

Growing Stewards Year Round



Stewardship Kaleidoscope

St. Louis, Missouri

September, 2018

What is “stewardship” anyway?

More than ten years ago, I lost count of how many times I have been asked the question above when entering a congregation. It seems there are many understandings and misunderstandings across the church. Then I decided to be proactive. Before someone could ask me, I would invite a response to one statement:

Tell me about stewardship ministry in your congregation

As you can imagine, the answers were all over the place – money, budget, Time & Talent, serving food, giving time, helping others and more. Most often I found the responses reflected what a specific congregation was teaching or doing around something people perceived to be stewardship. There were also some exceptional answers – “I think you need counseling”; “In our congregation it is one four-letter word: F-E A-R. We do not want to talk about it”; “You mention that word and it just puts a knot in my stomach”. These provided a great opportunity to simply ask “Why?”. And, there was a much more personal, deeper story behind each comment.

At some point I could have referred to one of the twenty texts in Scripture. For example, I Cor. 4:1-2 or I Peter 4:10 can be helpful in defining the role of a steward, but not necessarily the traits of a steward. One could look to history and find an explanation that in Old English the steward was the keeper of a pig sty. This too was not helpful.

One could look at the history of the word “stewardship”. While the Greek word *oikonomia* represents and early Christian use of the concept, “stewardship” was created by the Christian church in the United States during the 1890’s to raise funds for expansion of churches in the West and to support missionaries. By the late 1940’s, stewardship became connected with Time, Talent & Treasure. And, by the 1980’s stewardship was about faithfully managing what God has entrusted to us. All good knowledge to have, but not helpful in daily life for the average person in the pew.

I then looked to famous authors, teachers and church leaders. The book *Stewardship & the Economy of God* by John Reumann (© 1992, Ecumenical Stewardship Center) was helpful. Here are some quotes:

The word of the social gospel made flesh.

John M. Versteeg (1923)

What I do after I have said: I believe.

Clarence Stoughton (1949)

The living expression of the total content of the Christian Faith

T.A. Kantonen (1951)

However, these may not be helpful for the 21st century. I then adopted the following question.

Every congregation has good stewards. What are the traits of good stewards in your congregation?

As background for conversation around traits, I learned to use Paul’s words to the Corinthians (II Cor. 8-9). For stewardship ministry in the congregation, I have come to appreciate the words from Rev Charles Lane in his book *Ask, Thank Tell* (© 2006; Augsburg Fortress, p. 11):

The goal of our stewardship ministry is to help God’s people grow in their relationship with Jesus through the use of the time, talents and finances God has entrusted to them. KAM 9/18/18/

SEVEN PRINCIPLES FOR GROWING STEWARDS



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

We want you to know, brothers and sisters, about the grace of God ... 2 Corinthians 8:1

These words from Apostle Paul introduce us to the story of a people in ancient Greece called the Macedonians. These early Christians practiced a faith of abundant joy and overflowing generosity that came from a deep sense of gratitude to God. It is this spirit that moved Paul to describe the following basic principles.

GRATITUDE

We want you to know brothers and sisters, about the grace of God that has been granted to the churches of Macedonia.

2 CORINTHIANS 8:1



GENEROSITY

[F]or during a severe ordeal of affliction, their abundant joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part.

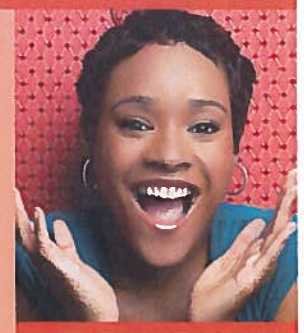
2 CORINTHIANS 8:2



ABUNDANT JOY

... their abundant joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity ...

2 CORINTHIANS 8:2



GIVE FREELY

For, as I can testify, they voluntarily gave according to their means, ...

2 CORINTHIANS 8:3a



SEVEN PRINCIPLES FOR GROWING STEWARDS

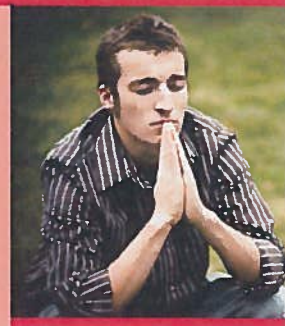


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... according to their means, and even beyond their means, ...

2 CORINTHIANS 8:3b



SHARE

[B]egging us earnestly for the privilege of sharing in this ministry to the saints —

2 CORINTHIANS 8:4



COMMITMENT

[A]nd this, not merely as we expected; they gave themselves first to the Lord
and, by the will of God to us.

2 CORINTHIANS 8:5



Starting Conversations about Generosity

1. When has someone surprised you with a generous gift?
 2. When have you experienced the abundant joy of be generous to others?
 3. What positive practices do you see in your congregation around generosity?
 4. Who are the people who model generosity in your congregation?
 5. What understanding, or misunderstanding, does your congregation have about the relationship between being “rich” and being “generous”?
 6. How does your congregation teach others to be generous?
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6. Give proportionately – is our way of giving in relation to our abundance. We are to give according to our “means,” not according to an income or a budget.

“If the eagerness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has—not according to what one does not have.” 2 Corinthians 8:12

7. Commit intentionally – means making a statement about your intent and following through. As members in the body of Christ, we are asked to make a commitment of our time, talents, and resources as a faithful response to God and as a statement of support for God’s work.

“...arrange in advance for this bountiful gift that you have promised.” 2 Corinthians 9:5

8. Contribute regularly – means practicing our stewardship on a daily basis. By doing so this becomes a lifestyle. Paul instructs us to

“On the first day of every week, each of you is to put aside and save whatever extra you earn,” 1 Corinthians 16:2

9. Live genuinely – means putting your faith into action. This is the tangible demonstration of what is sincerely on our hearts and where our treasure is, not simply a verbal expression. The Macedonians set an example that Paul called to the attention of the Corinthians.

“I am testing the genuineness of your love against the earnestness of others...” 2 Corinthians 8:8

10. Accept a challenge – means recognizing the dynamic nature of our faith. As our faith grows so will our blessings, and our responsibilities. Paul writes,

“...the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.” 2 Corinthians 9:6

Our role as God’s stewards is one of many dimensions—grateful, responsible, self-sacrificing, willing, sharing, proportionate, committed, regular, genuine, and challenged. By generously giving of ourselves, we discover joy in Christ.

“... you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” 2 Corinthians 9:7

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20 Practices for Growing Stewards in Our Congregation

Instructions: Circle how well your congregations does for each statement. Then identify the three strongest and the three could improve the most. Discuss this with others and come to a consensus on what practices to focus on in the year ahead.

	Not Well			Very Well	
	1	2	3	4	5
1. We commit to growing generous givers of time talent and resources as a faith response to God	1	2	3	4	5
2. Our vision and mission statements include a visible role for stewardship ministry	1	2	3	4	5
3. We teach the joy of generous living and giving in Jesus Christ	1	2	3	4	5
4. We foster regular prayer as a spiritual discipline that connects faith and generosity	1	2	3	4	5
5. We encourage first fruits and proportionate giving by members and the congregation	1	2	3	4	5
6. We invite members to practice 10-10-80	1	2	3	4	5
7. We share an increasing percentage of our income with ministries beyond our congregation	1	2	3	4	5
8. We strengthen personal relationships with others by sharing faith stories and the joy of Christ	1	2	3	4	5
9. We identify and nurture spiritual gifts to help people fulfill their calling and passions	1	2	3	4	5
10. We focus on the assets of people rather than on needs	1	2	3	4	5
11. We provide service opportunities for all ages	1	2	3	4	5
12. We have a holistic year-round stewardship approach	1	2	3	4	5
13. We separate the annual financial response from the budgeting process	1	2	3	4	5
14. We develop a Narrative Budget	1	2	3	4	5
15. We ask annually for a faith commitment/estimates of giving	1	2	3	4	5
16. We ask boldly for tithes, offerings and bequests	1	2	3	4	5
17. We provide quarterly reports to thank givers and inform them about congregational income	1	2	3	4	5
18. We provide regular opportunities for special offerings	1	2	3	4	5
19. We encourage individuals and families to write a will or living trust as part of a legacy plan	1	2	3	4	5
20. We have a mission endowment fund with a specific purpose and we educate people about it	1	2	3	4	5

Six Dimensions of a Steward

Who is a steward?

Every person is a steward! At baptism each person becomes a steward of God's varied gifts and participates in the Body of Christ. Every person has gifts, skills, strengths and resources.

What is a steward leader?

One who helps others grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ
Through the use of the time and talents God has entrusted to them.

What are the different dimensions of being a steward?

Giftedness

*Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit;
and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord;
and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God
who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given
the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. I Cor. 12:4-7*

Lifestyle

*I ... beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you
have been called, with all humility and gentleness,
with patience, bearing with one another in love,
making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit
in the bond of peace. Ephesians 4:1*

Earthkeeping

*Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness;
and let them have dominion (care) over the fish of the sea,
and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle,
and over all the wild animals of the earth,
and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.
Genesis 1:26*

Finances

*On the first day of the week, let each one lay aside their offering,
as God has prospered them. I Corinthians 16:2*

*... you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly
or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. II Corinthians 9:7*

Leadership

*Teach me your way, O Lord, and lead me on a level path...
Psalm 27:11*

Planning

*"... arrange in advance for this bountiful gift that you have promised,"
II Corinthians 9:5*

Six Stages of Development for Stewards Leaders

Awareness	May recognize that each person is a steward Not certain what a steward is or does Little connection between being a steward and daily life Role as a steward is largely unconscious
Learning	Shows a desire to learn about one or more aspects of stewardship Seeks ways to be a better steward Open to learning good stewardship practices Looks for connections between being a steward and lifestyle
Practicing	Uses learnings about one or more aspects of stewardship in daily life Often becomes enthusiastic or passionate about one or more aspects May develop specialized knowledge, skill or expertise in a one aspect Realizes personal practices have an impact on others
Teaching	Seeks ways to have an impact on others Often looks to others for personal and professional expertise Moves from personal practice to teaching others Personal values reflected in teachings and leadership style
Coaching	Feels confident in ability to teach and assist others Looks for way to have impact on teachers and leaders Develops personal passion and expertise into way to guide others Concerned more about big picture and long term impact of teaching
Servant Leader	Looks beyond roles to Christ-like living Learnings and practices reflected in daily life and all decision making Focus is on serving and teaching others Frequently asks, how can I instill wisdom?

Common Stewardship Myths

Have you ever been confronted with a myth? It may be a fictional story, or a perception of reality that is not really true. The following question was asked of ELCA stewardship staff across the country: "What is the most common myth you have encountered about stewardship?" As you think about stewardship ministry in your congregation, consider whether these myths or others exist in your context. As you engage in an ongoing conversation about stewardship, you may want to listen for the myths and others.

- We do not have enough.
Listen to the verbs used in your congregation. Do you hear the words "need to", "have to" and "must"? These are signs of "scarcity thinking" - a sense that individually or as a community, there is not enough for what is to be done. This contrasts with "abundance thinking" – the recognition of the assets, blessings and gifts God has provided. This positive approach uses words like "can", "could", "shall" and "will".
- It all belongs to me.
Just who does all this stuff on earth belong to? If you have a certificate of title or ownership for a car or property, does this really mean you own it? Genesis tells us God created everything and has entrusted us to be caretakers. We only have temporary use of the things in our possession.
- Stewardship is about getting dollars in the offering plate.
If this is what stewardship is about, why did Jesus talk so much about how we use what is entrusted to us? Stewardship is about growing in our relationship with Jesus through the use of time, talents and resources entrusted by God. It is not about achieving a budget or getting enough to keep the doors open.
- The more you give, the more you will get.
This distortion is sometimes used to encourage people to give more, and often for future benefits. God loves you whether you give a lot or a little. God invites each person or household to return a first fruits response of what is received as a faithful and grateful response. The widows' gift is just as important as the major financial gift, because we are encouraged to give in proportion to what we have received.
- We need more people to help pay the bills.
Looking beyond your immediate church family is seldom the answer to money problems. Neither new members nor community fundraising should replace a response to God's blessings. Why? Because giving is a spiritual practice. As faithful members and friends of a congregation, each person is asked to be accountable to God through their giving of time, talents and resources.

Which of these above have you heard in your congregation?

What others have you heard?

How are such myths dispelled? Most often through communication, education and the building of trust among family and friends.

KAM 9/10/18/.

Getting to Year-round Stewardship

A Holistic Approach

Assessing Congregational Stewardship Ministry

A variety of assessment tools are available, both qualitative and quantitative. Each congregation selects one or more tools appropriate to their context and edits to provide objective feedback. The initial assessment is used as a benchmark for monitoring future indicators of stewardship.

Developing a Vision for Congregational Stewardship

The Stewardship Team is invited to develop a vision for stewardship ministry in the congregation. This considers both current understandings and activities, and the desired outcomes for the next one to three years. This vision statement should be short and easy to explain to both existing and new members.

Stewardship Communication

This is an ongoing effort in every congregation. It may take the form of newsletter articles, temple talks, bulletin inserts, bulletin boards, social media, a website and more. An important part of communication is telling stories about the local, regional, national and global ministries of the congregation. We do more together than we can do alone. These stories add vitality to the life of individuals and the congregation.

Stewardship Education

The focus is on developing a holistic understanding of stewardship principles and theology from caring for creation to managing resources. This includes teaching practices and skills enhance our interdependence in the Body of Christ and build confidence when engaging culture. Healthy congregational stewardship begins with five nutrients and embraces missional approaches.

Gifts-based Ministry

This approach moves beyond Time, Talent & Treasure, and Volunteer Ministry. The focus is on identifying the assets, gifts, interests, knowledge, passions and skills of individuals and the congregation. People are encouraged to explore and nurture their passions individually and collectively through the congregation's ministries and community service.

Financial Stewardship & Fundraising

This begins by embracing financial health as an expression of faith. Our approach recognizes there is a place for financial stewardship, fundraising and church finances. People are invited to respond financially through regular giving, special giving and planned giving. The traits of gratitude and generosity are combined with the principles of first fruits, proportionate and growth giving are emphasized.

Planned Giving

Concepts and principles for planned giving are introduced to individuals and the congregation. This includes the use of memorials, bequests, investments and special gifts through a variety of instruments. Wills are strongly encouraged. In presenting giving options, special consideration is given to Income Giving and Asset Giving.

Competencies of a Well-formed Steward Leader

Leadership traits, skills, styles and competencies are nurtured. The development of well-formed steward leaders is an important part of congregational vitality and sustaining ministry. The stages of steward leader development become a framework for modeling, teaching and coaching others. People of all ages inside and outside the faith community can benefit from the equipping, encouragement and support of an experienced leader.

Creating a Culture for Growing Stewards in Your Congregation

Instructions: Invite people to identify current or desired practices for growing stewards in your congregation. Then discuss the following questions: What consistencies or inconsistencies do you see?

Who are the people who develop and best model these practices?

How will the healthy practices be continued in the future?

How will unhealthy practices be addressed?

In what ways is stewardship practiced in your congregation?	What principles or teachings is this based on?	What are the desired practices for your congregation in the future?	Who models these desired practices and how?	How are others informed or trained in these desired practices?
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Assessing Your Year Round Stewardship Efforts

Instructions: After reviewing the What is Year-round Stewardship document, please indicate below how well your congregation lives into each of these activities you use these principles in daily life and answer the questions below. Discuss with others and come to a consensus on how you can help each other the year ahead.

	Not So Well			Very Well	
Assess Congregational Stewardship	1	2	3	4	5
Develop a Vision	1	2	3	4	5
Communicate	1	2	3	4	5
Stewardship Education	1	2	3	4	5
Gifts-based Ministry	1	2	3	4	5
Financial Stewardship					
Regular Giving	1	2	3	4	5
Designated Giving	1	2	3	4	5
Planned Giving	1	2	3	4	5
Steward Leader Development	1	2	3	4	5
Overall	1	2	3	4	5

Questions

1. Which three of the above do you consider yourself the strongest?

2. Which two of the above would you like to work to improve?

3. What obstacles do you encounter to live into the above?

4. What assistance, guidance or resources would be most helpful?

Stewardship Visioning and Planning

In many congregations stewardship is associated with obtaining financial and Time & Talent commitments once a year. The intentional effort to engage people in understanding their roles as God's stewards is not a six week or six month effort. This undertaking is an ongoing, faith-building experience. It is a life long ministry in the name of Jesus Christ. Here is a summary of the process that has been used effectively.

1. Visioning

Most congregations have a mission or vision statement which provides a common direction and identity for the whole congregation. Within this statement there are direct and indirect implications for stewardship. Usually Jesus Christ is a focal point of the statement. There may be references to benevolence, giving, sharing and support - all ways in which we serve as God's stewards. What are the stewardship implications of your mission statement? The answer to this question is helpful in developing a vision for stewardship in your congregation. Once this vision is developed, it can be communicated and nurtured.

2. Planning

Stewardship, like education and worship, is an ongoing ministry of the congregation. It is important for people to see and experience the fullness of their gifts and how these gifts can be used. This is best done by planning. An integrated plan provides stewardship opportunities through worship, learning, service, support and witness. Each congregational group can develop their own specific goals, activities, a time schedule and assignments. Planning begins with an assessment of where the congregation is today and where it wants to be.

3. Organizing

When a vision and plan are clearly stated, the organization needed will usually become clear. Many congregations have a Stewardship Committee. Some congregations use task groups. One congregation developed a Life Management Team. More and more congregations are separating the annual stewardship emphasis as one task group and have another group focus on building a wholistic approach to long-term stewardship. Regardless of your organizational approach, clear lines of authority, responsibility and communication are very helpful.

4. Implementing

Planning and organization are simply the precursors to implementation. This is where both leaders and followers learn and grow. From a bible study to testimonials to prayer vigils and a ministry faire, stewardship awareness can be strengthened throughout the year. For the annual stewardship emphasis, there are a variety of themes and financial response methods available. The key to effective implementation is learning from your experience. What worked well? Why? What did not work well? Why?

5. Reporting

People accompany each other best when regularly informed about progress and the status of resources provided to do ministry. This is an important part of building and maintaining a trust relationship. People want to know how their efforts and support are making ministry happen. Reports should be frequent, accurate and complete. A Congregational Ministry Spending Plan, or Narrative Budget, can be helpful.

6. Evaluating

On a regular basis it is helpful to step back and review the progress of stewardship efforts. How are we doing in our efforts to grow well-formed stewards? Each person can be invited to do this once each year. Congregational leaders may be expected to do so. Based on the desired outcomes of stewardship planning, tangible and intangible indicators can be evaluated. This provides a basis for measurement for celebration and future planning.

Congregational Response Indicators of Effectiveness



Congregation : _____

Date : _____

**Row
No.**

Basic Information

Year : _____
(A)

Year : _____
(B)

Year : _____
(C)

1 Number of Households

2 Number of Envelops Assigned

Number of Participants

3 Time & Abilities / Giftedness

4 Contributors

5 Commitments / Pledges

6 Regular Offering by Members

7 Designated Giving by Members

8 Dollars Pledged by Members

9 Total Receipts by Congregation

10 Fund-raising Expenses

Performance Measurements

11 Growth in Number of HH (%)

12 Growth in Number of T & A (%)

13 Growth in Number of Contributors (%)

14 Growth in Number of Commitments (%)

15 Growth in Regular Offerings (%)

16 Growth in Designated Benevolence (%)

17 Growth in Total Receipts (%)

18 % of Households with T & A

19 % of Households Commit / Pledge

20 Average Gift Size (\$)

21 Growth in Average Gift (%)

22 Average Cost Per Pledge (\$)

23 Cost of Fund-raising (%)

24 Change in Cost of Fund-raising (%)

25 Cost / Return Ratio

Congregational Response Indicators of Effectiveness

Instructions and Formulas for Indicators

Row No.	<u>Basic Information</u>	Year : _____ (A)	Year : _____ (B)	Year : _____ (C)
1	Number of Households	_____	_____	_____
2	Number of Envelops Assigned	_____	_____	_____
	Number of Participants	_____	_____	_____
3	Time & Abilities	_____	_____	_____
4	Contributors	_____	_____	_____
5	Commitments / Pledges	_____	_____	_____
6	Regular Offering by Members	_____	_____	_____
7	Designated Giving by Members	_____	_____	_____
8	Dollars Pledged by Members	_____	_____	_____
9	Total Receipts by Congregation	_____	_____	_____
10	Fund-raising Expenses	_____	_____	_____
<u>Performance Measurements</u>				
11	Growth in Number of HH (%)	_____	B1 / A1	C1 / B1
12	Growth in Number of T & A (%)	_____	B3 / A3	C3 / B3
13	Growth in Number of Contributors (%)	_____	B4 / A4	C4 / B4
14	Growth in Number of Commitments (%)	_____	B5 / A5	C5 / B5
15	Growth in Regular Offerings (%)	_____	B6 / A6	C6 / B6
16	Growth in Designated Benevolence (%)	_____	B7 / A7	C7 / B7
17	Growth in Total Receipts (%)	_____	B9 / A9	C9 / B9
18	% of Households with T & A	A3 / A1	B3 / B1	C3 / C1
19	% of Households Commit / Pledge	A5 / A1	B5 / B1	C5 / C1
20	Average Gift Size (\$)	A8 / A5	B8 / B5	C8 / C5
21	Growth in Average Gift (%)	_____	B20 / A20	C20 / B20
22	Average Cost Per Pledge (\$)	A10 / A5	B10 / B5	C10 / C5
23	Cost of Fund-raising (%)	A10 / A9	B10 / B9	B10 / B9
24	Change in Cost of Fund-raising (%)	_____	B23 / A23	C23 / B23
25	Cost / Return Ratio	A9 / A10	B9 / B10	C9 / C10



Instructions :

1. Fill in the historical data in rows 1 - 10.
2. Calculate the Performance Measurements by dividing the Column and Row Designations

Stewardship Ministry in Your Congregation

Year Round Planning Calendar

YEAR : _____

CATEGORY	JAN.	FEB.	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE
ASSESS YOUR MINISTRIES						
VISIONING AND PLANNING						
STEWARDSHIP COMMUNICATION						
STEWARDSHIP EDUCATION						
GIFTS-BASED MINISTRY						
FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP						
PLANNED GIVING						
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT						

PREPARED BY: _____

DATE : _____

JULY	AUGUST	SEPT.	OCT.	NOV.	DEC.	CORNERSTONES
						ASSESS YOUR MINISTRIES
						VISIONING AND PLANNING
						STEWARDSHIP COMMUNICATION
						STEWARDSHIP EDUCATION
						GIFTS-BASED MINISTRY
						FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP
						PLANNED GIVING
						LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT