

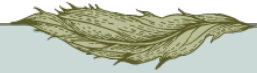


Stewardship Extravaganza 2024

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?

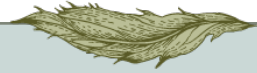


# The Offering in the Bible

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

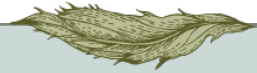


# The Offering in the Didache

It's Ancient, Ya'll



# What is the Offering Anyway?



## WALK THROUGH — THE DIDACHE

### XVIII. SET ASIDE A TITHE FOR THE LORD



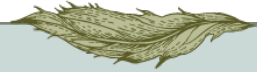
EVERY TRUE PROPHET THAT WILLS TO ABIDE AMONG YOU IS WORTHY OF HIS SUPPORT. SO ALSO A TRUE TEACHER IS HIMSELF WORTHY, AS THE WORKMAN, OF HIS SUPPORT. EVERY FIRST-FRUIT, THEREFORE, OF THE PRODUCTS OF WINE-PRESS AND

THRESHING-FLOOR, OF OXEN AND OF SHEEP, YOU SHALL TAKE AND GIVE TO THE PROPHETS, FOR THEY ARE YOUR HIGH PRIESTS.

BUT IF YOU HAVE NOT A PROPHET, GIVE IT TO THE POOR. IF YOU MAKE A BATCH OF DOUGH, TAKE THE FIRST-FRUIT AND GIVE ACCORDING TO THE COMMANDMENT. SO ALSO WHEN YOU OPEN A JAR OF WINE OR OF OIL, TAKE THE FIRST-FRUIT AND GIVE IT TO THE PROPHETS; AND OF MONEY (SILVER) AND CLOTHING AND EVERY POSSESSION, TAKE THE FIRST-FRUIT, AS IT MAY SEEM GOOD TO YOU, AND GIVE ACCORDING TO THE COMMANDMENT.



# 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





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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)

Stewardship is Generosity Mindfully Practiced and the Offering Must be Mindfully Practiced





# The Offering in the Liturgy



Interlude:  
Introducing Ladye  
Bess Brown  
Mother  
Grandmother  
Church  
Secretary  
Legend





# Who Taught You to Be Generous?

If we can share our generosity stories we can tap into the generative nature, the “learned characteristic” that we can both emulate and exemplify in our lives.





# Share Generosity Stories

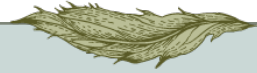
Who taught you to be generous?

What is one way you live into that generosity  
now?



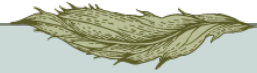


# The Offering is a Response to the Word



- 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
- Mission, mission, mission
- We need a new lens

# 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



# 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*