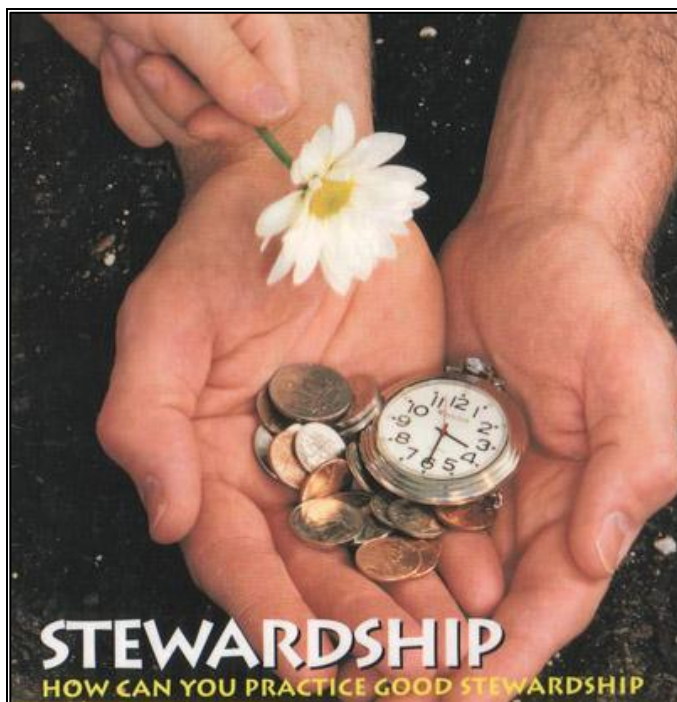


Financial Stewardship at St Paul's Cathedral Bendigo



A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER

All generous God,
you poured yourself out in creation;
you gave your Son to die for us on the cross;
and continue to give yourself to us through the gift of your Holy Spirit.
Give us generous hearts;
that in our response to your love
our lives may overflow in thanksgiving and generosity.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Dear Friends,

I wonder if you have noticed that we always speak of 'stewardship' rather than 'fund raising'. To be sure, we as a Cathedral do some fund raising; Trivia Nights and Effervescent Entertainment each raise significant amounts of money, but it would be a very unsatisfactory situation if we should come to rely on fund raising or even our rental income as our only means of support.

Why is this? Look at the word 'stewardship'. It has to do with being a steward, a person who manages affairs in relationship to another. Christians are called to manage everything (our time our talents our finances, to name just three) that has have been entrusted to us by God, who has created us and everything there is. In short, we are not the owners of who we are and what we have but rather we are tenants, called to be responsible in looking after what belongs to God. All of our thoughts about being stewards arise from our beliefs about our relationship with God.

Is this relationship the most important factor in our lives? While fund raising generates income to support a budget, stewardship is the action which proceeds from our faith. It is as one has called it, 'heart raising' – that is, putting the heart before the other matters! As Jesus reminds us: 'Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.'

My experience here at St Paul's is one of a generous church. Many people give generously where they see need. Yet even though there is visible generosity, we face financial challenges.

I would like to ask you, in response to this year's stewardship appeal, to lift up your heart and reflect that raising in your giving. I ask that we all think in terms of a sacrificial commitment of our life and labours; I believe we should all pray about our pledge before we review and renew our giving. I hope that we will reflect upon our role as God's stewards and respond with gratitude for all the many gifts our Lord has entrusted to our care.

Yours sincerely,

The Dean

Financial Stewardship

How much money do we need to run this church?

It takes nearly \$200,000 a year to run a church of this size. The bulk of these costs are for staff, including the Dean, but other costs are incurred simply from having our wonderful, and soon to be very wonderful, buildings. In the last year (2011) our income was around \$170,000 .We are looking to raise our annual income by \$30,000.

Where do we get this money from?

Most of our income comes through the generosity of people giving through the “open plate”; the collection bowl that is passed around during Sunday services. Other people support the work of the Cathedral by directly giving through their bank using a transfer (direct debit) from their account to the Cathedral’s. We have another source of income though the rental of office space to BFFS.

Why do churches wish people to give through planned giving?

We are hoping to shift our giving culture to that of planned giving though periodic payment from people’s banks or via pledged giving through the plate. The reason for this is that the open plate at Sunday services does not give a stable platform for the mission of the church. It becomes difficult for the treasurer to plan a budget when we do not know how much money will be coming in. Furthermore the open plate amount varies with season and weather. When the amount is down too much time can be spent dealing with small financial issues and not with mission and worship.

How much do people give?

It is not known by the Dean and the Wardens how much each individual gives. When a person fills in a pledge card, the only people in the church who know about this are the Treasurer / Acting Treasurer. It is important for ministry within the church that the clergy, wardens and council do not know the amounts that people pledge.

The profile of giving within this church can be discerned by looking at collections and periodic payments and it appears that this church is like many others. There are a few people who pledge a significant amount of money. About 20% of our stewardship income comes through a few bank transfers.

With the open plate, it is apparent that many people contribute \$5 when they come.

How much should I give?

It is the Dean's opinion that the church should not tell you how much to give, even as a percentage; yet it is the role of the church to give advice about how those decisions are made. The clear message from the Bible and from the life of the Church, is that Christians should give sacrificially. That means making a prayerful decision about what you can financially contribute to the church, prior to other discretionary expense decisions. There is a pithy saying: give God what is right, not what is left.



Take, O Lord, and receive my entire liberty, my memory, my understanding and my whole will. All that I am and all that I possess You have given me: I surrender it all to You to be disposed of according to Your will. Give me only Your love and Your grace; with these I will be rich enough, and will desire nothing more.

St Ignatius of Loyola