

The Financial Operations of Contemplative Outreach of Pensacola

The Chapter's Servant Leadership Circle (SLC) met on June 27 to discuss the Chapter's financial philosophy, expenses, and procedures for sustaining our mission and actions. In the spirit of transparency, we are sharing the outcomes from that meeting.

These principles were based on the financial philosophy of the Center for Action and Contemplation.

Our Financial Philosophy

The SLC decided to adopt financial guidelines followed by Richard Rohr's Center for Action and Contemplation. These include practicing transparency; never allowing money to be a barrier to participation; understanding exchanges of money first and foremost as vehicles for advancing our mission and message; committing to spending simply, equitably, and sustainably; and leading with giving and generosity.

Our Financial Expenses and Operating Procedures

Routine operating expenses total between \$1,500 and \$2,000 annually and include annual fees for our communications tools:

- Our website hosting platform (Weebly),
- Our email and social media platform that we use for our newsletter and event registration (Constant Contact), and
- Our online video meeting platform that enables weekly virtual meetings of the SLC (Zoom).

We decided that we will compensate our webmaster and newsletter producer for her professional services, which are essential to effective communications, promotions, and event registration. This compensation is included in the annual expense estimate above.

Revenue Sources. The chapter has been financially self-sustaining since its founding, without collecting membership dues, relying primarily on donations and love offerings received at our events. We have charged nominal registration fees for some events and training. We do not want to discourage anyone from attending chapter events or training due to registration fees.

Storne Shively Legacy Fund. We are committed to reserving the gift recently bequeathed to the chapter by Storne Shively exclusively for the support of retreats, education/training, and scholarships. This fund will not be used for routine operating expenses.

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Financial Scholarships. The chapter, in partnership with Contemplative Outreach, Ltd., has always offered scholarships for education and training, retreats, and spiritual formation events to those in need of financial support. We will continue to offer such scholarships.

Tiered Donation Model for Events. Inspired by other non-profit organizations, we have decided to introduce a tiered donation model (or giving levels) for events, featuring an entry level, a core/median level, and an upper tier. These preset benchmarks guide donor choices, reduce decision fatigue, and tie specific financial amounts directly to tangible program impacts.

Fiscal Transparency and Prudence. In the spirit of transparency and fiscal prudence, we will report on the chapter's finances at least annually. If event and other donations don't cover our annual event and routine operating costs, we will inform our chapter members and seek solutions to ensure our chapter's financial sustainability.

Other Donations. Donations can be made to the Chapter at any time and may be designated for specific uses (e.g., scholarships, training events).

We value your feedback on these operating principles and procedures and welcome suggestions to help us sustain our chapter as we aim to fulfill our mission.