistics

Yet, our market share compared with other charitable sectors has **decreased by nearly 50%**

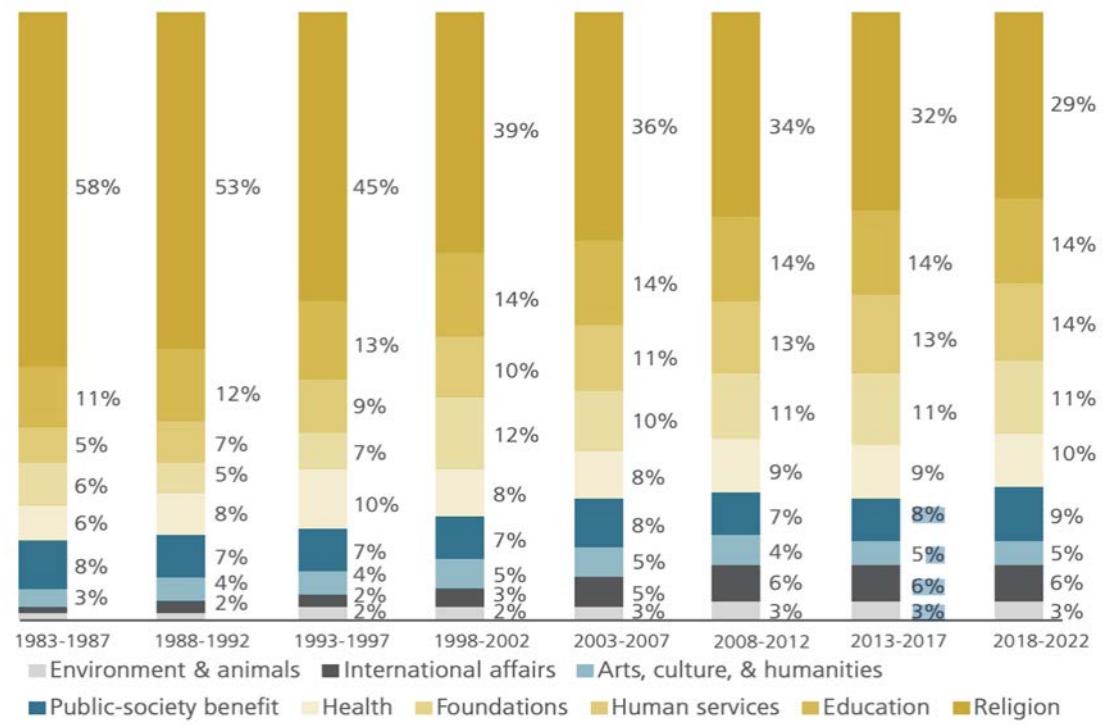
In 1983, 58% of charitable donations were for religious institutions. Today it is 29%

Source: Giving USA 2023 Key Findings

*Examining the Trends*

## Giving by type of recipient: Percentage of the total in five-year spans, 1983–2022\*

(adjusted for inflation, 2022 = \$100)



\* Does not include "unallocated" or "giving to individuals"

# Reversing the Trends

There is hope! We can reverse the trends!

- ▶ Run efficient campaigns that reach everyone
- ▶ Diversify ways people can give
- ▶ Include more voices
- ▶ Focus on Volunteer recruitment for your programs
- ▶ Recruit and Retain Younger Members – build sustainability



*Examining the Trends*

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# TENS Theme for 2024

When we walk in love, there is clarity and purpose. We move in alignment with each other and with our values. Walking in love is also something we cannot do alone - by definition it implies connection, community.

Whether we walk with our children or our spouse, or form an orderly line, or rely on the help of a friend or a neighbor, we carry with us all with whom we are in communion and they carry us with them. Our journey is one made by millions, over thousands of years: a cycle of sharing and invitation.

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*Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.. Ephesians 5: 1-2, NRSV*

*TENS Theme 2024*



# Recommendations for Your 2024 Pledge Campaign



*Stewardship Best Practices*

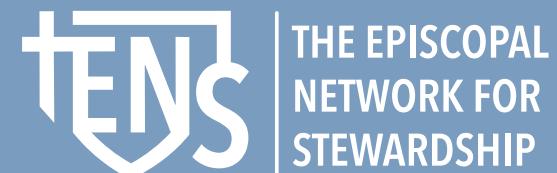


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# Weekly Inserts

- ▶ This year, the weekly inserts do not follow a particular Gospel text – you may use them in any order
- ▶ Showcase diverse messages of abundance in communities of faith
- ▶ They can be used in a post-service **coffee hour** as a forum for discussion, or in a **weekly small-group meeting**
- ▶ Each reflection suggests a couple of questions designed to **engage us on stewardship** topics
- ▶ The reflections can also serve as **inspiration for a sermon** on stewardship

*Stewardship Best Practices*



# Testimonials Tell the Story

*There is no better way to communicate impact than for members to tell their stories of support*

**Include things like:**

- ▶ What made them come on their first Sunday and keep coming back?
- ▶ What program or ministry they love best
- ▶ What their children have learned in Sunday School
- ▶ A time when the community was *there for them*

*Stewardship Best Practices*



# Testimonials Tell the Story

*Ministry Impact Reports are Important Stewardship Messages*

**Ask volunteers or ministry-beneficiaries to share:**

- ▶ What the program means to them
- ▶ What joy they have in serving (tell a story)
- ▶ What makes them feel good about this program / ministry
- ▶ What it would mean if this ministry didn't exist

*Stewardship Best Practices*



# Make Planned Giving a part of your Campaign

- ▶ Your pledge card should ask if your members have made provision in their estate for the church, or if they would like to.
  - ▶ Soft asks repeatedly plant the seed that legacy gifts are important spiritual tools
- ▶ Many members consider legacy gifts to be a “pledge legacy” – the ability for the church to receive a lifetime gift equal to their annual gift in perpetuity
- ▶ The number one reason people do not leave a legacy gift is because they were not asked!



*Stewardship Best Practices*

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# Virtual Stewardship

*Every congregation should have the ability to collect donations and pledges online and via mobile platforms.*

## For plate and pledge:

- ▶ It is no longer usual for individuals to carry cash. More and more people use their credit and debit cards for transactions.
- ▶ Receipts are automatic, as are thank-you acknowledgements
- ▶ Most donation software gives you at least basic information to reach out to visitors – at bare minimum, an email address or phone number tied to a real name
- ▶ More donors rely on online or mobile platforms to make recurring or one-time gifts to nonprofits than ever before.

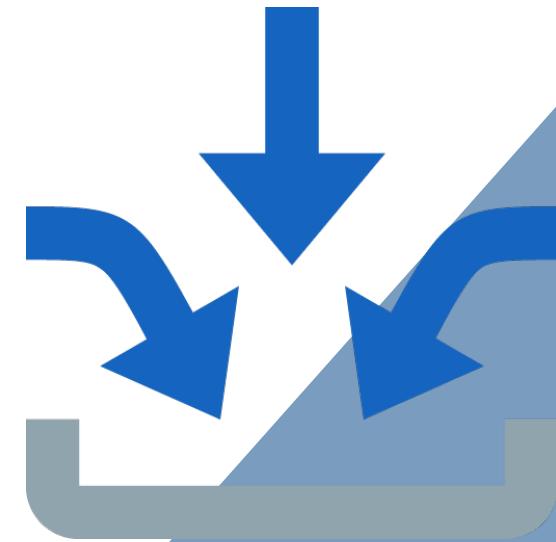


*Stewardship Best Practices*

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# Maximize Donations by Maximizing Opportunity

- ▶ Publicize and implement multiple ways of making gifts for annual campaigns
  - ▶ Gifts directly from retirement accounts (Qualified Charitable Distributions)
    - ▶ Many donors use their Required Minimum Distribution to make their annual gifts
  - ▶ Donor Advised Funds
    - ▶ Donors make a grant from their DAF for the church
  - ▶ Bank Checks / ACH transfers
  - ▶ Online Platforms
  - ▶ Mobile Giving
  - ▶ Workplace / Matching Gifts
  - ▶ Stock and Securities



# Asking for Money for Mission

## *How to make the ask*

- ▶ Renewal: Susan, this year we are raising more money than ever to fund our youth program, outreach to elders, and to help our community. Mary and I made our gift to the campaign, will you join us in supporting the campaign this year?
- ▶ Increase: Jonathan, my husband and I increased our giving this year because we want to see our congregation grow. Can you make a stretch gift to the campaign this year?
- ▶ Tough Year: Dick and Bill, your giving to our church has been so faithful all these years, and I know this has been a tough year for you. Still, I am asking you to make a gift to our pledge campaign, no matter the amount. Will you?
- ▶ Newcomer: Cindy, you and your family are new to our congregation, are there any questions I can answer about why we raise money through pledges or how you can join us?



# Strategies for Difficult Topics

- ▶ Create Safe Space
  - ▶ **Nurture all voices** but keep any one voice from dominating
  - ▶ Allow silence or time to process – **give space** for introverts
- ▶ Keep things positive
  - ▶ That doesn't mean everything has to be “just fine.”
  - ▶ **Dwell on what's possible**
- ▶ If running small groups, train your small-group leaders or conversation partners on facilitation
  - ▶ **Leaders don't need to have all the answers**
- ▶ **Pray for each other** in group and outside of group – keep each other in your hearts



# Challenges in Stewardship

*How to talk about money when there is economic fallout from inflation or other disruptions*

- ▶ There is **no shame** in a household pledging less this year than other years. Every gift matters.
- ▶ Remember, **some families are not struggling right now**, so some of your members may be able to increase their giving
- ▶ **Every conversation about pledges is a pastoral one**
- ▶ **Check in with clergy** about the people on your list, and follow up if **pastoral concerns** arise
- ▶ We remember the Great Recession in 2008-2009. We recovered, and we will recover again. **This too, shall pass.**
- ▶ Christians are people of Hope.
- ▶ **The work of the church is more acute in times of need**



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*Confronting Challenges in Stewardship*

# Challenges in Stewardship

*How to talk about stewardship if your congregation is facing budget cuts, program cuts, or staff reduction*

- ▶ Keep your conversation **focused on the mission**
  - ▶ The work of the church continues because the needs of our neighbors are still present.
  - ▶ We may have fewer resources to spend on mission, so we find other ways to do the work of God
- ▶ Did your congregation receive any assistance from the diocese or other organizations?
- ▶ There may be some members who can make extraordinary gifts to cover these unexpected shortfalls
  - **ask them**



*Confronting Challenges in Stewardship*

# Challenges in Stewardship

*How to talk about stewardship in times of uncertainty*

- ▶ Our times are often uncertain, it is our **Christian hope** and our prudent planning that can help us prepare and survive this uncertainty
- ▶ **Pledges can be changed** throughout the year if circumstances change – we are open and honest
- ▶ We can also make gifts from securities or other channels which **may be performing better**
- ▶ **The most important thing is to teach that all giving matters**, regardless of the amount. Be prayerful.



*Confronting Challenges in Stewardship*

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# Appreciative Inquiry

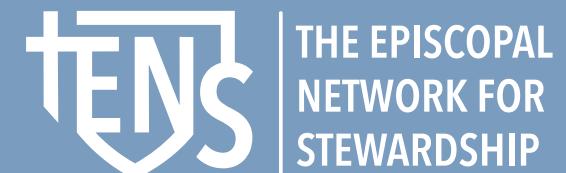
Appreciative Inquiry is a model of design thinking or development that focuses on what is possible, what is good, what is exciting. It purposely does not ask negative questions or frame problems. It is a solutions-based, inclusive way to engage in respectful conversation. In your small-group discussions using the weekly inserts, consider asking the following appreciate inquiry questions:



*Confronting Challenges in Stewardship*

# Appreciative Inquiry

1. Ask the questions posed in the reflection
2. What ministry of our congregation is most hopeful or most exciting to you? Why?
3. If money were no object, what service to our neighborhood / neighbors would you hope to begin? Why?
4. What are examples that you can name of nonprofits, organizations, or other churches that are doing remarkable work in our community? Why are they inspiring to you?
5. Which of your gifts are you most willing to share with our church? (some examples: music, accounting, website, answering the phone, yardwork, translation, invitation, having fun, leading groups, cooking food) Why?



*Confronting Challenges in Stewardship*

# Other Pledge Campaign Tools

## Pre-Campaign



- ▶ Send Letter from the Clergy outlining the theme
- ▶ Send Letter from the Wardens focusing on your budget and mission.
- ▶ Make sure your donation platform website is ready to go



*Using the TENS Materials*



# Other Pledge Campaign Tools

## The Campaign

KICK-OFF  
DEADLINE

- ▶ Send Letter from the Campaign Chair with Pledge Materials. Have a Kick-off event (virtual or in-person). Offer testimonials
- ▶ Pledge Cards
  - ▶ Use the model pledge / promise cards to ask for commitments from your members. **Don't forget to include information on time & talent, on legacy giving / estate gifts, gifts of securities, and online giving intentions**
- ▶ Case for Support / Brochure
- ▶ Budget
- ▶ Narrative Budget

*Using the TENS Materials*



# Other Pledge Campaign Tools

## The Campaign

WEEKLY  
DEADLINE

- ▶ Distribute Weekly Inserts in the bulletin or online
- ▶ Prayers of the People are specially written to bring in the *Walk in Love* theme
- ▶ Blessings at the offertory, ingathering and post-communion prayer
- ▶ Small groups or rector's forum discussions of the weekly inserts
- ▶ How are you going to finish your campaign?

Using the *TENS* Materials



# Other Pledge Campaign Tools

## Post-Campaign



- ▶ Send out Thank-You notes signed by the clergy and/or committee for every pledge or gift of time, talent, & treasure received
- ▶ Make sure to announce the amount pledged / collected, and a plan to clean-up gifts that haven't yet come in
- ▶ Evaluate your campaign. Watch the TENS Webinar on this topic: <https://www.tens.org/webinars-events/tens-webinars/evaluating-your-pledge-campaign/>
- ▶ Thank your committee and acknowledge their hard work

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Thank you!

For more information, tools, webinars, and  
resources, visit [www.tens.org](http://www.tens.org)

Our password for 2024: Ephesians5:2

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