Parish Development Conference Call

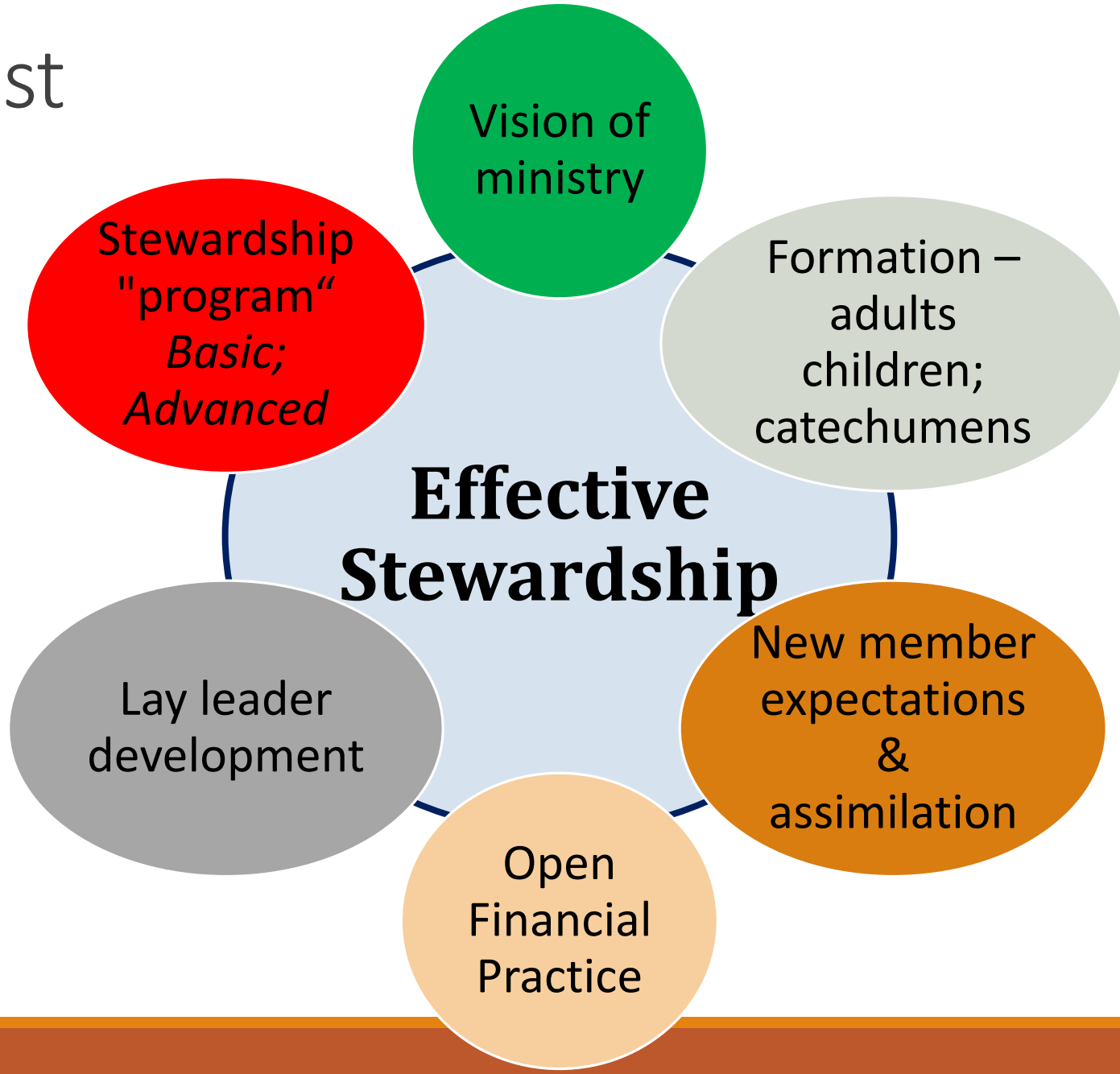
JAN 2020

CONTINUED EXPLORATION OF “STEWARDSHIP”

Previous Call (December 2019)

- Stewardship not for sissies.
- No one right way.
- Pledging best *(IMO)* – not easiest; more work.
  - More than forms letters.
  - Not a sprint
- "Our **IDENTITY** as Christians teaches us to **TRUST** God and enlivens a spirit of **GRATITUDE** reminding us to give back in **LOVE** to care for His Church."
- Today U.S. Orthodox are better educated & financially comfortable than ever before.
- Stewardship Ministry –
  - Connected w/ Parish Council.
- Purpose
  - Increase level of meaning of Christ and His church in parishioners lives.
  - Help people think about money/possessions/parish in different way.
- Fit to parish demographics; history & knowledge of stewardship.
- 'Fund raising' often leading enemy of building generosity.

Its Never Just One Thing!



Stewardship Definition

Fr. Thomas Hopko

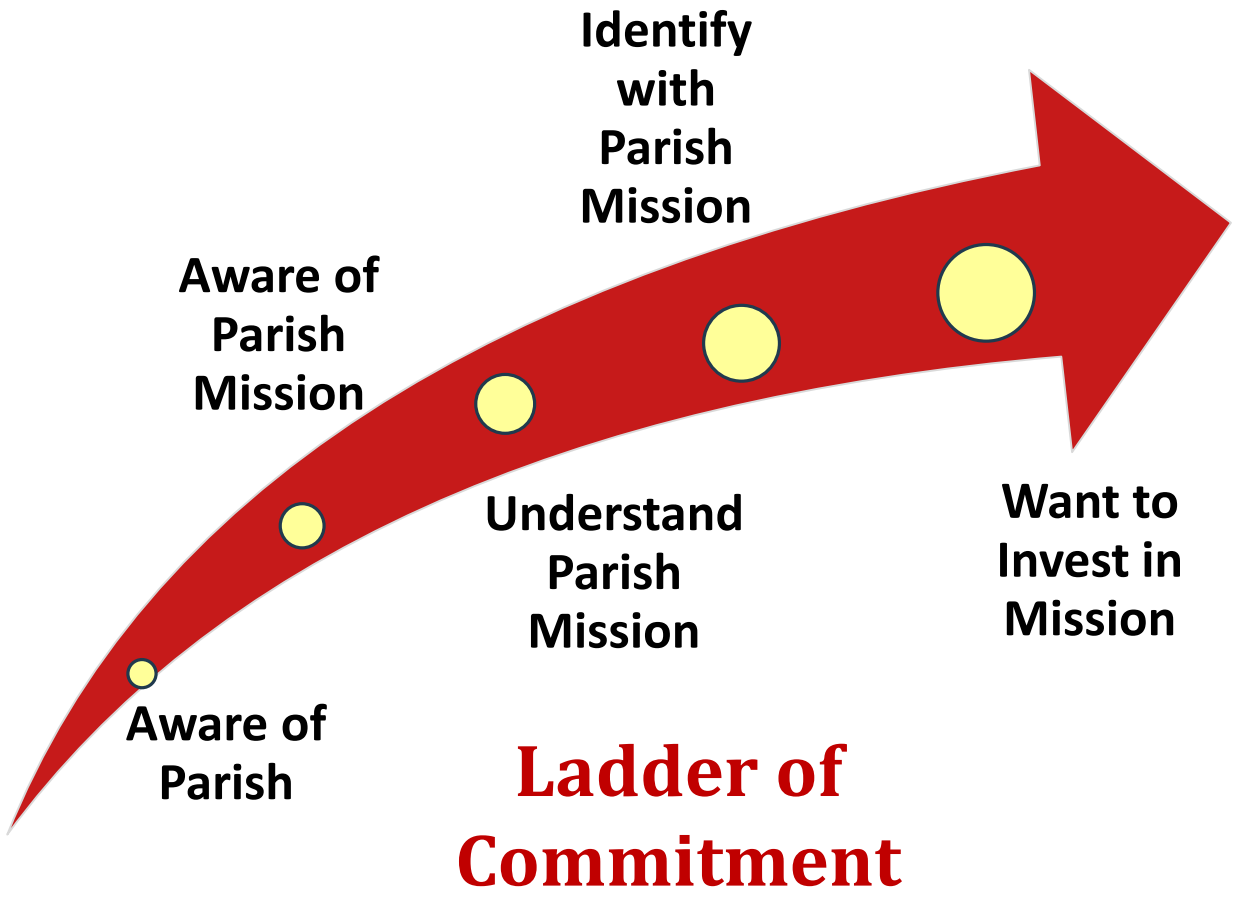
- *Careful responsible management of something entrusted to one's care. It is about the way we live in relationship to God and the world.*

Fr. Robert Holet

- *A way of life – characterized by an care-full and holy interaction with other human beings and with creation itself, carried out as a fruit of our relationship with God.*

Asking/ Obstacles

Vision/Mission



Ladder of Commitment

- People give because they believe in the result. **A solid future.**
- Give greater attention to future generations – not ourselves.
- “What can we do for this parish today for the sake of this parish tomorrow?”
- Where on spectrum?

Asking

- Necessary attribute of healthy parish of future: Ability to ask for money.
- Leaders lead; Leaders ask.
- Various forms: Written; Presentation; *In Person*
- In Person interaction/visits
  - Conversation (vs. advert)
  - Start with best prospects; not toughest.
  - Ask for meeting. Family; Small Groups; Home
- Prep:
  - Past giving;
  - Rough financial status

Don't

- Beg
- Review budget details
- Argue
- Be hypocritical
- You're not saving the parish – you're helping them grow in their life in Christ.

Do

- Tailor
- Priorities; what NOT doing
- Emphasize: Proportional; Meaningful

Probable Practical Obstacles

Others?

- “I can’t ask people for money.”

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- “I give in other ways”
- Don’t want to fill out form/make pledge and not fulfill the commitment
- “Not a good time.” “I’ll get back to you” “I’ve got a lot of things up in the air right now.”
- “What is a pledge?” Why are we changing? ”What’s wrong with the old way?”
- ”I don’t want to be involved”
- “We don’t need more money. We spend too much already.”
- “This parish always responds when there is real need.”

“I just cant ask for money.” Not good at it.

- (Some truly can’t.)
- What are you unwilling to do? (“Beg? Good we’re not doing that.”)
- Not ask for money … ask them to Remember God. Honoring & Thanking Him
- Most can tell stories. How God has been generous to them?
- Most can be persuasive about something that is important to them.
- Mastery – fulfill drive to become better; more fluent at Orthodox Christianity

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- Share experiences among “Askers”… Lessons Learned

“I Give in Other Ways”

- i.e Bake sales; festival ministry work etc.
- Stewardship implies sharing all of your possessions including money

We spend too much already

- Deal with questions of administrative costs/salaries. Broad terms.
- What does God expect of us? As His community, at this time; in this place?
- What aren't we doing?
- Differing mindsets; green eyeshades; rose colored glasses

Save

Spend

“I’ll get back to you” “I’ve got a lot of things up in the air right now.”

- Review/Repeat/ Remind
- Emphasize importance
- When can I check back? Follow up

Don’t want to fill out form/make pledge and not be able to fulfill the commitment

- Emphasize planning
- I’m *helping* by being highly responsible. Actually the opposite
- Causes guessing.
- Causes important work to be delayed. Mentality of frugality.

“What is Pledging?”

An <u>Estimate</u> of Giving

- A pledge to the parish is nothing more than a prayerfully considered estimate of annual giving. Thoughtfully considering our pledge helps us to:
- *Regularly review* our relationship between: ourselves as persons; God as Master of our life; and the God given worldly possessions which we’re asked to manage on His behalf.
- *Express gratitude* for God’s blessings
- *Joyfully offer* a meaningful, loving investment in the work of our parish -- sharing in the work of God through this church.
- *Reveal* what we value.

Key Advantages of Pledging

- Generally increases donations
- Leads to fewer appeals
- Less need for fund raising… more time for Christ
- Forces reiteration of parish mission each year
- Compels the parish to account for its stewardship
- Frees up precious volunteer time
- Creates resources: new programs of service; outreach
- Offers compelling testimony to visitors
- May align parish priorities and activities more closely with the New Testament
- “Rite of entrance” for new members.

Source Anthony Scott

What was wrong with the old way?

- Equal is unequal
- Didn’t challenge us.
- How do we determine eligibility to ‘vote’?

“Orthodox don’t (pledge/tithe)”

- Yes they do.
- Preferred method; particularly high growth parishes
- Newcomers often expect

“I don’t want to be involved” *(making donation)*

- What would it take?
- What would you need to see the parish doing for you to become truly enthusiastic about making a *meaningful (any!)* pledge to the parish?

Best Approach? Questions

- Is generosity a core value of a Christian?
- Is it possible to lead miserly lives (*or lives of great indulgence*) while giving little to the church or other charitable organizations yet attending and considering oneself to be a person of faith?
- How do you decide what you will give back to your parish?
- How important is the parish/Orthodox Church to you and your family? *Vs. other aspects of your life.*
- What is our responsibility to future members of this parish… our children of … and their children?
- What do we need to be doing for them?
- What is our parish's responsibility outside our walls? How well do we meet it?
- What aren't we doing that we should be in the parish?

Online Donations

Next Topic – Probably March

- Membership- Updated definition >> commitment
- Dialogue; Asking good questions
- Delegating tasks
- Leadership
- Parish Council basics
- PC meetings
- Facebook
- Websites
- Assessing parish strengths/weaknesses
- Greeting guests