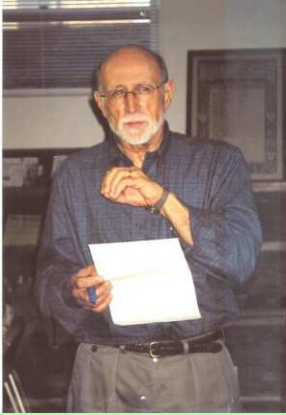


Summary of Vestry Papers for April, 2004—



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The publication “Vestry Papers” (to which we subscribe electronically) devoted its most recent issue to Wills and Planned Giving. The publication points out churches are often reluctant to raise of the issue of Planned Giving or to encourage members to include their church in their wills. Other charitable organizations are not so shy and benefit from their forthrightness.

One article points out that 39 percent of people’s regular giving goes to churches, but only 11 percent of bequest giving does. In the near future, trillions of dollars will pass from one generation to another and it would be a shame to neglect those charities and churches that have done so much to shape our society, promote its well-being, and love its people.”

One article, “Ready to Receive,” describes how some parishioners decline to leave money to their church because they are “not confident the church leaders will manage such a gift in a careful prudent way.” Churches need to assure their members that they have a structure that is “permanent, competent, reliable, accountable and responsive” to insure gifts will be well managed and used constructively.

Another article, called Only if we Ask,” describes a situation in which a devout parishioner had talked informally about leaving a gift to the church but had taken no concrete steps. When the parishioner became seriously ill, the church leadership decided against bringing it up. The parishioner then died, leaving a significant estate to her college that she had not visited since she graduated.

The Book of Common Prayer even has a rubric on page 445) urging the minister to “instruct the people . . . to make wills . . . not neglecting, if they are able, to lave bequests for religious and charitable uses.”

All Saints is currently able to operate as a full service church with (essentially) a full-time rector only because of a significant bequest given in the mid-80s. We are taking every step possible to grow the church to a self-sustaining size (generally in the range of 150 families). But there are no “sure-fire” methods of doing that, and even at best, they take time. Meanwhile our short-term hopes must necessarily include bequest giving. The future is very much in our hands. gs+