

Inspire! Invite! Thank!

What Clergy Should Know – about what people give

A brief sketch of the continuum looks like this

| Clergy should know because... | Clergy should not know because... |
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| They are the CEO of a \$###,000.00 operation and responsible for its care. | We (congregational leadership) don't trust the clergy or have confidence in their leadership. |
| Giving is a pastoral issue—giving patterns are signals, like others, of a state of the soul, mind or body. | Could lead to favouritism in pastoral care and other forms of ministry. |
| Money is a HUGE spiritual matter in the life of the church. | They (and/or congregational leadership) believe that money is a temporal NOT a spiritual matter. |
| They hold on to very sensitive information—why not this kind of information? | It could cloud their judgement; they might treat big or small givers differently. |
| Knowing overcomes the false split that exists between the financial life of the congregation and the spiritual life of the congregation. | |
| It begins to “shatter the conspiracy of silence” for the spiritual health of the people in the congregation. | |
| The reality could be startling! | The reality could be startling! |

WHEN SOMEONE – ANYONE – MAKES A FIRST GIFT

When ANYONE makes a gift - whether this is a visitor or a potential new member – clergy should be told of the gift as soon as it is processed (and that processing gifts is done as quickly as possible – not at the end of the month). All donations should be acknowledged promptly even if the receipt is not issued until the end of the year.

WHEN SOMEONE STARTS GIVING REGULARLY

Clergy need to know that this is someone making an intentional effort to become connected to the congregation. This is an opportunity for either the clergy or the lay leadership to initiate or deepen the pastoral relationship leading to further involvement and faith formation by reaching out in welcome and hospitality. New givers can be sent a short note of appreciation for their gifts that includes information about the congregation's ministry in order to help deepen their understanding of the mission of the church and ways to engage in that mission with their resources of time, skill as well as financial generosity.

WHEN THERE IS ANY CHANGE IN GIVING PATTERN (NO MATTER WHICH DIRECTION)

If giving decreases this usually happens in for two primary reasons. First, the person is going through personal challenges or a great hardship. Second, the person is upset with the church. *Either situation requires pastoral attention.*

When giving increases, this is an opportunity to rejoice with the donor.

Either way, the change is an opportunity for a deeper relationship with the individual or family.



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WHEN SOMEONE GIVES A GIFT FOR A SPECIAL PURPOSE

Again, this is an opportunity for gratitude from the leadership or from the wider faith community.

WHEN SOMEONE IS BEING CONSIDERED FOR A LEADERSHIP POSITION

If those being considered for a leadership position aren't giving faithfully to the mission of the church, their hearts are not with you and their hearts may actually be far from you! Leaders in the faith community need to have made their own informed and intentional gift to God's mission.

WHEN SOMEONE HAS SHOWN THE CAPACITY TO GIVE GENEROUSLY

If someone is a great singer, we encourage them to sing. If someone is a great teacher or youth worker, we encourage them to apply these gifts to the benefit of God's mission. But if someone is a great giver, we ignore them! Don't all people need to be encouraged in their God-given giftedness, including generous givers? Other organizations will get in if you don't.

WHAT ARE THE GIVING PATTERNS IN THE CONGREGATION

How many people are giving at particular levels? How much of the ministry is supported by each giving level? How and when do people give? This data is used to implement processes to make it as easy as possible for people to be generous. *This is basic information that should be routinely available – with annotations from the person who does have all the detail.*

FOUR WAYS CLERGY CAN SUPPORT HEALTHY, MATURE GENEROSITY

1. Articulate a theology of giving, gratitude and generosity.
2. Model the spiritual practice of generosity by sharing their own practices in this area.
3. Invite others to join them in the spiritual practice of giving, gratitude and generosity.
4. Model a spirit of gratitude by thanking often.

