

Casting Into Deep Waters



A Four Week Personal Giving Journey
The Episcopal Diocese of Kansas
2008

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Provided by the
Episcopal
Diocese of
Kansas
Development
and Stewardship
Committee

This program is designed to be distributed to the Stewardship Chair and Team as well as the Senior Warden and Rector of your congregation.

Introduction:

The Development and Stewardship Committee of the Episcopal Diocese of Kansas is pleased to provide you with a complete program for your annual giving campaign. This model is based upon four-weeks of mailings or reflections that culminate in a special meal to celebrate the gifts that will be given in the coming year. Included in this packet (in addition to all of the guidance you need for the campaign) are the tools for conducting a similar stewardship program for your school-age children.

This program is very different from others you've conducted. Many parish programs involve sending a letter, an estimate of the budget needs for the year, and the pledge card. And many times, we hear from you about a need to do more than that. Some parishes conduct some form of the every-member canvass. While this has a good pastoral intent, it is very uncomfortable for lay leaders to conduct. If you've ever done such a program, you will agree that it really ends up being all about the pledge card. Our committee was dedicated to finding some other way to bring a theological basis into our yearly giving, and to provide you with a program in which you don't have to invest precious time and resources. We believe we have that program for you now.

As you look it over, you will notice that your mailing costs will be higher with this campaign. We will outline some suggestions that could bring some of those costs down, but nonetheless, we encourage you to follow the plan. We have confidence in this program and our goal is that your annual giving will increase. Congregation who have used similar programs have seen increases of 15-20 percent. These additional costs are a small price to pay considering the possibilities for the increased income created.

"Casting into Deep Water" bridges the journey we take with our spiritual life and our resources. It is not about running this campaign to reach a budget goal. Please do not bring a completed budget while conducting your four-week program. Take time to conduct this program and let the budget form once you've completed the plan. If you would like more help with this, please contact Char DeWitt, Director of Development and Stewardship. Contact information follows.

The meal is a very important component of your four weeks. It is a way to celebrate your blessings, and create a heightened sense of the importance of the pledge. Not the *budget*, but the pledge. Not the pledge *card*, but the statement that is made by affirming our desire to give back to God.

We are committed to meeting the needs of every parish. Help us create even better plans by filling out the survey at the end of your campaign. We will gather statistics and report back to everyone.

Please contact us with any questions, concerns, ideas, or stories. Direct technology questions to Heidi Wise: 785-215-8642 (home) or 785-969-4674 (mobile) or heidijayhawk@yahoo.com. Direct other questions about implementation to Char DeWitt: 785-250-0060 (cell phone), or 888-400-2885 (toll-free direct line into my office), or cdewitt@episcopal-ks.org.

I wish you a successful campaign and a wonderful time using this program.

Sincerely,

Charlene L. DeWitt
Director of Development and Stewardship
Episcopal Diocese of Kansas

2008 Annual Giving Campaign

Casting Into Deep Waters

OVERVIEW:

Just imagine standing on the shore by the Sea of Galilee, scanning the expanse of water and watching the light dance off the waves. Should we go in? Is the water cold and bitter? Can we wade along or will we need to swim? How deep is the water?

Deep water stewardship is rarely experienced. We may have started at the **shoreline**, moved in **waist-deep** and then perhaps allowed ourselves to be guided into the exciting and new areas of **deep water** giving. Parishioners encounter the three depths of stewardship throughout their lifetime and in the life of the church.



This annual giving program explores the three depths of giving. It must be acknowledged that personal giving percentages or levels do not tell the story of why we (the rector and lay leaders) become disappointed with our pledge campaigns. We are disappointed when the amounts don't meet expectations or the number of pledges seems low, but our responses usually have more to do with the budget demands than with the spiritual motivation of the person making the pledge.

At the shoreline

At the shoreline stewardship is nothing more than the October Beg-a-Thon. It's really frustrating to be the Stewardship Chair, and it's even more frustrating to be the person who is hunted down for their pledge card. There is no theological meaning for our giving and it is based on a budget that the finance committee prepares and brings to the congregation. Giving to the budget is not what God asks us to do! Giving to the budget affirms God, and each other, that staying on the shore is the safest place for us, that "doing what we've always done" assures us that we can simply ask for some incremental amount of increase over last year and that it will be met without any discomfort.

At the shoreline, we can carry on for an entire lifetime. We'd be safe, we would be fed, our church life would plod onward and we can make decisions that rarely involve trauma or risk. We can walk for miles and gather up random possessions we might find valuable, enjoy the serenity of the shore and rarely encounter someone needing saved.

Jesus asks us to experience the discomfort. Jesus asks us to give in proportion to what we possess; which we possess because of all that has been given by God. Giving at the shoreline is allowing only our feet to get wet while the rest of our soul looks longingly at being skilled enough, and inspired enough, to venture out into deeper water.

Waist Deep

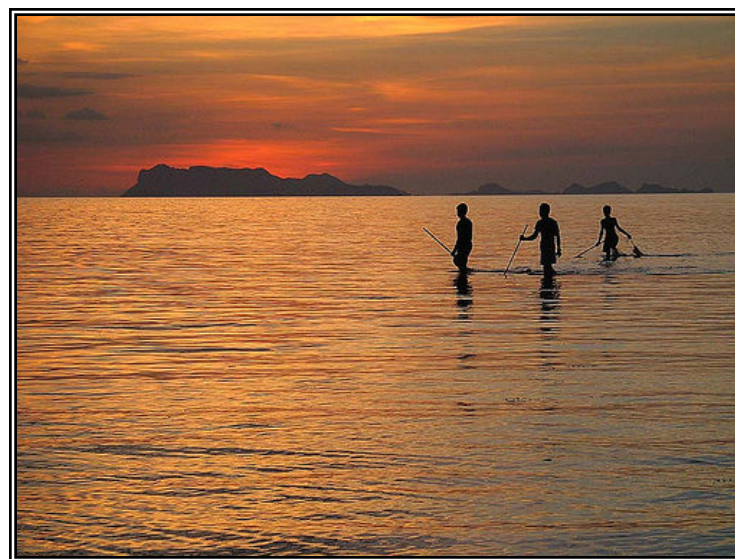
Being **waist deep** is an interesting place. Your head is above water, you can feel the bottom, but things aren't like they were at the shore. You have to pay attention to all these sensations about you: the unknown objects you can't see, the waves that threaten to overcome you, the bottom that might give way and the riptides that threaten your entire being. You have to be aware and alert and ready.

Here we are, no longer on the safe shore. It's like the experience of a 3 a.m. journey to Christ when we don't know what to do. We are floundering. Our soul tells us to peek below the surface to see what is swimming around us. Our brain says it's smarter and safer to keep our heads up and not to splash!

We are still clinging to the objects we accumulate, but we begin to desire a deeper relationship with Jesus. A 3 a.m. journey is always accompanied by prayer, lots of prayer. Asking God to help us with our journey is necessary, because the shoreline is not where we will look for him.

By looking away from the shoreline, we can think more concretely about how we live our lives and how we are called by God to give. If we give in a manner we once may have resisted or feared, we can open up the possibilities within our lives. We can venture into deeper water knowing we have God with us as resources flow in and out. And we can devote our time in ministry to others.

Stewards aren't born; they are converted. In waist-deep waters, we begin to see the acts of God on our behalf, and we see that God offers the way to live life as a steward. We can dunk our heads and swim out.





Deep Waters

Our conversion allows us to venture into **deep waters**. True abundance is here, not at the shoreline. We can leave behind our focus on material goods to devote our time and resources to others. Giving is a witness to our conversion.

When we live in deep waters, we experience life fully in the hands of God. Deep water conversion grants us grace. Giving grants us a joy that cannot be fully felt at the shoreline. It is joy given to anyone, poor or rich, because generosity knows no constraints, knows no budget and allows us to give knowing that we will receive more.

At the shoreline, we debate budget matters. In deep water, we give to run our ministry so that others will be able to worship and be transformed. At the shoreline, we cut back on outreach giving because costs of running the church increase. In deep water, we give what we feel God is calling us to share.

Deep water stewardship allows discussion of the reality that some people are further along in their stewardship journey than others. It is an encouragement to explore the joy of giving, to experience life that is abundant and full of hope, and to see how moving from the shore to deep waters is about spiritual change, not about meeting a budget.

The water is great...it's time to jump in!

The spiritual basis for deep water stewardship:

Peter's Journey to Deep Water Faith (Luke 5:1-11)

Peter was discouraged by the lack of fish caught that day. He was washing his nets, perhaps tired and hungry, and may have had a bit of a walk back to his home. Yet, a man appears before him asking to use his boat so he can speak to people on the shore.

So much of Peter's day was unproductive, and yet he finds himself in the boat with this man. He may not have been listening very closely, thinking about how long his day was, how being kind was not really helping him get home sooner and that tomorrow might not yield any fish either.

And then, Jesus asks him to do one more thing. He asks Peter to cast his net in deep water. At that moment, Peter thought about his rinsed-out and folded net, his empty stomach, and the evening that was upon them. And he could have said, "Thanks, but I don't feel like it."

Don't we do this, too? We worship only when our schedules and our kids' schedules allow. We give only because we are in church that Sunday. Often we give to others only when we get "caught" by someone asking for a donation. We keep silent about bringing a friend to worship because it's simply uncomfortable! This is our life at the shoreline. When we can tell God "no thanks", we can live without risking any of our lifestyle, our choices, and our conveniences.

In waist-deep water, Jesus asks us to do the impossible. If we let down our nets, he invites us to see the abundance that is ours to claim. He asks us to set aside our fears of what happened today and what could happen tomorrow. He allows us to see the gifts that surround us, just as the water surrounds our body.

Peter and the other disciples didn't see the abundance at first; they didn't know the possibilities. Peter initially says that he was not worthy to gather up and take home the abundant catch.

Gliding into deep water allows us to be freed of that which keeps us worried and frees us to venture into scary and unknown areas without fear. Grace fills us with a generous and loving heart. And grace grants us a desire to give more and more of ourselves.

In deep water, Peter realizes he can claim the abundance offered by Jesus. By doing so, he becomes a follower of Christ. When we take in the grace offered by God, we can give away all that hinders our soul: possessions, thoughts of scarcity and fear, misuse of our time, and undue influence on our faith.

The amazing catch of fish was exactly what Peter needed to continue his physical survival. But Jesus said that leaving the catch behind was possible and he would experience even greater miracles by following Jesus.

Peter and the others gave up their livelihood to give of *themselves* to Jesus and ultimately to others. They gave, in addition to their money, their ultimate gifts of time, talent and lives.



How to organize the four week personal giving journey:

Committee:

Your parish can easily implement this program with as few as four people: a person to **Chair** the plan and handle the mailings; someone to coordinate the **Youth and Children’s** program; the **Rector** to carry out the theme in sermons, written notes or articles, or other educational opportunities in your parish; and someone to coordinate the **Celebration Meal**.

Depending on the size of your parish, each of these subcommittees may need helpers, so the chair must be responsible for delegating that to the committee coordinators.

Calendar:

This program is organized around four Sundays. The first week relates to Shoreline Stewardship, week two is Waist Deep, week three is Deep water and the fourth week is a bringing forward of blessings, making commitments, and a Celebration Meal.

Prior to beginning the four weeks, either the Rector or Sr. Warden will send Letter #1 that explains the theme for this year.

Possible Timeline of Events:

September	Gather your committee and get familiar with materials
Late September	Send out preliminary letter that explains theme
October 7	Kick off
October 9	Send out first letter
October 14	Week 2
October 16	Send out second letter
October 21	Week 3
October 23	Send out third letter
October 28	Week 4
October 30	Send out letter #2
November 4	Celebration Sunday (this is also All Saints Sunday this year)

This is just a suggested timeline that should be discussed by the Stewardship Committee, Rector and Senior Warden.

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Week One:

Shoreline card is mailed on Tuesday (to reach parish members before Sunday).
Begin announcing your special Sunday meal and that reservations are needed.

Week Two:

Waist-deep card is mailed on Tuesday, along with the family giving record and the estimated giving chart.
Continue to announce the meal and that reservations are needed.

Week Three:

Deep-water card is mailed on Tuesday.
Announcements continue to encourage reservations for the celebration meal.
Begin phone calls to parish members who have not indicated their intent for attending the meal.

Week Four:

Letter #2 is sent, along with the pledge card
Continue to determine your count for the meal.

The Meal:

Having a meal together is an important part of this annual giving program. Food has important connotations; it shows we care about each other and that we want to come together as a family. For your special Sunday celebration, it is important to have the meal catered. The possibilities for catering may be limited, depending on your town or city. Nonetheless, try to arrange food prepared by someone else, brought in and cleaned up when finished. Make clean up as minimal as possible, but make the meal as nice as possible.

Don't feel that you have to have an elaborate meal. You can have a great deal of fun with simple things like grilled burgers, pans of lasagna, or even a fish fry! The idea here is that it is *not a potluck meal*. Potluck dinners are terrific, but they don't need reservations. This is a special parish event and you are asking for everyone to attend the meal as an important member. Having the meal catered gives an expectation of needing a reservation.

Approach one or more parish members and ask them to underwrite the cost of the meal. The vestry can also be approached to provide and serve the meal in smaller congregations.

The Worship Service:

We realize that every parish has varying Sunday attendance, different liturgical styles, and more or fewer volunteer resources available to carry out the campaign. However, we believe that carrying out a few key items will increase your results.

The Sunday of Celebration is meant to be very special. Concentrate on music and prayers that invoke our call for mission and ministry. Determine the prayers and liturgy for that day that will bless the gifts given for the coming year. On this day the pledge cards are to be brought. Plan how you will handle them. If you'd like to have them collected during the offering, consider having each person bring their card to an alms basin. You can also collect them as you would the offering. Bring to the altar and have the priest say a prayer to bless the gifts. (Have a box or alms basin available for one or two weeks after your celebration for those who were gone.)

Think about other times in the service when in the service the pledge cards could be offered. Perhaps after the recessional hymn, offer a prayer, a time of quiet reflection and allow people to place their cards in the designated spots as they go to the meal.



Special Reflections During the Weeks Prior to the Sunday of Celebration:

Offer special guest reflections during one or more of the Sundays prior to your special day. Ask someone from another congregation (Episcopal or otherwise) to offer a guest sermon. Ask some of your fellow parishioners to give a short 5 minute presentations about their own spiritual or giving journey. Some of the most powerful reflections come from hearing others speak about their experiences. Ask a teenager who is a giver of record to tell why they give. Don't be afraid to ask people in your congregation to do this. There are people who would be very willing to speak.

See if it's possible to coordinate the topic with that week's theme (i.e.: shoreline, waist-deep, deep water). Spending time developing ideas and then finding people who would help you with a short talk is easier than you think!

The Mailings:

We encourage you to send out all the mailings as designated. The letters on your letterhead and the postcards on card stock. Try cool and fun colors for these! However, we understand the extra costs of postage you would incur. To bring down the cost, you could send the letters as directed and then use the mailings as bulletin inserts.

However, we believe this will diminish their meaning. They are meant to be put on the refrigerator, taken to school, or placed in a prominent place. Bulletin inserts are less likely to make it to the car and less likely to be used as a point of reflection at home.

Follow-up:

The Monday or Tuesday following the Sunday Celebration:

Send letter #3 to those who were not at the celebration and who have not turned in a pledge. Send letter #4, preferably handwritten by the rector. Include the amount given as their pledge to confirm. Defer to your own pledge policies on this as needed.



The Entire Congregation Can Participate in the Blessings of this Life.

Like Peter, we sometimes don't realize the abundance we have around us and experience in our daily life and work.

Create a positive way for members of your church to spontaneously offer up thanksgivings. Copy the enclosed fish on colored paper, cut out and place at the back of the church with markers, pens, etc. Allow people to write a blessing, prayer or thanksgiving on the fish and place in a net hanging somewhere at the back of the church. Fill up the net throughout the Deep Water Stewardship weeks and then bring to the altar on the Sunday of Celebration. This can be combined with the children's stewardship program.

Deep Water Stewardship Children's Forum

Sunday School Edition

Why should stewardship only be for adults? Everyone has a place in the church! And everyone should have the opportunity to be a part of the congregation as a whole.



This forum is designed to take about 5-10 minutes at the beginning of your normally scheduled Sunday School plans. It will follow the same four week period as the adult forum. So here it goes!

Each week the students should write a blessing on one of the fish and place them into the net. The net will be full by the end of the month!

Week 1: What is a blessing?

This will work at all grade levels. What are the notions that kids have of blessings? Are their brothers and sisters blessings? Moms and dads? Nintendo DS? Read the story of Jesus casting into deep water (Luke 5:1-11).

Week 2: How to people fish?

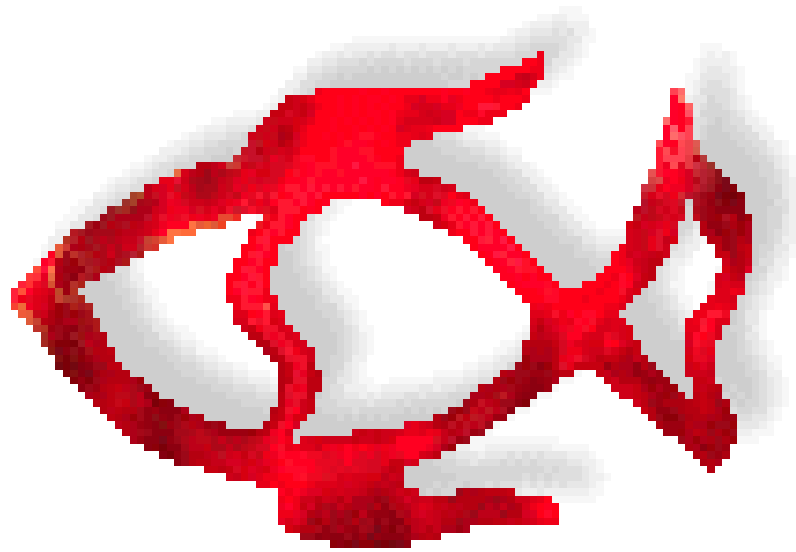
What ways do you fish? With a pole? Fly fishing? How did Jesus fish? Why was it such a big deal for them to fish where they were not used to fishing? Did it take faith? Did it take trust? (these of course are all leading questions!)

Week 3: What does God give to us?

What kind of gifts has God given to us? Parents? Friends? Family? Our church? And how can we give to God? Through the time and talents that he has given to US! Send home the children's pledge cards today. Encourage them to talk to their parents about what they should give back to God.

Week 4: Bring it all together!

Go back through and look at the fish that have been collected. Look at how many blessings we have counted in only a month? How can we give back to God and our church? Talk about the pledge cards that they brought home and explain that they will be giving them up to God at the same time as their parents.



These are the fish to be copied onto card stock and cut into squares. Blessings can be written into the center. Be creative and allow folks to write as many as they want.

The Child's Pledge Card



Children's Pledge Card

Please circle as many as you want!

Clean up bulletins

Sing in choir

Coffee hour help

\$____a week

Acolyte

Read lessons

Pass Bulletins

Oblationist (bring gifts to altar)

Pick up after Sunday School

Make cards for shut ins

Greet people as they enter

Care

Pray

Love

Sing

Give

Honor

Respect

Name _____

The children's pledge card should be distributed in conjunction with the adults pledge cards. Explain to the children that they need to discuss the things they are pledging with their parents. Pledging to your church carries with it responsibility. This responsibility is shared between the parents and their children. Discuss the meaning of a pledge card and the commitment to the church it represents. The time and talent of our youngest parishioners is an extra special gift.

At the shoreline.....



Luke 5:1-4

“Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Genne-

saret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the words of God, he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put away from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, ‘Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.’”

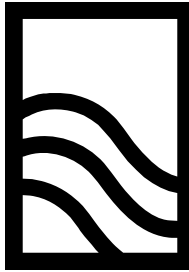
Imagine you are a reporter covering this event. In these passages, Jesus is the main focus of your story, but every good reporter looks for the unexpected story that could be told. What if you walked up and interviewed Simon Peter? What would you expect to learn from him?

Peter was discouraged by the lack of fish caught that day. He was washing his nets, probably tired and hungry.. Yet here appears a man asking him to use his boat so that he can speak to some people. Once in, Peter likely was not listening very closely. His thoughts may have been on the long day, on the speculation tomorrow might not yield any fish either and how being kind was not really helping him get home sooner.

Peter could have thought about his rinsed-out and folded net and his empty stomach. And he could have said to Jesus, “Thanks, but I don’t feel like it.”

Don’t we do this as well? We worship only when our schedules and our kids schedules allow. We give only because we are in church that Sunday. We give to others only when we get “caught” by someone asking for a donation. We keep silent about bringing a friend to worship because it’s simply uncomfortable! This is our life at the shoreline. Here, we can tell God, “no thanks.” We can live without risking any of our lifestyle, our choices and our conveniences. When we’re at the shoreline in our spiritual journey, God longs to have a relationship with us. We let the worries we carry, the fears we have, crowd in and we don’t hear what Jesus is saying.

Almighty and everlasting God, increase in us the gifts of faith, hope, and charity; and, that we may obtain what you promise, make us love what you command; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



Waist Deep...

Luke 5:5-7

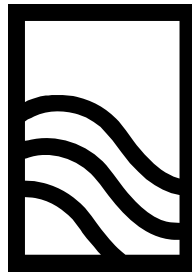
Simon answered, "Master, we have worked all night long, but have caught nothing. Yet, if you say so, I will let down the nets." When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink."

When we are spiritually waist-deep, we have to pay attention to all the sensations surrounding us: the unknown object that we cannot see, the waves that threaten to overcome us, the bottom that might give way.

When we venture into waist-deep waters, we are no longer safe at the shoreline. Our soul tells us to peek below the surface to see what is swimming around us. Our brain tells us it's smarter and safer to keep our head up and not to splash!

In waist-deep water, Jesus asks us to do the impossible. And he asks us to do this without knowing anything of the outcome. He asks us to see the abundance that is ours to claim. He asks us to set aside our regrets of what happened today, and our fears of what could happen tomorrow, so that we can see the gifts that surround us, just as water surrounds our body.

Almighty God, whose loving hand has given us all that we possess: Grant us grace that we may honor you with our substance, and, remembering the account which we must one day give, may be faithful stewards of your bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



Deep Water...

Luke 5: 8-11

“But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, ‘Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!’ For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, ‘Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.’ When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.”

Peter and the other disciples did not see the abundance at first; they did not know the possibilities. Peter initially said that he was not worthy to gather up and take home the massive catch of fish, which would have fed him and the others physically and economically for some time.

However, in this lesson, Peter moved from the shore, past waist-deep and into deep waters. Peter realizes he **must** claim the true abundance offered by Jesus. By doing so, he becomes a follower of Christ. By letting go of the tangible possessions, he and the other men could experience even greater miracles in their lives, and in the lives of others.

“Do not be afraid.”

Lord, hear my prayer, and in your faithfulness heed my supplications; answer me in your righteousness. Let me hear of your loving-kindness in the morning, for I put my trust in you; show me the road that I must walk, for I lift my soul to you. (Psalm 143)

Letter #1

Dear _____

On _____, we as a church family will offer our commitments to each other and to God. We will offer our financial and ministry pledges during the worship service and then gather together to share a catered meal.

Over the next three weeks, you will receive materials patterned on the time when Jesus called the first disciples. The passage is Luke 5:1-11. Casting Into Deep Waters, this year's stewardship program, allows us to think about the journey that Peter took when he moved from the safety of the shore into the deep waters of following Jesus.

Christian stewardship is about proper and generous use of our time, talent, and treasure. And, it's about joyfully returning to God those riches we have all been given.

The mission and ministry that we have begun at _____ (church name)_____ are important, and our work changes lives. We have developed (new leaders in the church, initiated new ministry teams, and grown the outreach programs). You are an important part of our parish.

I invite you to participate in the giving journey for the next four weeks. At the same time, our youth will be learning about stewardship in their classes. Please notice the fish cut-outs at the back of the church. We will have them available all month for you to write a small word or two of thanksgiving, blessing, abundance, or prayer. Place them in the net and we will bring these to the altar on our Sunday of Celebration.

I am grateful for your commitment and your contribution.

Faithfully,

Letter #2

Dear _____

On _____ we as a church family will offer our financial and ministry commitments to each other and to continue as disciples in Jesus Christ. We ask you to pray and reflect upon the ways that God is leading you in ministry.

We ask you to think about the calling of Peter and the first disciples. For the past few weeks, we have focused on Jesus' call to them, and to us, to cast out into deep waters.

We have heard from some parishioners who have discussed their own journey into great abundance. (give some recaps)

Our time of reflection will conclude when we share a special meal we will share after the ____am service. This is a specially catered meal and your reservation is important. Please call the church office at _____ to reserve your place at the table.

Enclosed is a pledge card and estimated giving chart. Please take time to pray and reflect on your financial gifts for this year. Bring your pledge with you (next Sunday; on _____) and we will offer them at the altar during the worship service.

Thank you so much for your support of time and money to this congregation. Your gifts are precious and much appreciated.

In Christ,

Letter #3

Dear _____:

Thank you so much for attending the wonderful celebration yesterday and for your pledge to fund the mission and ministry of _____.

As confirmation, your estimate of giving for 2009 is _____. This amount is so important and helps continue (name two or three ministry or pastoral programs)

Again, thank you so much for the support of this parish.

In Christ,

Letter #4

Dear _____

We had a terrific turnout and response for our celebration yesterday. We are sorry you were unable to join us!

Could you help us complete the campaign by filling out the enclosed giving card? This is not about the amount of money you give. It is about our own personal need to give back to God. Your pledge is an important part of carrying out the ministry of _____.

We are grateful for your help and your support.

In Christ's love,