**Vestry and Leadership Communications**

**for Your Annual Giving Campaign**

An essential element of a vibrant and engaging annual giving ministry is the full participation of your church’s leadership team. From your clergy to your vestry to other deeply invested ministry leaders, enthusiastic participation is pivotal.

In the last full paragraph of our “All Hearts Open” pledge letters, we write:

Enclosed is your 2018 pledge card. Between now and Grace’s Celebration Sunday on November 5th, consider how you might increasingly imitate Jesus Christ and open your heart to God, to yourself and the gifts God has given you, and to others with greater intent. **The vestry and other ministry leaders at Grace have already committed not to take their pledge amount from last year and simply write 2017’s figure on 2018’s pledge cards. Instead, they have each prayerfully committed, as evidenced in the vestry letter to the church, to tithe or give proportionally. Please follow their lead as you discern how God is calling you to open your heart more broadly into the generous life God gives to others through us. Join us in this commitment.**

Making the above statement in your pledge letters is important to demonstrate the responsibility and example that your church’s leaders offer in their commitment to God. And it takes planning. Here are a few ideas:

* Distribute pledge cards to your vestry, clergy and other designated leaders you identify in July.
  + Describe the emphasis on leadership examples and allow time for conversation.
  + Request that the pledge cards be returned in August.
  + Plan your communications around leadership giving in September.
  + Begin leadership communications at your kick-off, and continue to evangelize your leaders’ commitments throughout the campaign, with particular emphasis in the first two weeks and the final two weeks.
* If your vestry signs a Vestry Statement on Giving, confirm that all members have indeed signed it. Use this statement as part of your messaging.
  + If your vestry does not have a current Vestry Statement on Giving, [this article](http://www.ecfvp.org/posts/creating-a-culture-of-giving/), “Creating a Culture of Giving” by Angela Emerson, found on the Episcopal Church Foundation Vital Practices website is a great place to start. (<http://www.ecfvp.org/blogs/974/creating-a-culture-of-giving>)
  + A sample vestry statement on giving from a Diocese of Virginia church is:

We, the Christ Church Vestry, call on ourselves and our fellow parishioners by our example to witness that stewardship to God is an acknowledgement that we are most blessed by God’s gifts, and we joyfully want to give back for God’s use a portion of our time, talent, and treasure.

We acknowledge the requirement of Canon 12 of the Diocese of Virginia that vestry members “shall support the programs of the Church through a commitment to service and biblically-based standard of proportional giving. Each vestry member shall also continuously encourage the members of the congregation to support the programs of the Church and to give generously towards the support of those programs…”

We have each resolved to work toward proportional giving to the Church and to others, recognizing that The Episcopal Church has established the Biblical Tithe as the minimum standard to be attained. We urge your prayerful consideration of joining us in this commitment to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

* Different stewardship evangelism opportunities are:
  + Ask your treasurer to combine the total vestry member pledges of current vestry members in 2016 and in 2017, then calculate the aggregate percentage increase. With this percentage increase, you may communicate something to the effect of: “**We’re all in!** Join us in “All Hearts Open” at Grace Episcopal Church. We’d each love to tell you about our journey at Grace, but more importantly we’d love to hear about yours!”
  + Ask leaders to describe why they increased their gift through:
    - A worship bulletin note
    - A front page newsletter article
    - A video
    - A ministry minute during worship announcements
    - A forum conversation
    - Artwork!
* How do you get started writing? See the sample note below!

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**Sample Communication**

**(letter, article in newsletter, e-mail, etc.)**

Dear Nancy and Ed *or* Dear Grace Family,

Your vestry and clergy at Grace Episcopal Church are committed to our mission of “insert your church’s mission statement here.”

In response to this mission and how we open our hearts to God, each of us has prayerfully discerned how God is opening our lives to greater generosity. We have faithfully committed to tithe or give proportionally and have already submitted an “All Hearts Open” pledge card. Our pledges as a group have …

**\*increased by x.y% percent!\***

**We’re all in!** Join us in “All Hearts Open” at Grace Episcopal Church. We’d each love to tell you about our journey at Grace, but more importantly we’d love to hear about yours!

< Depending on how you send this note, each vestry member and your clergy can sign, or a single vestry member who is the vestry contact for the individual/family receiving the letter may sign.>