

January 2012
A STEWARDSHIP MESSAGE FOR YOUR CHURCH

#274 The one who blesses others is abundantly blessed;
Those who help others are helped. Proverbs 11:26-27 *The Message*

God grant me the serenity to accept the people I cannot change, the courage to change the one I can, and the wisdom to know it's me.
-Author Unknown

January is the season for New Year's resolutions. We want to start out the New Year on the "right foot," taking care to improve ourselves and our habits. Getting out of debt and saving money are generally two of the top ten resolutions made each year. Cuts in income seem to be the norm these days, so how do we remain faithful and generous as we set priorities in the New Year?

It seems counter-intuitive but it begins by giving. Generosity breeds a positive, "can-do" attitude in us. It's good to say thank you, even in tough times. Therefore as you make moves toward financial freedom from debt, consider:

1. Making the first payment from your check every week or month a "thank you" gift for the many blessings you've received.
2. Save an equal amount in an emergency savings account you can use when you truly need to overspend your regular budget for medical needs, car repairs, house repairs or emergency family travel.

Some folks find that giving 5% of their income to the church and saving another 5% each week or month in an emergency fund can be a helpful spiritual tool as they take responsibility for their finances.

If you'd like help in meeting your financial New Year's resolution, sign up today to attend the two-hour Freed Up From Debt Workshop sponsored by the Foundation on January 29th from 6:00 - 8:00 pm or January 30th from 3:00 - 5:00 pm in Room 305 of the Conference Center in Sun Prairie. Cost is \$8.00. Everyone is welcome! Call us to register and to get more information:

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Growing in Generosity with Children

A Quart of Coins *by Rev. Jean Ehnert Nicholas*

We keep a quart jar in a prominent place in our bedroom and put our loose change into it on a regular basis. When it's almost full we take it to the bank and are surprised to discover there's about \$100 that has magically accumulated!

It's also amazing to me that for just over \$100 per member/year we are able to fund the worldwide mission and ministry of the entire United Methodist Church! We may have loose coin offerings for a number of very worthy ministries in our churches throughout the year, but what are we teaching our children if we don't meet our primary commitment to the ministry, done in our name here in Wisconsin and throughout the world, through our apportionments?

I invite you to start now - at the beginning of the year - to find a way to fund your share of the church's apportionments. Maybe you can write a check for the full amount upfront. Or you may be like many folks who are struggling to make ends meet and the most you can give are a few coins each week. Start now and when that jar is full, you'll be amazed at how much you've saved!

If you don't have children or grandchildren at home, invite a child or two from your church to help you count it. And, if you wish, involve those children in giving the gift the following Sunday in a special envelope marked for apportionments. For many wonderful stories of how these gifts are used for the ministry of Christ and the glory of God, go to www.umcgiving.org. For more resources to help you and yours meet your financial goals this year visit:

www.sharesavespend.com - Family Money Talks, Mind Your Money - for adults, and Money Sanity Solutions Book and DVD

www.moneypurposejoy.com - click on "Resources," "Calculators," and then "Accelerated Debt Payoff Calculator"

www.threerules.org

http://www.willowcreek.com/resources/good_sense.asp

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February 2012
A STEWARDSHIP MESSAGE FOR YOUR CHURCH

#275 *Giving is an act of Love.* Protect yourself against the least little bit of greed. Life is not defined by what you have, even when you have a lot." Luke 12:15 The Message

Valentine's Day is around the corner. When I was in college, living in an all-women's dorm, Valentine's Day was "the" holiday of the year! There was more activity at the front desk on February 14th as retailers and beaus brought in a steady flow of flowers, candy, cards and other goodies to be delivered to various residents. Flowers were definitely the gift of choice, the gift of "true love!" And every woman who thought she would (or should!) receive flowers, stayed close to the phone waiting and hoping that at least a single rose or a few carnations would arrive in her name.

What a different view I have of Valentine's Day now. That's not to say I won't accept flowers from my husband, but I certainly don't wait for them with baited breath! This year Valentine's Day is still in the season of Epiphany, when the love of God is made real and known to us in concrete and "ah-ha" kinds of moments. How do we as God's people make this love known to the world?

For some, it's done in gifts for present need. Others feel called to make gifts to Endowment funds, which Webster defines as a "permanent fund or source of income." What a wonderful way to make the love of God in Christ known to the world through the church forever! The principal is invested and the income may be used for further investments and supplementary expenses. Endowment income is often used to match ordinary income and giving from parishioners, to meet unexpected and extraordinary expenses, or to provide for new and creative ministries.

Endowments are often used to provide matching funds to help a congregation meet unexpected building expenses or begin a new ministry. For more information on how you or your church can establish an Endowment fund, contact us at:

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Growing in Generosity

The Challenge of Ten Apples



Once upon a time there was a couple who had nothing, and God gave them ten apples. God gave them the first three apples to eat. They shared each apple and ate all three.

God gave them the second three apples to trade for a shelter from the sun and rain. They traded the second three for a shelter from the sun and rain. God gave them the third three apples to trade for clothing to wear.

God gave them the last apple so that they might have something to give back to God to show their gratitude for the other nine. But the man and woman looked at the tenth apple, and it seemed bigger and juicier than the rest. They reasoned that God had all the other apples in the world. So they ate the tenth apple and gave back to God the core.

God has given you enough apples to supply your needs - plus one with which you may show your gratitude to God. The choice is yours. Will you return to God the largest and juiciest of your apples - or only the core?

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March 2012
A STEWARDSHIP MESSAGE FOR YOUR CHURCH

#276 "Give each what would keep (them) above want, and bestow all the rest in such a manner as would be most for the glory of God." - John Wesley

A few years ago Karen inherited shares of stock from the estate of a family friend. When her church asked for a commitment to their building campaign, Karen wrote on her pledge card that she had some shares of stock she'd like to redeem. No one from the finance committee or church office ever contacted her to help her make the gift! She didn't know who to contact in the secular world either so she left the stock invested.

Years later she read in her church newsletter that the Wisconsin U.M. Foundation could process gifts of stock, which meant she could avoid paying capital gains taxes. She would also avoid paying a selling fee or commission. She was amazed! By following the Foundation's simple procedure, she could actually make a larger gift to her church than if she sold the shares of stock herself and wrote a check to the church for the proceeds.

In 2011, the Foundation assisted 79 people in giving \$483,512 in stock gifts to 48 different churches and ministries. That's an average gift of \$10,073 per church! Individual gifts ranged from \$165 to as much as \$22,393.

These gifts of stock have offered support to local church operating budgets, provided items such as hearing devices and a piano, as well as supported a number of capital campaigns and Miracle Sunday campaigns. By making these gifts through the Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation, these individuals made sure that 100% of the proceeds from the sale were used for ministry.

For more information on how you can make a gift of appreciated stock to your favorite church or United Methodist ministry, please find the most current securities processing form on our website at <http://www.wumf.org/assets/ProcessingStockGifts.pdf>. Be sure to call us or send us a copy of the form so that we can process your gift as quickly as possible.

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Some Lenten ponderings from 1911:

Seven Ways of Giving

First - *The Careless Way*: To give something to every cause that is presented, without inquiring into its merits.

Second - *The Impulsive Way*: To give from impulse - as much and as often as love and piety and sensibility prompt.

Third - *The Lazy Way*: To make a special offer to earn money for benevolent objects by fairs, festivals, etc.

Fourth - *The Self-denying Way*: To save the cost of luxuries and apply them to purposes of religion and charity. This may lead to asceticism [severity] and self-complacence [self-righteousness].

Fifth - *The Systematic Way*: To lay aside as an offering to God a definite portion of our gains - one-tenth, one-fifth, one-third, or one-half. This is adapted to all, whether rich or poor, and gifts would be largely increased if it were generally practiced.
(1 Cor. 16:2)

Sixth - *The Equal Way*: To give God and the needy just as much as we spend on ourselves, balancing all our personal expenditures by our gifts.

Seventh - *The Heroic Way*: To limit our own expenditures to a certain sum and give away all the rest of our income. This was John Wesley's way.

-by Dr. A. T. Pierson from *Gems of Thought on Tithing*,
Published 1911 By George W. Brown, a Presbyterian layman

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April 2012
A STEWARDSHIP MESSAGE FOR YOUR CHURCH

#277 “Let the children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the Kingdom of God.” Matthew 19:14

It's April. Most of us are either in the midst of finishing our tax preparations or at least filing an extension! It's not something anyone I know of looks forward to, even if they are pretty sure they're going to get a refund. We know that the money we "give" in taxes does provide some essential governmental services. Yet we don't really "give" this money away. It's not a choice.

Compare the feeling you have about paying taxes to the heart of the boy who gave a game ball to another young fan during a July 2011 baseball game between the Arizona Diamondbacks and the Milwaukee Brewers. A player threw a ball into the stands. A young Diamondbacks fan was the lucky boy whose glove was chosen to receive the ball by the stadium worker in charge of making such difficult decisions.

The boy in the Brewers jersey was devastated. If you watch it at: (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QfF1m3-DL_Q), you'll see that after young Ian (the Diamondbacks fan) returns to his seat, he decides to give the ball to the boy wearing the Brewers jersey. And he says, "It just seemed like the right thing to do. My parents taught me that way."

Ian had a lot of fun that day and gained great satisfaction from giving that ball away. (He also, incidentally, received great recognition and some gifts in return!) But, he gave the gift without any expectation of receiving anything else in return.

What is God calling you to give - to your neighbor, to the church, to the person right next to you; or to someone in need whose name you don't even know? And if and when you do receive a tax refund, consider how you'll surprise someone with a special gift of unconditional love!

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Helps for the Stewardship Chair

Did you know?

Jesus talked about money and possessions twice as much as he did about heaven and hell, five times as much as he talked about prayer, and nearly half of Jesus' parables deal with how we manage money and possessions.

John Wesley's goal was not to raise money for the church, but to lead people into a healthier, more productive, more positive life by providing practical wisdom on the relationship between their faith and their finances. Wesley's rules are not about fund-raising for the church. They are about becoming more like Christ. They are about practicing the spiritual discipline of generosity so that we become generous people whose lives are shaped in the likeness of an extravagantly generous God.

A thick bankroll is no help when life falls apart, but a principled life can stand up to the worst.

Proverbs 11:4 [The Message](#)

Whoever loves money never has money enough;
Whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income.

Ecclesiastes 5:10 NIV

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May 2012
A STEWARDSHIP MESSAGE FOR YOUR CHURCH

#278 *Giving means thinking positively.* "Make the most of every chance you get. These are desperate times." (Ephesians 5:16 *The Message*)

As we begin the month of May in our church, we're making the transition from spring to summer. We're moving from a busy, busy time to a little bit slower schedule over the summer with generally lower attendance (unless you live in a vacation area!). The "snowbirds" return from the south and others are missing due to vacations and other activities.

What is God calling you to give this summer - of your time, your talents and your treasures? Do you have time to help clean and paint some Sunday School rooms? Do you have a talent to offer during Vacation Bible School - even if your own children are grown? Perhaps you can try giving your regular tithes and offerings electronically through your bank over the next three months, especially if you have lots of weekends when you're out-of-town.

Here are some thoughts to share as you move through this summer:

1. Be positive when inviting members and friends of the church to give. Your church does good work and you are inviting others to invest in that ministry.
2. Giving to God is not a transaction. Anytime you give anyone a gift it is a reflection of your relationship. Your commitment to the church should be a reflection of your relationship with God in Christ and the Church.
3. People give to change lives.
4. Money is never an end in itself in the church. Money is a tool for ministry. A bank account that is bursting at the seams but not used for ministry is like having a sanctuary no one is ever allowed to enter.
5. Churches that have regular stewardship campaigns receive more money from their members than those that do not. You get what you ask for, not what you wish for.

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Wisconsin Stewardship Stories

If you have a stewardship story or idea to share, please send it to us today. The Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation reserves the right to edit all submissions. Authors also grant permission to the Foundation to share their writing in this forum with other U.M. churches.

"Even in these tough economic times, I feel truly blessed. I may not have as much disposable income as I have had in the past, but I am finding that some of the things I spent my money on did not give me lasting contentment. I am eating out less, but the food I am eating is healthier and better prepared. As a bonus, I am spending less on gas to go places where I will spend more money on things that I do not need. I admit that I am lucky - I have a job with income and benefits. I may wish for more money, but I am not suffering. And yet I know that there is a lot of suffering throughout the world.

The following passage is from 2 Corinthians 9:11-13:

You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous in every way. Such generosity produces thanksgiving to God through us. Your ministry of this service to God's people isn't only fully meeting their needs but it is also multiplying in many expressions of thanksgiving to God. They will give honor to God for your obedience to your confession of Christ's gospel. They will do this because this service provides evidence of your obedience, and because of your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone. (Common English Bible)

This passage reminds us that we are called by God to give to others less fortunate than ourselves. Because we are part of the United Methodist Church, we promise faithfully to participate in its ministries through our prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness."

-Susan Hutchings, Finance Chair, Trinity UMC in Montello, Wisconsin

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June 2012
A STEWARDSHIP MESSAGE FOR YOUR CHURCH

#279 **Giving is an expression of love and gratitude.** -- "Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul.... there was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold.... and it was distributed to each as any had need. (Acts 4:32-35 NRSV)

Roy and Mirabel lived wisely and frugally. They were generous with their time, their talents and their treasures. One of the ways they chose to make gifts toward the end of their lives was through the establishment of two different charitable gift annuities with the Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation.

In 2004, they made a gift of \$12,000 to establish a Two Life Charitable Gift Annuity. When Roy died the next year, Mirabel continued to receive their annual annuity payments. In 2008, Mirabel decided to establish a second charitable gift annuity for \$4,000. When she died last October, the Bread for the World Institute in Washington, DC received a gift of over \$2,600 from the remainder in her single gift annuity. And United Methodist Children's Services in Milwaukee received over \$7,000 from the remainder in the original gift annuity she and Roy established.

When you consider the difficult investment climate during the years between 2004 and 2011 and the fact that the Charitable Gift Annuity Reserve at the Foundation receives the first 20% of the remainder in any charitable gift annuity, I imagine that both Roy and Mirabel are very happy about the gifts they were ultimately able to make to two very different ministries that so aptly represent their passions for ministry.

For more information on how you can establish a Charitable Gift Annuity, please contact us at:

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Helps for the Stewardship Chair

Did you Know...

Charitable Gift Annuities can provide additional income for persons with assets they feel called to give away. If you have a CD or some shares of stock or mutual funds that are currently underperforming, you might consider establishing a Charitable Gift Annuity. You can increase your income through fixed income annuity payments, remove the asset from your estate, and have the assurance of making an ultimate gift to the church or ministry of your choice at the time of your death.

Call our office today ([Toll Free 1-888-903-9863](tel:1-888-903-9863)) and ask for a Charitable Gift Annuity Application. You will be under no obligation. However, please be ready to share with us your birthdate, the amount of the gift you are considering, whether you will be funding your charitable gift annuity with cash or appreciated stock or mutual fund shares, and your income tax bracket.

**SOME SELECTED CURRENT
CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITY RATES**

	One Life	Two Lives	
Age 60	4.4%	Ages 60 & 60	3.9%
Age 65	4.7%	Ages 65 & 65	4.2 %
Age 70	5.1%	Ages 70 & 70	4.6%
Age 75	5.8%	Ages 75 & 75	5.0%
Age 80	6.8%	Ages 80 & 80	5.7%
Age 85	7.8%	Ages 85 & 85	6.7%
Age 90+	9.0%	Ages 90 & 90	8.2%

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August 2012

A STEWARDSHIP MESSAGE FOR YOUR CHURCH

#280 "I'm thankful for all of you every time I pray ... because of the way you have been my partners in the ministry of the gospel from the time you first believed it until now." (Philippians 1:4-5, CEV)

Thank you for your faithfulness in giving and worship attendance this summer. It's been a summer of record heat and yet there are people in worship. Your faithfulness in attendance and giving as well as the many ways you continue to offer your time and talents for our shared ministry, are gifts that truly make a difference.

Your continued giving through your tithes and offerings have made it possible for us to pay our utilities and salaries and provide for persons in need. The giving of your time and talents have provided funeral meals for families whose loved ones have died, nursery care for our youngest disciples, summer Sunday School and Vacation Bible School classes.

Your giving also allows us to pay a portion of our mission giving. Our apportionments (or a-portion-meant-for-others) have put the systems in place so we could actually get pastors moved to serve new congregations starting July 1st. At the same time the administrative systems we have in place allowed all Wisconsin United Methodists to deliver 500 flood buckets quickly and efficiently to persons affected by the floods in Superior, with more on the way.

Our apportionments also provide the staff and facilities at Pine Lake Camp and Lake Lucerne Camp and Retreat Center. More than 880 campers have registered to date this summer. Super Hero Camp, canoe camps, family camps, the Stewardship Retreat and many more types of camps have invited children, youth and adults to experience the love of Jesus Christ in new and different ways in the outdoors.

Thank you for the gifts you have given to the ministry of Christ through our Church.

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Helps for the Stewardship Chair

60 Second Offering Statements for the Summer:

This morning it's extremely hot and humid again outside. But here inside we are comfortable, thanks to our air conditioning. We can worship in comfort. I thank you for your offerings. Your gifts make it possible for us, as well as those who suffer health problems in the heat, to be here and join together to praise God. Thank you!

It is definitely hot and humid outside. I give thanks for all of you who have come to worship here today in the name of Jesus in spite of the heat. I give thanks for our air conditioning that enables me to preach and you to listen to the Word of God in comfort. Your faithful offerings, week by week, enable us to pay our utility bills in order that we can all share in Christian community, regardless of the temperature outside. Thank you!

For churches without air conditioning:

Thank you for your faithful presence here today, even though the weather outside continues to make it hot and uncomfortable inside. The warmth of God's love is evident as we share and sing and pray together. This building is a special, sacred space that has served many faithful generations of Christian people in our community. Thank you for your faithful offerings that keep our ministry alive.

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September 2012
A STEWARDSHIP MESSAGE FOR YOUR CHURCH

#281 The grass withers, the flower fades; But the word of our God will stand forever." (*Isaiah 40:8 - NRSV*)

As I drive through the countryside, I'm amazed at how differently the corn crop is responding to the drought. The grass has dried up and leaves on the trees are falling prematurely. When the Gerbera daisies in my flower boxes need water, they wilt so pitifully I can almost hear them whining for water! Instead of withering, drooping and giving up, so to speak, the corn plants are stretching up as high as they can. Their leaves are curled toward the middle as their defense mechanism against the lack of rain. Driving by, it appears that they are reaching toward the sky. Many are still trying to tassel out and pollinate in order to produce cobs.

I think we could learn some lessons from the corn plants that are reaching toward the sky. They are standing as tall as they can in the midst of adversity. The difficulties they face are not going to get them down. In theological terms, we could say that the difficulties they face are also not going to keep them from being focused on God.

They continue to grow straight and tall, trying their best to give all they can. The cobs they are able to grow this year will be small and much lower in essential nutrients. But those who are able will give as much as possible.

It's written in the scriptures, "The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever." (*Isaiah 40:8*) In the midst of the drought this year, we are beginning a new approach to discipleship and giving here in Wisconsin called "Think Greater!" Let's "Think Greater" together as we give thanks for all God has given us and offer a portion of our gifts back to God. What is God calling you to give of your time, your talents and your treasures?

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Growing in Generosity with Children and Youth

A number of authors have shared the idea of encouraging children and youth to divide their allowances and other financial gifts into three categories:

Sharing - Saving - Spending

They suggest that parents use a visual of 3 different cups or jars, labeling each one. Each week when the child receives their allowance a formula is followed. Sample formulas are:

10% Sharing (Giving) - 10% Saving - 80% Spending
10% Sharing (Giving) - 40% Saving - 50% Spending
25% Sharing (Giving) - 25% Saving - 50% Spending

Parents and students decide where the Sharing/Giving portion will go. This allows the students to give their own offerings to the church and other charities, which begins to foster good giving habits.

The Saving portion is intended to be for long-term savings - a college fund, a car fund, a Christmas gift fund or whatever the parent(s) determine is acceptable.

The Spending portion is just that, the amount that can be spent. If it's not enough to buy a certain item in one week, then there's another element of saving involved.

For more information on how to implement this simple money management system in your household, go to
http://www.churchleadership.com/leadingideas/leaddocs/2012/120201_article2.html

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OCTOBER 2012

A STEWARDSHIP MESSAGE FOR YOUR CHURCH

#223 Giving is...recognizing God's priorities - "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (Matthew 6:21)

As Adam and Nicole started planning their Halloween costumes for this year, Adam said, "I sure like all the candy we get on Halloween. But, I still think about all the people who were hurt by Hurricane Isaac."

His sister Nicole remembered her Sunday School teacher telling them about how they could Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF and help other children have clean water to drink, medicine, and warm blankets. She said, "You know, the blankets and bottles of water we took to church to send to the hurricane victims probably helped. But, I'm sure those people need more help. If we Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF we'll be able to help them some more and help other people in other places, too."

"Hey," Adam said, "We could talk to our friends about having a carnival or haunted house to raise money, too." Nicole said, "Yeah, and that money could be given to the United Methodist Committee on Relief. You know, 100% of what we give there goes to help the people who need it most. Let's go ask Mom - she'll help!"

Let's not overlook the ways our children can be encouraged to be good stewards and leaders in living the gospel of Christ among us throughout the upcoming holiday season. We invite everyone to consider creative ways of giving from all your resources to share with those who now have nothing. Cash isn't the only gift you can offer. Consider giving appreciated stock, life insurance policies, mutual fund shares, and appreciated property or land.

Contact our office if we can assist you in making a gift of any of these types of assets to assist with the Hurricane Relief, another UM mission or ministry, or your local church!

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Helps for the Stewardship Chair
Biblical Stewardship Principle:

Giving is.... recognizing God's priorities.

Teaching Children About Money

Learning how to handle money responsibly was a value my wife and I wanted to pass on to our three children. Yet, where does one go for appropriate "curriculum" for such teaching? We decided to develop our own system. Among the values related to money management that we wanted to teach were:

1. Learning to give to God and others.
2. Learning to save.
3. Learning to spend responsibly.

As a fundamental learning experience, we provided each of our children with three banks, as soon as they were old enough to receive money of their own. One was the "spending" bank. One was the "saving" bank. One bank was for "giving." The kids were urged to divide whatever money they receive among the banks. And this they did without complaint.

The plan worked beautifully for a number of years, until one day my oldest son came home from Sunday school.

Facing me, Chris declared, "Dad, you've been lying to me!" I couldn't imagine what he was talking about!

"You've always told me I should give away one third of my money. Today in Sunday school, they told us to give only 10 percent!"

By: Wayne Barrett

The Abingdon Guide to Funding Ministry, Vol. 2
by Donald W. Joiner and Norma Wimberly
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November 2012
A STEWARDSHIP MESSAGE FOR YOUR CHURCH

#283 Giving breaks the temptation of greed. *"The one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind."* (2 Corinthians 9:6-7a)

Roy and Mirabel Deming lived a life marked by gratitude and thanksgiving for their family and their church family. In addition to establishing two different Charitable Gift Annuities, they expressed their thanks for the opportunity to serve Christ through the Church by naming the Minister's Pension Memorial Fund here at the Foundation as the recipient of 5% of their residual estate at the time of their death.

Their children agreed to add a more to that amount and sent a donation to deposit into this special fund established to supplement the pension for Wisconsin United Methodist pastors. Their daughter, Joan Deming wrote, "My parents were always grateful for the many ways the church supported them, especially in their retirement. As a family we are very pleased to send this final gift in honor of them to further benefit all pastors."

What are you thankful for in the life and ministry of the church? What might you consider as a gift in your will to further the love of Christ through the ministry of your local church or another ministry? The Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation is ready to help everyone meet their charitable giving goals, both clergy and laity.

At this time of thanksgiving, we invite you to make sure the Church is included in your will. For more information on how you might do that, please contact us at:

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Helps for the Stewardship Chair

This is My Church

author unknown

This is my church.
It is composed of people like me.
We make it what it is.
It will be friendly if I am.
Its pews will be filled if I help fill them.
It will do great works if I work.
It will make generous gifts to many causes
if I'm a generous giver.
It will bring other people into its worship and fellowship
if I bring them.
It will be a church of loyalty and love, of fearlessness
and faith and a church of noble spirit ...
if I, who make it what it is, am filled with these.
Therefore, with the help of God
I shall dedicate myself to the task of being
all the things I want my church to be.

A woman was asked by a co-worker,
"What is it like to be a Christian?"

She replied, "It is like being a pumpkin. God picks you from the patch, brings you in, and washes all the dirt off of you. Then God cuts off the top and scoops out all the yucky stuff.

God removes the seeds of doubt, hate, greed, etc.,
and then carves you a new smiling face and
puts the light of Christ inside of you to shine
for the entire world to see."

Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation
750 Windsor Street Ste 305, P.O. Box 620
Sun Prairie, WI 53590-0620
1-888-903-9863 or wumf@wumf.org

December 2012
A STEWARDSHIP MESSAGE FOR YOUR CHURCH

#284 Give to Grow Spiritually - "For a child has been born -- for us! ... and there'll be no limits to the wholeness he brings." (Isaiah 9:6-7, *The Message*.)

Jesus is counting on us - all of us - to care for all the children of the world this Christmas season. How do we as United Methodists do that best? A) By ringing bells in our community for the Salvation Army red pots. B) By providing items for the food pantry. C) By paying our apportionments in full this year... or, D) *all of the above are great ways to live our faith this holiday season!*

When we place our holiday gifts in the church's offering plates, 84.6 cents of every dollar, on average, will remain in our local church to provide for utilities, building maintenance, pastoral and staff salaries, children's and youth ministries, etc.

Another 12.7 cents out of every dollar we give will provide signs of hope to children, youth and adults who participate in the ministries of Northcott Neighborhood House, United Methodist Children's Services, Harbor House Crisis Shelters, our United Methodist camps, Jr. and Sr. High Youth CONVOs and campus ministries on ten different campuses.

Signs of hope are shared through over 1,000 mission personnel supported through the General Board of Global Ministries, in over 150 countries, for just 2.7 cents out of every dollar given.

As United Methodists we are connected. We are called to **THINK GREATER!** We see that vision come alive right now as people work together to respond to the devastating effects of Hurricane Sandy throughout the Caribbean and the northeastern section of the United States. Even in the midst of such tragedy, UMCOR is there on our behalf sharing the love and hope that is ours in Christ. As United Methodists, let's celebrate the many ways hope is shared through our connectional giving this holiday season.

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Helps for the Stewardship Chair
Ways to Grow in Generosity with Children

During Advent, give them each a "charitable certificate" for a certain amount per day (\$1.00/day = \$25, \$2.00/day = \$50), or whatever sum feels right, and ask them to decide by Christmas what good cause to give it to. Then give it in their names. You get the deduction, but they get the thank-you note. It could help them to see how fortunate they are - and spark in them the joy of giving. Here is a sample:

Happy Birthday, Jesus!

As we wait for Jesus' birthday this year, my/our Christmas gift to you includes a gift of \$_____ per day from December 1-25, for a total of \$_____.

And you get to decide who this gift will help!

Please decide by Christmas what good cause you want to give this gift to. We can talk about it together if you want. It is up to you how you will help others know the love of Jesus through this gift.

Merry Christmas, with Love

FROM:

TO:

Websites to Consider when choosing a charity -
Heifer International (www.heifer.org)
The Advance at (www.advancinghope.org)
UM Committee on Relief UMCOR) Gift Catalog
(<http://new.gbgm-umc.org/umcor/give/gift-catalog/>)