

**First
Presbyterian
Church**
of Waynesboro, Virginia

The Columns -Online.

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Crowdsourcing invites the whole people of God
to participate in abundant life

by the Rev. Rosemary C. Mitchell, Mission Engagement and Support
Special to Presbyterian News Service

LOUISVILLE — Crowdsourcing existed long before the internet.

Of course, we didn't call it that. In some instances, we called it a miracle. Consider this: What was, for you, the miracle of the Feeding of the 5,000? Was it that Jesus single-handedly fed 5,000 people with two fish and five loaves? Or was the miracle that the message of Jesus inspired an unexpected outpouring of generosity, the likes of which no one had ever seen? A level of generosity that was miraculous?

In today's successful crowdsourcing initiatives, small amounts of money — or simple ideas or modest recommendations — are requested and collected from a large number of people. What is collected generally adds up to more than enough, as with the loaves and fishes, proving once again that we can do more together than any one of us can do alone.

Although crowdsourcing existed before the internet, what the internet adds to the mix is a sense of urgency, energy and immediacy. In a 2006 Wired magazine article titled "The Rise of Crowdsourcing," Jeff Howe had this to say:

"We're talking about bringing people in from outside and involving them in this broadly creative, collaborative process. That's a whole new paradigm."
continued below

COVID average Incidence Rate per 100,000
from the Virginia Dept of Health.

Augusta County:	48.3
Harrisonburg	30.7
Rockingham	32.4
Staunton	28.7
Waynesboro	48.0
Average/100K	37.6

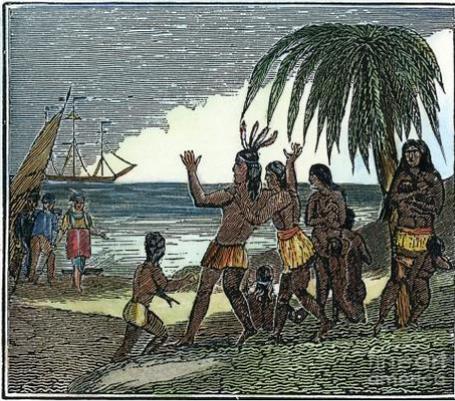
**Level of Community
Transmission**

High

Substantial

Moderate

Low



Columbus lands in the Bahamas,
thinks it's Asia
October 12, 1492



Chuck Yeager breaks
the sound barrier
October 14, 1947



Vice President Spiro Agnew
resigns, October 10, 1973



Roman Emperor Claudius
assassinated
October 13, 54 AD



Norman conquest of England begins
October 14, 1066

Doesn't that describe what we are struggling with in the Church these days? Bringing people into the community of faith and involving them? Our challenge is whether we are courageous enough to involve them in a faith-filled experience that is "broadly creative and collaborative." Tremendous energy, satisfaction and a sense of ownership results when people – and the contributions they offer – are accepted and welcomed. That is the longed-for culture of Church.

So much has been presented, written, sermonized, blogged and talked about the topic of raising money in the church. Pastors search in vain for that magical story combined with the perfect Scripture that will transform the blessed stewardship day into an outpouring of generous gratitude. A truly blessed pastor will have a stewardship committee that combines the exacting skills of engineers with the design skills of artists and descriptive skills of poets. Together they combine their cheerleading abilities to motivate the congregation to overcome the financial challenge for another successful annual campaign.

If only.

Maybe it's time for us to frame the stewardship campaign in terms of crowdsourcing or crowdfunding. It seems to me that those terms have much in common with stewardship because they are invitation. They invite the whole people of God – everyone – members and friends of the congregation to participate in the life abundant. Everyone is invited to support the ministry of the church as they are able. Every amount contributed is welcome. There is no minimum. No suggested percentage increases. No entry fees. No ticket price to get in the door. These terms can remind us that there is an energy in giving. Even more importantly, we should never take for granted what a group of people can accomplish when they join with others and embody their collective promise to focus their energy, intelligence, imagination, love and resources! We may witness the miracle of transformative generosity!

Within the life of the Church, our act of financial giving is described as an act of stewardship because in our reality it is not based on money. It is based rather on our relationships and our promises – the relationships and the promises we make with each other and with God. Every faith community has within it the spark of the miraculous generosity described in the Feeding of the 5,000. It can break forth at unexpected times and in unexpected ways.

Our giving is about so much more than the money. It's about our life together as the people of faith. The life and love we share with our family, our friends, our congregation, the ministry we engage in together and how we live that out in our daily lives. When those relationships are real and authentic, then, yes, that miracle spark of generosity is ignited.

When we come together as Church, it is not merely "crowdsourcing" that leads to "crowdfunding." It is a longing to be reminded that God is with us as we humbly ask for God's grace. God's relentless "yes" to each of us moves us to respond with the miracle of generosity.

May it be so!

The Rev. Rosemary C. Mitchell is senior director of Mission Engagement and Support for the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

Music Notes for this week.

Sources of Information

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[PC\(USA\) News](#)
[Virginia Department of Health updates](#)

Sources of Inspiration

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[Daily Readings from the Lectionary](#)
[Jan Edmiston's Blog](#)
[The Upper Room Devotional](#)

Sources of Fun

click on the links

[Today's Holiday](#)

[Mr. Boffo](#)



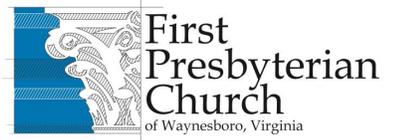
Tallis.

This week's anthem, *All Praise to Thee*, is a canon (aka a round) by Thomas Tallis (c. 1505-1585). He was one of the few English composers who served both Protestant and Catholic monarchs. He spent half his life as a court composer, writing music for Anglican liturgies and Roman Catholic masses.

Tallis (along with William Byrd) also cornered the market on 16th century music publishing in England. *All Praise to Thee* is one of nine psalm tunes that Tallis composed for Archbishop Matthew Parker's Psalter, published around 1561.

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THE FOUR MUSICIANS OF THE APOCALYPSE