

Ownership

"...that you may with one mind and one mouth
glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

(Romans 15:6)

Key Components

- Commitment of Parish Priest and Parish leaders
- Diverse Stewardship Committee
- Develop Yearly Material
- Strengthen Stewardship Giving
- User Friendly Web Presence
- Communication
- Confidentiality
- Transparency and Accountability
- Acknowledge & Celebrate

Key Components of Ownership

Commitment of Parish Priest and Parish leaders

- Develop and Support the Stewardship Strategy and Message
- Evaluate strengths and weaknesses of Strategy throughout the year

Stewardship Committee

- 4-12+ members of all ages and backgrounds, including non- (or-not-yet) Orthodox
- Parish Priest must be an active participant
- Meet at regular intervals

Key Components of Ownership

Develop Materials on a Yearly Basis

Stewardship brochure/form, including time, talent and financial (treasure) commitment, banner and flyers

Include a QR code on all paper forms

Letter, short and positive, from Parish Priest on Stewardship

Strengthen Stewardship Giving

"The rich man is not the one who has much, but the one who gives much. For what one gives away, he keeps for all eternity."

St. John Chrysostom

"He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully."

(II Cor. 9:6)

The amount each
individual/family gives
will be different
because the resources of
each individual/family
are different

Transition to Percentage of Income Giving

Give with joy “for God loves a cheerful giver”

II Corinthians 9:7

Successful Percentage of Income Giving Program

"One of the reasons our Stewardship program is so successful is we do not focus on dues so much as on the Biblical message of tithing. Knowing that Parishioners cannot give 10% of their income if they haven't set up their finances that way, we ask Parishioners to challenge themselves by offering 3% and every year raise it a little bit. We have a helpful graphic on our Stewardship form that helps Parishioners see, based on their income, and the percentage they want to give to the church, what that amount would be.

We pray that our model can help you in your Stewardship program."

God Bless,

Fr. Dimitri Tobias

LEADERSHIP ST. NICHOLAS

- A **minimum financial commitment** of \$10,000 per year for 10 years
- Your contribution is considered to be your annual Stewardship pledge as well as making you a contributor to Paying Down the Mortgage, AND it provides you with a Brick from the Brick Campaign. If you have an existing outstanding Capital Campaign pledge, you will need to fulfill it in a timely manner.
- Attendance at parish General Assemblies; providing **leadership and direction** for the good of the parish community at these meetings and throughout the year.

SUPER STEWARD

- **Minimum annual financial contribution** of 5% of household income each year.
- Your contribution is considered to be your annual Stewardship pledge as well as making you a contributor to Paying Down the Mortgage, AND it provides you with a Brick from the Brick Campaign. If you have an existing outstanding Capital Campaign pledge, you will need to fulfill it in a timely manner.
- **Flexibility provided to reach the 5% giving level gradually**; if the level can't be reached immediately, you may gradually increase your Stewardship to reach 5% by the end of the year.
- Attendance at parish General Assemblies; providing **leadership and direction** for the good of the parish community at these meetings and throughout the year.

STEWARD

- A financial pledge made to the church in good faith and in accordance with your means and ability.
- A commitment of time and talent to support the church and its ministries.

CULTIVATE ST. NICHOLAS

BEARING FRUIT WITH GOD'S GIFTS

THE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Capital Campaign Pledge
Mortgage Payment
Brick Purchase
Other Special Funds

STEWARDSHIP

Annual Pledge
Tray Donations
Holiday Donations



St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church St. Louis, MO

Leadership St. Nicholas and Percentage of Income Giving

Letter from
Fr. Douglas
Papulis
describing
success of
the
program

Eliminate Barriers to Becoming a Steward

- Eliminate minimum amount financial commitment strategies, e.g., “dues” and “average”
- Welcome and encourage participation of non- (or-not-yet) Orthodox in ministries that are not directly related to teaching Orthodoxy, e.g. serving on the stewardship committee, passing the tray, welcoming visitors
- Eliminate questions on the Stewardship Commitment forms about religious affiliation and **welcome all** who wish to become stewards
- Eliminate multiple paper forms: Create one form that includes financial commitment, family information and ministries/programs for commitment of time and talent
- Eliminate multiple online forms: Create one online form that includes financial commitment, family information, and ministries/programs for commitment of time and talent

Key Components of Ownership

User Friendly Web Presence

- Archdiocese provides free web assistance to Parishes
- Include “Stewardship” page for testimonials and Stewardship related material
- “Stewardship” button on site banner
- User-friendly online stewardship commitment form for completion online (pre-filled for returning Stewards, if possible)
- Stewardship commitment forms that can be downloaded
- Various methods of online paying: credit card, PayPal, Venmo
- “Give Butter”: one example of a platform that includes the above ways of giving
- Payment schedule of Steward’s choosing: weekly, monthly, quarterly, yearly

Web assistance from the Archdiocese at no cost to the Parish for the life of the website

- The staff of the Archdiocese will set up the platform at no cost to the Parish
- Large selection of templates from which to choose
- Support continues after the setup at no cost to the Parish
- Helpful and responsive support from the staff of the Archdiocese
- The web platform mimics Archdiocese and Metropolis of Chicago Website
- Archdiocese takes care of all the security and software updates
- The templates allow for each Parish's unique information on website, such as, sermons, bible study materials, calendars and other material

Key Components of Ownership

Communication

Stewardship Kiosk at Church

Centralized point of information with Commitment/Pledge forms and for online giving, flyers, calendars with church events

U.S. Mail and Email

Letter from Priest and brochures with time, talent/financial commitment prior to Stewardship Sunday(s) and at various intervals throughout the year to those who haven't pledged and as updates

Do not start off with “the ask”

Each Parish has a story and a history

- Tell the story of your Parish
- Discuss the good works being done -- in-reach and outreach, support of philanthropic causes, transparency, goals, and other pertinent information
- The ask may be: “Help us achieve our goals by being a Steward”

Key Components of Ownership

Communication

Acknowledge and Honor All Gifts Promptly

Express thankfulness as often and in as many ways as possible --
telephone calls, thank you letters
postcards, thank you notes (Letters,
postcards and thank you notes with
original signature and a short handwritten
sentence, by Parish Priest(s) and/or
Stewardship Committee Chair)

Make Stewardship a
focal point as often
and in as many
ways as possible

- Sermons on Stewardship by Priest
- Podcasts on Stewardship
- Small group discussions
- Identify Champions in each ministry and program to talk about Stewardship at the meetings
- Display list of Stewards in alphabetical order and update regularly
- Stewardship Sundays
- Parishioner testimonials

Example: Stewardship Sunday

Preparation leading up to Stewardship Sunday(s)

Communication

- Sermons on the meaning of Stewardship for a minimum of three weeks prior to Stewardship Sunday
- Testimonials, written or oral, from Parishioners of all ages/demographics on “What the Church means to me”
- Mail and email the letter from the Priest and brochures/pledge cards inviting Parishioners to Stewardship Sunday
- Mail postcards about Stewardship
- Ensure web is updated with current brochures and forms for online giving (pre-filled forms for returning stewards, if possible)
- Call Parishioners and invite Parishioners to Stewardship Sunday
- Announce Stewardship Sunday in the Sunday Bulletin, Newsletter, Constant Contact for several weeks prior to Stewardship Sunday

Example: Stewardship Sunday

Stewardship Sunday (one Sunday or three in a row)

Sunday(s) during November, December or January

- Place brochures/pledge/commitment cards and pens in pews in advance
- Written material to have a QR code
- Kiosk with brochures, pledge cards, IPAD/laptop for convenience of pledging

Immediately following Divine Liturgy

- Sermon on Stewardship and testimonials (on all three Sundays, if doing three)
- On the first Stewardship Sunday invite Parish Council members and Stewardship Committee members to come forward and place their pledge cards in the basket
- Ask Parishioners to turn in their pledge cards at the end of the service
- Invite and welcome everyone to coffee hour hosted by the Stewardship Committee
- Set up a table with brochures and pledge cards for pledging during coffee hour

Communication

Sunday Bulletin / Monthly Newsletter

- Dedicate a section of the Bulletin/monthly newsletter to Stewardship and vary the message
- Quotations on Stewardship
- Parishioner Testimonial(s)
- Short essays on why Stewardship, generosity and similar Stewardship topics are important
- Short write-up on a Parishioner once a month
- Monthly Updates on total Pledged/Committed and number of Stewards

Key Components of Ownership

Communication

- Online Email Marketing Platform, such as Constant Contact, can be used for:
 - Sunday Bulletin
 - Newsletter
 - Email blasts

Confidentiality

- Ensure that the Stewardship financial commitment of each individual/family is confidential

Key Components of Ownership

Transparency and Accountability

- Ensure accounting is accurate
- Periodic disclosure of finances:
 - Disclose expenditures such as salaries, office supplies, gifts to other organizations, building expenses
- Parishioners tend to be more generous when the Parish is more transparent

STRENGTHEN STEWARDSHIP NOW – STEWARDSHIP
Lou Laros, Stewardship Chair
Three Hierarchs Greek Orthodox Church, Champaign, IL

The Three Hierarchs Greek Orthodox parish in Champaign, IL, is extremely pleased with the new financial software offered by the Archdiocese through its Orthodox Software Initiative. Our median pledge for 2020 is \$2,021, surpassing last year's median pledge by over \$200.

Father Michael and I stopped by the Archdiocese booth at the 2018 Clergy-Laity Congress in Boston. We saw a presentation of the ACS Church Management Software and Church Accounting software. Effective January 1, 2020, Three Hierarchs began fully running this system for income and expenses. We have weekly 1.5-hour meetings with the Archdiocese contact person so that we can completely understand and utilize the program's many capabilities. This assistance has been awesome and a tremendous asset to the Parish.

Finally, with the importance of staying on top of stewardship, and with its heightened importance due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, this system provides a very easy and professional platform that allows us to stay in contact with our stewards, both electronically and by regular mail, more than ever in the history of Three Hierarchs. In a parish like ours, where 75% of our total income is derived from stewardship, this has been an awesome tool. We are only one click away with getting pertinent financial information to parishioners quickly.

We are in the process of sending out quarterly stewardship updates and reaching out to the few parishioners who have not yet made a stewardship pledge, but who are still contributing. We are personally committed and determined to get through this financial crisis through stewardship. We are fortunate to have this wonderful tool to assist us. We believe this will allow us to surpass any stewardship levels we have ever experienced at the Three Hierarchs Parish.

Communication and Financial Transparency Increases Financial Commitment

STRENGTHEN STEWARDSHIP NOW – STEWARDSHIP
Tony Zafiropoulos
Assumption Greek Orthodox Church, Town and Country, MO

When I started reviewing the survey information from all of the parishes on behalf of the Strengthen Stewardship Now committee, I was looking for a connection that would help us identify what works and what doesn't. Looking for a simple theme, what stood out was "Transparency and Outreach". The successful parishes were doing outreach in different ways and using transparency with their finances to accomplish their goals.

So what I did next was to beat the drum... every chance I got, I mentioned what we need to do at our parish is to be transparent with our finances with a positive message, and to do outreach. So a number of things started happening – our priest and parish council president got together to communicate to the parish about the shortfall of festival (Memorial Day for us) fundraiser money. Our council members stepped up to help contact our parishioners during the toughest lockdown time and afterwards. People wanted to talk to someone. We sent out a letter of "thank you" with an icon to remind everyone we are together as a community. Then the festival replacement letter went out after the festival would normally be held.

A few weeks after the festival replacement letter went out, the donations started to come in... by the end of the next month our treasurer had some good news – we received some generous donations (including one of \$36,000 and another large donation). The combination of small and large donations essentially replaced the festival net income. One of the large donors mentioned that something in the letter triggered him to make the donation. It had to be that he felt God's hand.

With faith, honesty and effort we can continue to serve God.

Financial Transparency and Communication Lead to Increased Giving

On the basis of studies reported in *Passing the Plate: Why American Christians Don't Give Away More Money* (New York: Oxford UP, 2008), sociologists Christian Smith and Michael Emerson concluded:

“[A] significant increase in the public transparency, accountability, and institutionalized credibility of the many religious and charitable causes and organizations to which American Christians might consider giving money would have the real effect over time of considerably increasing the amount of money they give.” (143)

Acknowledge and Celebrate

Parish-wide acknowledgement and
celebration of time/talent/treasure

- Appreciation brunch, luncheon, picnic,
dinner dance — complimentary for
Stewards
- Post list of Stewards
- Public recognition of Parishioners who give
time and talent

Quotations on Stewardship

“Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.” St. Matthew 5:16

“What do you have that you did not receive? And if you received it, then why do you boast as if it were not a gift?” I Corinthians 4:7

“As for the rich in this world, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hope on uncertain riches, but on God who richly furnishes us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good deeds, liberal and generous, thus treasuring up for themselves a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life which is life indeed. “ I Timothy 6:17-19

“If I do not feel a sense of joy in God’s creation, if I forget to offer the world back to God with thankfulness, I have advanced very little upon the Way, I have not yet learnt to be truly human.”
Bishop Kallistos Ware, *The Orthodox Way*

“I do not believe one can settle how much we ought to give. I am afraid the only safe rule is to give more than we can spare. In other words, if our expenditure on comforts, luxuries, amusements, etc., is up to the standard common among those with the same income as our own, we are probably giving away too little. If our charities do not at all pinch or hamper us, I should say they are too small. There ought to be things we should like to do and cannot do because our charitable expenditure excludes them.” C. S. Lewis (1898-1963), English author and scholar