

Greetings!

As you do ministry in the time of this pandemic, what new abundance have you discovered? We are surrounded by messages of what we are lacking and missing, but churches across the synod have been active and engaged, trying new things, and discovering new ways of being the church together (even while staying apart). Here are just a few quick stories from around the synod:

What are the stories of generosity in your community? How are your members being generous with the congregation? How is your congregation being generous with the community?

How are you sharing these stories with your people? Find below some ideas to communicate and cultivate generosity especially during this period of social distancing:

- **Do offering in your virtual worship.** If we believe it's really a spiritual action and an important part of our in person worship, then we can and should be including it when we have to worship online. Use the time to tell the stories of generosity from your people. Use the time to invite prayerful giving (online giving, preparing a check to mail, and praying about other ways they can be generous with their resources).
- **Strive to communicate abundance.** We easily slip into scarcity communication. Instead of starting your next parish newsletter with acknowledgment of what we can't do, start with celebration of what is happening: "We can't meet in person right now for worship, and many people are missing the time of fellowship after worship." vs. "Last week we had double our average attendance view our online worship service, and we had three first-time visitors at our virtual coffee hour last week." It's not all sunshine and roses, and there is a place to acknowledge that. But how can we tell our story in a different way that communicates what we have in the face of adversity rather than what we don't have?
- **Talk with your church council.** Now is the time to be talking about what's next. At your next virtual church council meeting, invite conversation about what things you have learned or experienced in this time that you want to carry forward. Is it shepherding groups? Online presence? A different understanding of spirituality? New or renewed commitment to serving particular needs of your community? Start thinking now about how you will tell the story of your ministry through this time.
- **Use joining language.** Rather than telling people to do something, tell them how you are being generous and invite them to join you. You might say something like: "I've made a commitment to give 20% of my stimulus check to the church and 20% to our local housing fund. Our council members have all pledged a portion of their check to our shared ministry together. And one of our members who is unemployed and needs the income is using this as an opportunity to give extra time to planning

for our outreach team. Join us in thinking about how you want to be generous in this time.”

- **Thank people.** Are you and your council or other leaders making phone calls to members during this time? Include a personal word of thanks for their financial support of the congregation. If they’re continuing to give during this crisis thank them for that. If they are a particularly faithful giver, thank them. If they have had to stop giving right now, find a way to thank them for their commitment in the past.
- **Update your e-giving page.** If you have an e-giving page on your website, now is a good time to check whether that page in particular and not just other parts of your website are telling the story of your ministry (while keeping the way to donate easy to access). Also make sure immediate and follow-up thank yous go out to online donors.

Additional resources:

[Audio Podcast Interview](#)

[GSB Fundraising Blog](#)