



Living the Gift

**Stewardship in Word
and Practice**

Clergy Workshops June 12, 2026





The Journey of Generosity

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The Episcopal Network for Stewardship

Where we are now

This morning, we began by talking about preaching and teaching generosity.

Then we explored the pastoral realities of money and meaning.

Now we turn to formation.

- ▶ Because generosity is not created by one sermon, one letter, one gift, or one campaign.
- ▶ Generosity is formed.
- ▶ Over time.
- ▶ With Scripture, prayer, practice, testimony, teaching, and invitation.

Opening



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The Throughline

Generosity is not a fundraising task. It is a discipleship journey.

And if generosity is discipleship, then forming generous Christians is part of the pastoral vocation of the church.

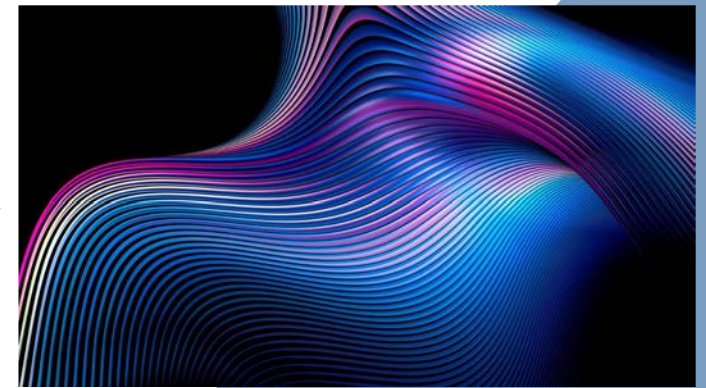
Not just the stewardship committee's job.

Not just the finance committee's job.

Not just the fall appeal's job.

The church forms people for generosity because the Gospel forms people for abundance, trust, gratitude, and love.

Opening



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What we mean by “Formation”

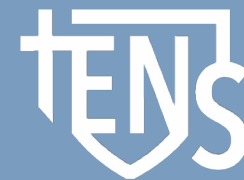
Formation is not simply information. *Formation is the slow shaping of imagination, habits, values, and practices.*

Formation asks:

- ▶ What do we believe about God?
- ▶ What do we believe about enough?
- ▶ What do we believe about money?
- ▶ What do we believe about our neighbors?
- ▶ What do we believe about the church?
- ▶ What do we believe has been entrusted to us?
- ▶ What kind of life are we practicing together?

Formation is how the church helps people become disciples, not merely donors.

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Stewardship is not about Fundraising

Stewardship is not about fundraising.

Stewardship is about mission – God’s mission in the world, and our mission as followers of Jesus Christ.

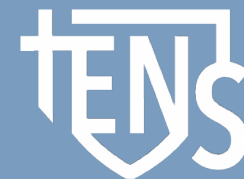
Fundraising asks, “How do we raise enough?”

Formation asks, “How are we helping people become faithful, generous, grateful, courageous disciples of Jesus?”

The church needs both.

But formation has to come first.

Why this matters



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Why Formation Matters

Without Formation, Stewardship becomes:

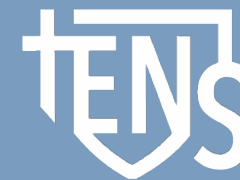
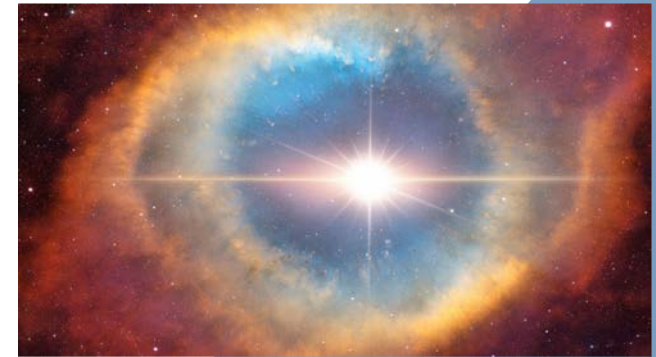
- ▶ Annual
- ▶ Transactional
- ▶ Awkward
- ▶ Budget-driven
- ▶ Dependent on guilt
- ▶ Vulnerable to anxiety
- ▶ Easy to avoid
- ▶ Easy to resent

With Formation, Stewardship Becomes:

- ▶ Spiritual
- ▶ Relational
- ▶ Scriptural
- ▶ Habitual
- ▶ Mission-centered
- ▶ Joyful
- ▶ Courageous
- ▶ Part of Christian identity

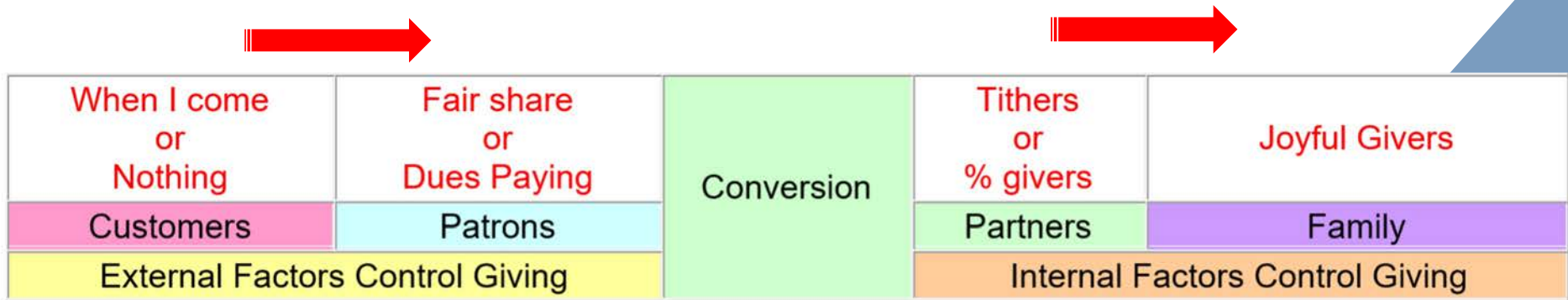
Formation changes the soil.

Why this matters



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The Journey to Generosity



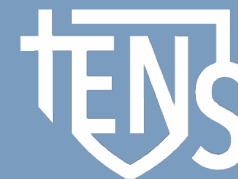
This language is not about judging people.

It is about recognizing that people are in different places on a journey.

The pastoral question is not, “*How do we shame people into the next category?*”

The pastoral question is, “*How do we invite people more deeply into relationship, belonging, purpose, and practice?*”

Why this matters



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Customers

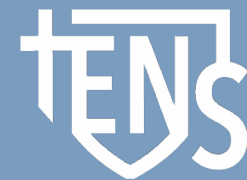
Some people are loosely connected.

- ▶ They may attend occasionally.
- ▶ They may not understand the offering plate.
- ▶ They may assume someone else funds the church.
- ▶ They may even say, “Nobody ever asked me.”

This is not necessarily resistance.
It may be lack of formation.

They have not yet been invited to understand themselves as part of the ministry and mission of the community.

Why this matters



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Forming “Customers”

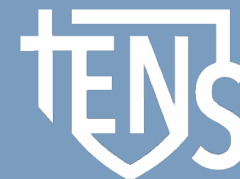
Customers need:

- ▶ Welcome
- ▶ Belonging
- ▶ Explanation
- ▶ Low-pressure invitation
- ▶ Clear teaching about why giving matters
- ▶ Opportunities to participate
- ▶ Stories of impact
- ▶ A sense that the church is not “someone else’s institution”

A good formation question:

When does this become more than a place I attend?

False Flags in Pastoral Stewardship



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Patrons

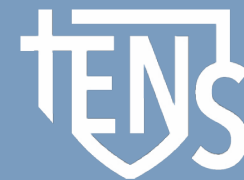
Patrons see the church as valuable.

- ▶ They may love the building, music, community, programs, or tradition.
- ▶ They may give because the church is important to them.

But patronage can remain transactional:

“I support this because I value it.”

Not yet the full Christian vision.



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False Flags in Pastoral Stewardship

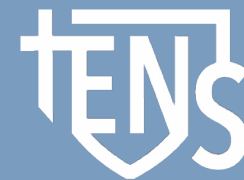
Forming Patrons

Patrons need help moving from support to participation. Formation can ask:

- ▶ How is this congregation shaping your life with God?
- ▶ What ministry here makes you grateful?
- ▶ How does your giving participate in God's mission?
- ▶ What does your gift make possible for someone else?
- ▶ How might giving become prayer, not only support?

*A patron supports a valued institution.
A disciple participates in a holy calling.*

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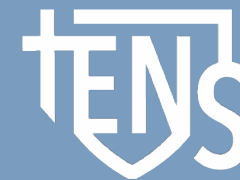
Partners

Partners understand that **giving is connected to mission**. They see themselves as part of the work. They begin to think in terms of shared responsibility, spiritual practice, and investment in the Gospel.

Partners are often **ready for deeper teaching**. They can be invited into:

- ▶ Percentage giving
- ▶ Testimony
- ▶ Leadership
- ▶ Mission interpretation
- ▶ Mentoring others
- ▶ Legacy giving
- ▶ Practices of discernment around money

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Forming Partners

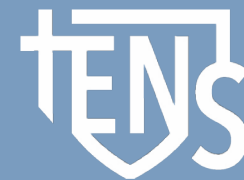
Partners need ongoing spiritual challenge. *Not pressure. Challenge.*

Questions for partners might include:

- ▶ What would growth in generosity look like for you?
- ▶ Where is God inviting you to trust more deeply?
- ▶ How does your household talk about giving?
- ▶ How are you helping others experience abundance?
- ▶ What future are you helping this community build?

Partners can help carry the congregation's generosity culture.

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Family

These are your joyful givers – those who give not simply from duty, loyalty, or support, but from **belonging, love, and shared life**.

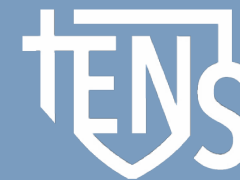
*This is not about gift size.
It is about spiritual posture.*

Family gives because the church's mission has become part of their own life.

They do not ask, "*What do I owe?*"

They ask, "*What are we called to do together?*"

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Forming Family

People at this stage need:

- ▶ Gratitude
- ▶ Continued spiritual nourishment
- ▶ Honest partnership
- ▶ Opportunities for testimony
- ▶ Healthy boundaries
- ▶ Invitations to legacy
- ▶ Encouragement to mentor new givers
- ▶ Protection from being overused or treated as institutional saviors

*Joyful givers still need pastoral care.
Sometimes especially so.*

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The Journey is not Linear

People move forward and backward.

- ▶ Life changes.
- ▶ Jobs change.
- ▶ Households change.
- ▶ Trust changes.
- ▶ Faith changes.

A person may be a partner in one season and financially stretched in another.

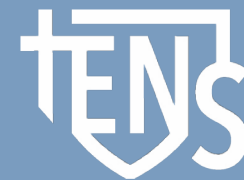
A person may give generously but still carry scarcity anxiety.

A person may have wealth but little freedom.

A person may have little money but deep generosity.

**This journey is not a ladder of worth.
It is a pastoral map.**

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The Goal is Spiritual Maturity

We are not trying to produce better institutional consumers.
We are trying to form spiritually mature disciples who understand generosity as part of their life with God.
Spiritual maturity includes:

- ▶ Gratitude
- ▶ Trust
- ▶ Wisdom
- ▶ Mercy
- ▶ Justice
- ▶ Honesty
- ▶ Courage
- ▶ Practice
- ▶ Joy

Generosity is one sign of that maturity.

False Flags in Pastoral Stewardship



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Children are already Learning about Money

Children learn about money long before the church teaches them. They learn from:

- ▶ What adults worry about
- ▶ What adults avoid
- ▶ What adults buy
- ▶ What adults share
- ▶ What adults resent
- ▶ What adults celebrate
- ▶ What adults say is “too expensive”
- ▶ What adults treat as worth sacrifice

If the church does not offer a faithful language for money, children will still be formed.

Just not necessarily by the Gospel.

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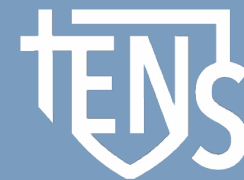
Tweens & Teens Need Honest Money Talk

Tweens and teens are already absorbing powerful messages about:

- ▶ Status
- ▶ Consumption
- ▶ Phones
- ▶ Clothes
- ▶ College
- ▶ Work
- ▶ Debt
- ▶ Influencers
- ▶ Comparison
- ▶ Success
- ▶ Scarcity
- ▶ Generosity

They can handle more honesty than we often give them. And they can smell fake piety from a mile away. Do not give them vague “sharing is nice” stewardship. Give them real conversation.

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Adults Need more than a Financial Ask for Formation

Adults need more than an appeal.
They need spaces to reflect on:

- ▶ Money stories
- ▶ Family patterns
- ▶ Anxiety
- ▶ Debt
- ▶ Enoughness
- ▶ Retirement
- ▶ Children and inheritance
- ▶ Charitable giving
- ▶ Legacy
- ▶ Simplicity
- ▶ Justice
- ▶ Mission
- ▶ Trust

Adult stewardship formation should create brave, non-shaming spaces where people can tell the truth.

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Formation is not one-sized

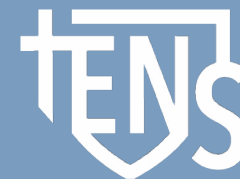
Different groups need different entry points.

- ▶ Children may begin with gratitude and sharing.
- ▶ Youth may begin with values, comparison, and identity.
- ▶ Young adults may begin with debt, work, rent, vocation, and financial pressure.
- ▶ Families may begin with household generosity practices.
- ▶ Older adults may begin with legacy, simplicity, mortality, and blessing.
- ▶ Vestries may begin with budget, mission, transparency, and trust.

The formation question is:

What does faithful generosity look like in this season of life?

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Formation Across the Whole Congregation

A healthy generosity formation plan might include:

- ▶ Children's offering teaching
- ▶ Youth conversations about money and values
- ▶ Adult Bible study on abundance
- ▶ Vestry reflection on budget as mission
- ▶ Testimony during worship
- ▶ A legacy giving workshop
- ▶ A financial literacy forum
- ▶ Newcomer teaching on giving
- ▶ Seasonal gratitude practices
- ▶ Thank-you notes and storytelling

The point is not to do everything.

The point is to stop treating generosity as one annual event.

Preparing for Parishioner Dynamics



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A Year-Round Formation Map

Advent:

Enoughness, simplicity, preparing room, holy longing

Epiphany:

Gifts, offering, vocation, light for the world

Lent:

Examination, repentance, fasting, almsgiving, financial truth-telling

Easter:

Abundance, resurrection, joy, new life, shared mission

Pentecost:

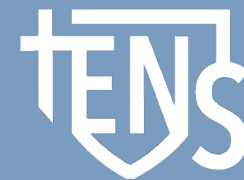
Gifts of the Spirit, community, participation, common life

Ordinary Time:

Practices, habits, discipleship, daily faithfulness

*Stewardship fits everywhere because discipleship fits
everywhere.*

Preparing for Parishioner Dynamics



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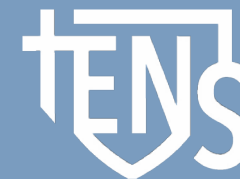
Formation Through Leadership

Vestries, parish councils, bishop's committees, stewardship committees, and finance leaders need formation too. They need to ask:

- ▶ What story does our budget tell?
- ▶ Where are we operating from scarcity?
- ▶ How do we speak about money?
- ▶ Do our practices build trust?
- ▶ Are we thanking people well?
- ▶ Are we transparent and understandable?
- ▶ Are we forming generosity or merely collecting pledges?
- ▶ What are we modeling?

Leaders cannot form what they have not practiced.

Preparing for Parishioner Dynamics



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Formation Through Newcomer Welcome

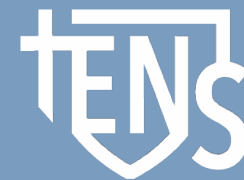
Newcomers need gentle, clear teaching.
Do not assume they know:

- ▶ How to make a gift
- ▶ Why churches ask for money
- ▶ How giving supports ministry
- ▶ Whether small gifts matter
- ▶ Whether they are expected to give
- ▶ What “stewardship” means

Newcomer formation might say:

“Giving is one of the ways members and friends of this congregation participate in our shared life and mission. We invite everyone to consider what generosity looks like for them, at whatever stage of life and faith they are in.”

Preparing for Parishioner Dynamics



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Formation Through Financial Literacy

The church is not a financial planning firm.
But the church can create spaces where people grow in wisdom. Possible offerings:

- ▶ Budgeting and values workshop
- ▶ Wills and estate planning seminar
- ▶ Teaching children about generosity
- ▶ Debt, shame, and grace conversation
- ▶ Retirement and faithful purpose
- ▶ Simplicity and enoughness during Lent
- ▶ Charitable giving and tax basics with qualified professionals
- ▶ Medical directives and end-of-life planning

*This is not separate from faith.
It is faith meeting real life.*

Preparing for Parishioner Dynamics

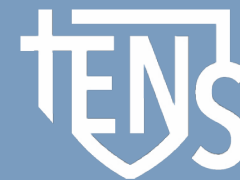


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Generosity & your Church

A generous congregation is not formed by accident.

- ▶ It is formed by repeated invitations into **gratitude, trust, mission, and practice**.
- ▶ It is formed when children learn that **sharing is joyful**.
- ▶ When youth learn that money is **connected to values**.
- ▶ When adults learn to **speak honestly** about enough.
- ▶ When leaders learn to interpret the **budget as mission**.
- ▶ When elders learn that **legacy is blessing**.
- ▶ When clergy learn that **teaching generosity is not a fundraising burden**. It is pastoral vocation.



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Preparing for Parishioner Dynamics



Thank you!

For more information, resources, and videos, find us at www.tens.org

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