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**Vestry Leadership:** Stewardship

**What is a Vestry Stewardship Statement?**

The vestry stewardship statement is a corporate statement made and signed by the vestry and the clergy. It is the most visible means by which the clergy and vestry collectively express their leadership in the practice of stewardship in the parish. The vestry stewardship statement can be the single most important expression of leadership on stewardship issues, and therefore is the critical element in a parish stewardship education program.

The vestry stewardship statement expresses leadership and collaboration by describing personal commitments that include sacrificial giving offered in a timely manner and hands-on support of the commitment program. Essential elements of the statement are sentences that begin "We believe ... ", "We commit ...", "We commend ...".

The statement should be brief and widely distributed. It should be signed by all vestry members, all clergy, and any others, such as the stewardship committee, who participated in its development.

**Examples A:**

We believe God is the source of all gifts, spiritual and material. Our faithful response, in gratitude, is to be givers and creators ourselves. While we strive to be good stewards of all God's gifts to us, we believe that the way we use our money reflects the state of our spiritual lives.

We commit ourselves to follow Christ in community. In prayerful witness to our faith, each of us is already tithing or is committed to increasing his or her personal giving to reach or exceed the tithe.

Our experience is that joyful giving results in spiritual growth. We urge the parish to join us in the commitment to deepening our faith.

**Example B:**

We believe in God, who is the source and giver of all our blessings. As joyful receivers of God’s gifts, we affirm that Stewardship is a personal covenant with God celebrated through this community of faith. We commit ourselves to follow Christ by faithfully accepting the Biblical tithe as the minimum standard of giving of our time, abilities, and money. We, the members of the Vestry, are now tithing or moving toward the tithe in our individual giving.

**Example C:**

We, the Vestry of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Church...believe God is the source of all gifts, spiritual and material, and will supply our needs.  In gratitude to God, this vestry strives to be good stewards of all God’s gifts. We believe the way we use these gifts reflects the state of our spiritual lives.

In prayerful witness to our faith, each of us is committed to giving our time and talents and to proportionate giving to reach or exceed the tithe.  We also commit to a goal of giving as much of our parish budget to others as we spend on ourselves. We invite and encourage the parish to join us in embracing these commitments in joyful service to the Lord.

**Example D:**

We are a church bountifully blessed by God. And we believe in sharing those blessings: sharing the abundance of spirit that is present whenever we gather in worship or fellowship; sharing the talents God has given each of us to make the world a better place; and sharing our financial resources to sustain our parish and to help others in our community.

**Example E:**

We believe God is the source of all gifts, spiritual and material, and that God has blessed us abundantly. Our faithful response, in gratitude, is to be givers and creators ourselves. We believe that all we have has been given to us by God. We believe the way we use our money and time reflects the state of our spiritual lives and that stewardship is a pathway for spiritual growth. It is our responsibility and our privilege to return a share of these gifts to God.

We commit to expanding our faith through regular and faithful worship, and to give in proportion to God’s abundance in our lives. We commit to joyfully and sacrificially supporting God’s work in the world and in this parish by making an annual financial commitment in proportion to our income.

We invite you to join us in this journey of faith, embrace these commitments, and celebrate with us the sharing of God’s abundance.