



Stewardship Kaleidoscope 2025

Making the Offering a High Point in the  
Liturgy

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# About Me



- -Pastor
- -Father and Husband
- -Writer
- -Occasional Slow Runner
- -Trying to Live a Generous Life



# What is the Offering Anyway?



- What is your first memory of the offering in worship?
- When you were a young(er) church goer, where did you think the offering went?
- What did your parents/family/pastor say the offering would be used for?
- How was the offering collected when you were young?



# The Offering in the Bible

Too Many to Count...



# What is the Offering Anyway?



- 1 Chronicles 29:9
- Acts 20:35
- Hebrews 13:15
- Deuteronomy 16:17
- Luke 6:38...and so many more

# What is the Offering Anyway?



- *Karbanot*
- Functioned in three primary ways:
  - A giving and renunciation
  - A substitution
  - A means of drawing close

# What is the Offering Anyway?



- Up to the 11<sup>th</sup> Century, the Offering was closely connected with the sacrament of the Eucharist—a gift of what was at hand
- In the Middle Ages this idea became distorted some and associated with appeasing God and a kind of “balancing of the sin-ledger.”
- The Reformation sought to reclaim the idea of the Offering as a response to God’s grace, not a response to God’s anger.
- The Offering is an essential part of the Christian life.

# What is the Offering Anyway?



- Uniquely American?
- The early missionaries to the States in our tradition had to wrestle with the fact that this new nation would not sponsor state religion
- Sponsorship still happens in countries with a historic state church
- Offerings came to support the church more-so than support the mission of the church...we have to wrestle with the reality and justice-issues related to this fact.



# The Offering is a Matter of Stewardship and Discipleship





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*oikonomos* = Steward or manager

“(Practicing stewardship) is as spiritual as giving a sermon, entering a time of prayer, visiting the sick, or feeding the hungry! (Stewardship) is always a call to conversion”

(from “A Spirituality of Fundraising,” by Henri J. M. Nouwen)





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*Galatians 5:22-23*

By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, **generosity**, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup>gentleness, and self-control.

Stewardship is Generosity Mindfully Practiced as a Disciple



# Traditional Paradigm vs. Emerging Paradigm



- Traditional

- Moral Obligation
- Theology of Duty
- Institution Centered
- Institutions are to be Trusted
- Institutions are Autonomous .

- Emerging

- Donor Cultivation
- Theology of Grace
- Donor Centered
- Institutional Trust must be Earned
- Donors are Collaborative Partners



# The Offering in the Liturgy



# The Offering is a Response to the Word



- God has given graciously, and we respond with grace
- The Gospel calls us not to atone for ourselves, but to help our neighbor
- The Offering provides a way of participation
- The Offering allows us to give of ourselves for our neighbor
- Mission, mission, mission...the Offering allows us a time to connect God's mission with our work

# The Offering is a Response to the Word



The Offering Gives Us the Opportunity to Respond in Generosity to a Generous God.

...so let the people respond, by God!



# How Can We Rethink How We Do Offering?

- Pass the plate (or basket)
- Laminated online giving forms
  - QR Codes
  - Testimony
- Stations around the sanctuary
- Processional celebrations





# We Need a Reframe





# Re-Frame

What is this?



# Re-Frame

And this?



Re-Frame

And now?



## Short Story Time: The Grind



# What Unique Thing Does Your Church Do to Change Lives?

What would be missing in your town/city/neighborhood if your community was gone tomorrow?

What stories of life-change through Christ are alive in your church?

How are those in your community uniquely generous and how can you tell these stories?





# How Can You Tell The Story?

Connect the Offering with the work you're doing,  
weekly?

What stories of life-change through Christ are  
alive in your church?

How are those in your community uniquely  
generous and how can you tell these stories?





# It's Not Just About Money!

Utilize your bulletin differently to highlight all the ways you do ministry!

What stories of life-change through Christ are alive in your church?

How are those in your community uniquely generous and how can you tell these stories?





# It's Not Just About Money! (pt 2.)

Utilize your context!

Utilize the season!

Utilize your annual meeting!





# Aha?! Take Away? Note?

What are you walking away with here?

What next step in your community will you take?





Thank you



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*Curating and cultivating  
resources and relationships so  
congregations can fuel their  
Christ-centered ministries*