

Ask, Thank, Tell

An Approach to
Year-Round
Stewardship

Ask

Introductory Comments

- The best annual stewardship response program in the world will not rescue a bad year-round stewardship ministry.
- A good annual stewardship response program will be a vital component of a good year-round stewardship ministry.

Three reasons people give

Not Your Parents' Offering Plate,

Chapter 2

A belief in the mission

- Is the congregation able to clearly articulate its mission?
- Do the members know the mission?
- How have the members had the opportunity to participate in shaping the mission?

Regard for staff leadership

- Like it or not, in a congregation the Senior Pastor is crucial here.
- The importance of the basics (“Pay the rent”).
- Just do your job!

Financial stability of the institution

- People don't give to sinking ships. (Ken Callahan)
- Don't cry wolf. Bad news doesn't motivate.
- If the situation is difficult, talk about fulfilling the mission of the congregation. Don't talk about the need to pay the bills.

The Three Pockets of Giving

Not Your Parents' Offering Plate

Chapter 5

Earned Income

- Regular income, however it comes
- Most often earned income is the source of regular giving to the congregation.
- In many cases it is also the source of giving to special/capital appeals.
- The importance of previous financial decisions on giving from earned income.

Accumulated Assets

- Savings, stock, cash value of insurance policies, property, etc.
- Tax law and appreciated assets
- Most often accumulated assets are the source of giving to special/capital appeals
- The possibilities of giving from accumulated assets for regular giving

Estate Giving

- Accumulated assets given at a specific time
- Often given to a congregation's endowment fund. Often a problem if it is given to general fund. Be prepared for this.
- Invite this giving on a regular basis. The message will be heard only by those thinking about estate planning at that time.
- Seek professional help.

Why People Give

- Why people give (results from a Luther Seminary research project)
 - I am grateful for what God has given me (92.3%)
 - I know that my giving will make a difference in people's lives (86.7%)
 - I belong to a congregation and I want to do my part (84.2%)

General Guidelines

- All “asks” for giving should focus on the need of the giver to give, not the need of the church to receive
- Don’t use a budget to ask people to give
- Don’t talk about “the church is a business”
- Don’t talk about the monthly bills
- Focus on the Bible
- Focus on the mission

Giving

- Regular Giving
- Capital Appeals
- Endowments

Regular giving (usually from regular income)

- Pledging
 - How it can help the giver
 - It is an act of Christian maturity
 - It is an act of prayerful discernment
 - It is an act of faith
 - It is an act of Christian community
 - » From John Clark, President, The James Company
 - How it can help the congregation
 - My experience with pledging
 - Personal
 - Congregational

Regular giving (usually from regular income)

- Is tithe a helpful word?
 - If so, how can it be communicated as a word of grace?
 - If not, how can we answer the question, “What is a generous gift?”
 - Language that is helpful – “Grow towards a tithe.”
- Ask for growth in giving
 - How are you intentionally asking people to grow in their giving?
 - Encourage regular giving from accumulated assets
 - Ask for a specific amount based on past giving

Regular giving (usually from regular income)

- Segment the ask
 - Based on age and/or interest
 - Based on past giving
 - Based on preferred way of receiving information



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Conduct an excellent
annual response program

A definition

An annual response program is a three or four week emphasis when members of the congregation:

1. Grow in their understanding of biblical stewardship,
2. Learn more about the congregation's ministry, and
3. Are invited to increase their financial support of the congregation.

Why I think you should have an annual response program

Reason #1 – A time of Biblical focus on stewardship



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Why I think you should have an annual response program

Reason #2 – An opportunity for each member/friend to ask, “How is God calling me to respond?”



Why I think you should have an annual response program

Reason #3 – Your congregation can budget for growth



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Why I think you should have an annual response program

Reason #4 – Over several years, a small annual increase in your budget can make a huge difference in your mission and ministry

- A 5% increase for 10 consecutive years will turn \$200,000 available for mission and ministry into \$325, 779.

Why I think you should have an annual response program

Reason #5 – People give more regularly when they have made a commitment



GOD'S GREAT MERCY BECAUSE OF
GOD'S GREAT MERCY

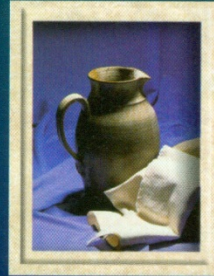


Walk with *Jesus*

REVISED • EDITION

Herb Miller

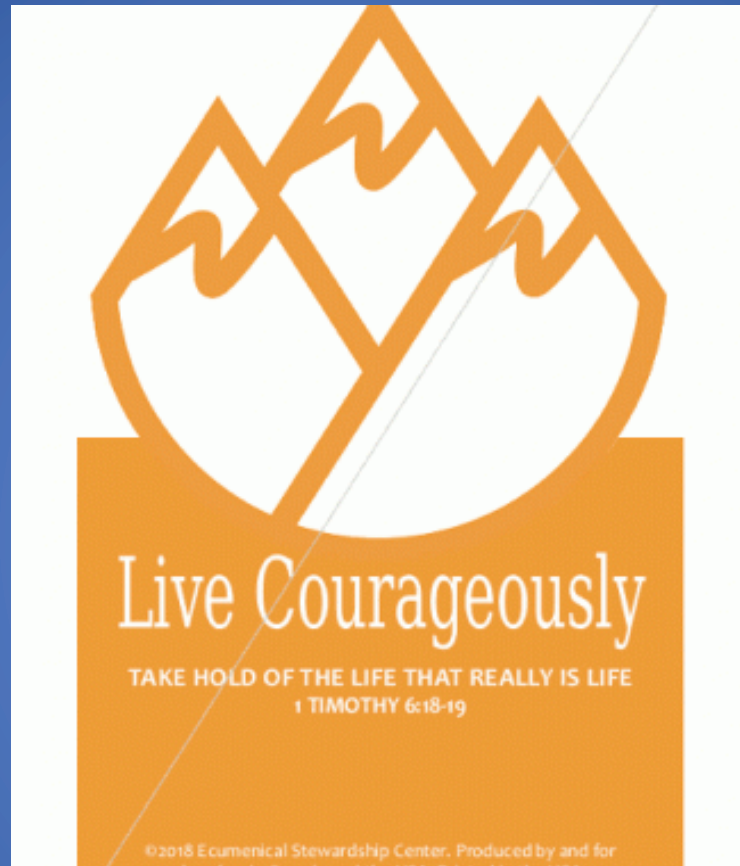
NEW CONSECRATION
SUNDAY



STEWARDSHIP
PROGRAM

TEAM MEMBER MANUAL





Ecumenical Stewardship Center
www.stewardshipresources.org

Capital Appeals (usually from regular income and accumulated assets)

- Capital appeals will almost always raise significant “new money”
- Perhaps the most significant factor in a capital appeal is what the congregation does before the appeal ever begins.
 - Give people ample opportunity to participate at the earliest times
 - Develop a clear focus, hopefully by consensus

Endowments (usually from Estates)

- Promotion is vital
 - Focus on promotion, not on your investment return
 - “Slow drip” promotion works better than an occasional big push
 - An annual event is often a good practice
- Governance Documents
 - Prevent endowment income from damaging regular giving
 - Minimize power and control issues by board of directors

Creating a Culture of Thanksgiving in Your Congregation


Thank

Tell

Thank

- Thanking builds up the person who is thanked,
- builds up the person who thanks, and
- builds up the body of Christ

Thank You



Thank

- General ways of thanking
 - With reports of giving – a three paragraph letter from the pastor
 - One great ministry event in the past quarter
 - Thanks for making this and more possible
 - One thing that is coming up in the next quarter that the pastor is especially anticipating
 - In worship – Thanksgiving Moment
 - In newsletter – Have staff and council members do this – tie to mission

Thank

- Specific ways of thanking
 - Pastor intentionally thanks before/after worship
 - Pastor writes five thank you letters per week
 - Congregational thankers(s)

Develop a plan for thanking

1. Discover what you are doing now
2. Ask yourselves what you would like to do
 - Staff
 - Elected leaders
 - A focus group or two
3. Develop a plan
 - Keep it simple
 - Start small

Tell

People need and deserve to know how their giving is making a difference in the world.

(...and you can bet that if they don't know how their giving to your congregation is making a difference, they will be tempted to move their giving to someplace where they know how their giving is making a difference)

Tell

- The need to tell something many times using different media before the message is heard
- The knowledge gap between leaders and others
- Tell as you thank
- Tie your telling to your mission
- “Because of you...”
- “Look what you’ve done now...”

Tell the congregation's story

- What the members of the congregation are doing to help one another grow as faithful followers of Jesus Christ
 - Different age groups
 - Events for members off site
 - Interest groups
 - What else?

Tell the local story

- To repeat myself – don't assume too much knowledge
- Temple Talks (short, sweet and well-rehearsed) are effective for this task
 - Invite leaders from ministry areas
 - Can you invite ministry recipients to speak?
- Connect telling, serving and giving
- This might be the best place to engage younger members

Tell the story of designated giving

- Use the web and available print resources to gather material
- Guest speakers/preachers (Again, can you invite ministry recipients to speak)
- Mission trips?

Tell the story giving to the
Nebraska Synod and
churchwide organization

Thanking and telling
are two keys activities
in effective
year-round stewardship