

If you were to ask Monte Chamberlin about what inspired him to start Cost Stewardship, you will probably not get a good answer – or at least the whole truth. There are two reasons for this. First, it is a brilliant and much needed venture and he is not likely to brag about his role in developing that. Second, the inspiration came from what he did for our church and he can't tell the story without getting emotional about it.

Our church was started in 1992, making it quite young in church years. A few years back, we found ourselves really struggling financially. There were both spiritual and financial reasons for that. We had \$5000 in our combined accounts and there were pastors, utilities, and mortgages to pay.

Monte accepted the role as Finance Team Chair in the midst of this difficult time. He used his financial expertise and put his heart and soul into leading our efforts to tackle the financial side of our problem. He led a team of people charged with looking at EVERYTHING possible to improve our financial situation. He helped us see and come to realize opportunities EVERYWHERE!

We bought different orange juice and donuts for our Sunday morning treats. We added another classroom to our preschool. We studied all of our utility bills and found services we didn't need and taxes we shouldn't pay. We changed the structure of our bank accounts to reduce fees. We changed payroll providers. We purchased used copiers and set up better service agreements. We refinanced and restructured our mortgages (against all odds of making that happen). We established a preferred customer account for office supplies. We started using only white paper and black ink. We made better use of our heating and cooling control systems. We worked with our insurance providers and secured better rates.

I cannot overstate the role that Monte played in saving our church. It is true that many of us participated in making things happen. It is also true that on-our-knees prayer and the faith of our congregation helped make things happen. But Monte was the one who saw opportunities, coached and encouraged others on pursuing those opportunities and took on the toughest negotiations on our behalf.

What a blessing he was to our congregation! I have seen him take this same enthusiasm, skills, and experience to help other churches and I know he has been a blessing to them, too. He is doing great things through Cost Stewardship, freeing churches everywhere to redirect a larger portion of their resources to further the Kingdom of God.

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