

## Why Should A Congregation Prepare a Narrative Budget?

*We have a story.*

A good story! A story that has touched the lives of countless people, speaks of profound generosity and challenges us to live out our own lives in response to God's abundance. As congregations we come together each week to celebrate the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ through worship. Each congregation has a story to tell about how it responds in thanksgiving to the call to serve God's people. It is a story that includes worship, fellowship, evangelism, faith development, outreach and pastoral care.

*Your congregation's budget can also tell the story.*

A narrative budget integrates dollars, people and ministry to tell the story of a congregation's mission and ministry. It is the representation of the line item budget in simple, easy-to-read descriptive terms, often with congregational pictures, quotes, illustrations, graphs and pie charts; however, it does not replace the financial statements. It is often developed by the treasurer and/or finance committee, presented in PowerPoint at the annual congregational meeting and distributed as a printed resource.

*A narrative budget gives a vision of ministry in addition to a spreadsheet of line items.*

It reflects how the congregation spends its time, talent and treasure in a unique way, rather than just how we pay the bills.

*Narrative budgets can assist with stewardship conversations.*

They help focus stewardship on the core message of celebrating God's gifts to us, and every member's opportunity and obligation to celebrate and offer in return their gifts to God.

### **Resources to Plan and Prepare A Narrative Budget**

An excellent resource is available from the ELCA Resource Page

"Giving thought To a Narrative Budget"

<http://www.elca.org/Resources/Stewardship#Leadership>

The free download is about 1/3 the way down (in alphabetical order) the resource page.

The Center for Faith and Giving shares how important it is to help each member in your congregation develop a picture of the whole mission of your church, particularly when you are asking them to give both their time and money.

Narrative budgets bring the ministry of the church community to life.

<http://www.centerforfaithandgiving.org/2016/01/building-a-narrative-budget>

Contact your Director for Evangelical Mission!

Pastor Melissa Stoller is most happy to overwhelm you with even more resources, walk with you through the budget preparation process, and connect you with other pastors and congregations who have walked through the narrative budgeting process.

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