

GIVING

The Community of Love
December 2018

Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaining. Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 4:8-11a, NRSV)

In addition to being secure in God's abundance, good stewards need to be oriented toward building a community of love. We do this because it is what God wants for us and because it glorifies God: our community of love is God made visible to those who cannot see him. The community of love has many aspects:

Loving God. In order to best love others, we must love God first. This is the greatest commandment and the source of our love.

Loving one another. More than loving others as ourselves, we are called to recognize that we share the same shortcomings and sinfulness in the eyes of God. Therefore, in constant love for one another we avoid being judgmental and practice forgiveness.

Living out our giftedness in the Body of Christ. We share the gifts that the Holy Spirit has bestowed on us in order to build the church. We have all things in common: we study scripture and pray together, we are in fellowship and break bread together, we give generously and distribute the proceeds to meet our needs and the needs of others.

Witnessing to God's glory. We as individuals and as the church exist to glorify God. The community of love is a light that shines for all to see. This stewardship season let us remember not just what we give, but **why** we give: so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ.

Jim Wells, Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation

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Helps for the Stewardship Chair

Year-End Giving

A man and his friend are sitting in a diner. The two know each other well and attend the same church. The friend shares that he and his wife, having had some successes and carefully managed their funds over time, have just given the new community center a gift of one million dollars. The man, Stewardship Chair at the church, is stunned. He asks, "Why didn't you give it to the church?" The friend answers, "Because the church wouldn't know what to do with a million dollars!"

Over the years, I have heard a number of versions of this parable. (Note: another possible ending is "Because nobody asked!")

The point is not that the church would not know what to do with a lot of money. It is that the friend, a member of the church, does not know what the church would do with *his* gift. One job of the Stewardship Team is to communicate goals/dreams/needs that gifts can fulfill.

Donors are especially motivated to give around the Christmas holiday and end of the year. Therefore, this is a good time for the church to provide givers with a number of year-end giving opportunities. We are not talking about balancing the annual budget or meeting shortfalls. We are talking about giving to specific mission and ministry targets to help the church to fulfill its mission through helping others.

Choose a few targets. **Scholarships** for local students are attractive to donors. Does the church support a **missionary** or **community charity** such as a homeless shelter or agency for victims of domestic abuse? Add national/international targets, too, such as **UMCOR** disaster relief.

Suggest a giving amount. For example, "Give \$500 to provide a scholarship for one student, or give a smaller amount to build up the scholarship fund."

Send a personalized letter explaining your year-end appeal; enclose a response card with a list of giving opportunities and suggested amounts.

Thank your donors and report on how the gifts were distributed.

If you have questions or want to learn more, contact:

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GIVING

Abundance: Security in God
November 2018

And all ate and were filled; and they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. Those who had eaten the loaves numbered five thousand men. (Mark 6:42-44, NRSV)

The story of the loaves and the fishes illustrates God's abundance. It also illustrates the often seen configuration of Stewardship attitudes in our churches.

The needs of the many are great. It is late in the day and Jesus sees that the people are hungry and takes compassion on them. Then as now, Jesus tells his disciples to feed his people.

The leaders are skeptical. The disciples say, "There isn't enough. We don't have enough money to buy bread for all these people."

A few give generously, sacrificially. In the story, a young boy gives up his entire lunch, a few loaves and fishes.

Jesus blesses our gifts and multiplies them in ways that are difficult for us to comprehend. The few loaves and fishes given to Christ and blessed by him turn out to feed 5,000 with baskets of food left over.

Trygve David Johnson has noted, "that the ministry I serve in Christ pivots not on how much I have or what I can give, but rather on how much God gives by multiplying what I have."

Often at this time of year, when our thoughts turn to Stewardship, our churches act as if there is scarcity. Tentatively asking their congregants to give a little from their scarcity. The disciples said, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish." But, if we have the right Stewardship attitude, then we will experience abundance. "Bring me your nothing, ask for my blessing," says Christ, "and I will turn it into something."

So this year, let us boldly invite people to abide in the Kingdom of Abundance.

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Helps for the Stewardship Chair

Challenge Grant 2.0 Activity Category: Principles & Concepts

He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way for your generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God... (2 Corinthians 9:10-11)

Three simple rules for Stewardship are 1) Understand God's bounty; 2) Embrace gratitude in all things; and 3) Give of yourself. When we give of ourselves, we embrace generosity, we model Biblical giving, we inspire others and we invite others to share in the joy of giving to God and to those in need.

The Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation is kicking off **Stewardship Challenge Grant 2.0** to encourage and reward churches (up to \$2000 over three years) for using best practices of stewardship. This month we talk about **Education on Principles and Concepts**. Good stewards grow in their understanding of God's abundance, in ways to give back, and ways to provide others with opportunities to give.

In this category is one required activities: creating a **narrative budget**. A narrative budget is a document that describes the vision of the church for the coming year in terms of its categories of ministry and assigns every dollar to be spent to one of those ministries. This is a better way of presenting monetary needs than a line item budget.

Optional activities include holding a congregation-wide study related to Stewardship, hosting a planned giving presentation, educating the congregation on personal finance principles; creating a list of at least 52 ministries of the church (and talking about them weekly); publishing a monthly stewardship article in your newsletter; and creating a local Stewardship library.

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GIVING

Living in the Kingdom of God

October 2018

Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?'... But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. (Matthew 6:31, 33, NRSV)

According to John the Baptist, we must "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." (KJV) What does repentant Stewardship look like?

I recently (re)read *A Spirituality of Fundraising* by Henri Nouwen. He provides some answers to the question, "What will Stewardship look like in the Kingdom of God?" Here is a summary based on Nouwen's thoughts on stewardship as faithful discipleship.

Security in God. Do we place our trust in God or mammon? What is our relationship to money? There is money in the Kingdom; it finances building a community of love. However, there are no money worries, because in the Kingdom there is abundance rather than scarcity.

Community of Love. In the community of love, we care for one another and serve our neighbors. The middle class often resents the rich and fears the poor. In the Kingdom, we include all and love all alike.

Invitation. We invite everyone to abide in the Kingdom and participate in the building of the community of love. This means we are comfortable asking for money, because money is what the community needs to be fruitful in its missions and ministries.

Prayer and Gratitude. It is in prayer that our conversion begins because it re-orientes our thoughts toward money, toward others and toward our goal of the beloved community. "As our prayer deepens into constant awareness of God's goodness, the spirit of gratitude grows within us." (Nouwen, p. 57).

How is your Stewardship program inviting disciples into the Kingdom?

Jim Wells, Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation

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Helps for the Stewardship Chair

Challenge Grant 2.0

Activity Category: A Culture for Giving

He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way for your generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God... (2 Corinthians 9:10-11)

Three simple rules for Stewardship are 1) Understand God's bounty; 2) Embrace gratitude in all things; and 3) Give of yourself. When we give of ourselves, we embrace generosity, we model Biblical giving, we inspire others and we invite others to share in the joy of giving to God and to those in need.

The Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation is kicking off **Stewardship Challenge Grant 2.0** to encourage and reward churches (up to \$2000 over three years) for using best practices of stewardship. This month we talk about **Creating a Culture for Giving**. Good stewards *give* generously, *invite* others to give generously and *provide* opportunities for giving.

In this category are three required activities: holding an **annual financial campaign**, promoting the **challenge to tithe**, and creating an **apportionment giving plan**. The annual campaign is a time where the congregation recites and remembers its vision for discipleship and each person renews their commitment to support the ministries of the church. We remember the biblical call to tithe and strive to meet or exceed it in our own giving and to help others in doing so. Finally, we share in worldwide missional giving with others in our connection (conference, jurisdiction and world) through apportionments.

Optional activities include instituting procedures for online & electronic giving; educating the congregation on personal finance principles; creating a list of at least 52 ministries of the church (and talking about them weekly); publishing a monthly stewardship article in your newsletter; and creating a local Stewardship library.

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Spiritual Maturity in Stewardship

September 2018

I could not speak to you as spiritual people, but rather as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for solid food. Even now you are still not ready... (1 Corinthians 3:1-2)

The goal of discipleship is spiritual maturity. As Scripture tells us in Hebrews 6:1, "Therefore let us go on toward perfection, leaving behind the basic teaching about Christ, and not laying again the foundation". The aim of mature spirituality is to have the same mindset as Christ Jesus, but usually comes in stages of commitment whether it be prayer, presence, service, witness, or giving.

Previously, we identified four stages of giving. In **Stage 1**, people spend on themselves and give to God from what is left over. They usually give little or nothing. They are not ready to commit.

In **Stage 2**, people take responsibility and wonder what equal shares of the goal (e.g., church budget) are. Of course, this fails to recognize that households have different levels of resources. People at this stage are ready to give regularly and many of commit to pledging.

In **Stage 3**, people want to put God first in their lives, even if they must change spending habits and attitudes toward having things. They understand that an offering to God is intended to be a sacrifice. They look to move toward tithing, giving ten percent of their income to God, by increasing the percentage of income they give each year.

In **Stage 4**, people want to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. They see even what they spend on their own needs to be support for their discipleship. Often, their giving to church substantially exceeds the 10 percent tithing mark. Where are you in your discipleship journey? Is this the year, you make a change? Let's pray for one another as we grow together.

Jim Wells, Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation

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Helps for the Stewardship Chair

Challenge Grant 2.0

Activity Category: Praise and Thanksgiving

I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. (Philippians 1:3-5)

Three simple rules for Stewardship are 1) Understand God's bounty; 2) Embrace gratitude in all things; and 3) Give of yourself. When we embrace gratitude, we give thanks to God, but also to others for their gifts. We help others to see how they are equipped, help them to grow in discipleship, and invite them to share their experiences with the congregation.

The Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation is kicking off **Stewardship Challenge Grant 2.0** to encourage and reward churches (up to \$2000 over three years) for using best practices of stewardship. This month we talk about **Praise & Thanksgiving**. Good stewards are grateful for the gifts of others and find ways to allow members to witness to how and why they give.

In this category is one required activity: **personal thanks to donors**. A personal note, call or message from the Stewardship Team or Pastor a couple of times a year goes a long way in cementing the donor's commitment to the ministries of the church, trust in the wise stewardship of their gifts, and continued support.

Optional activities include having a guest speaker from a mission, ministry or organization supported by the church; sending individual quarterly updates on year-to-date giving; writing a personal note to first-time givers; holding a celebration for what you DO have as a congregation; and including in worship and in church communications, at least quarterly, personal testimonies about giving or volunteering.

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GIVING
Stewardship Best Practices
August 2018

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. (Galatians 6:9)

The Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation is initiating **Stewardship Challenge Grant 2.0**. The purpose of the grants is to encourage and reward churches (up to \$2000 over three years) for using best practice of stewardship. Best practices (BPs) are procedures that are accepted or proven correct or most effective. (Check out the BPs at www.wumf.org/stewardship-grant). Ask your church's **stewardship contact** whether your church is getting this free money.

Why bother with best practices? Isn't what we are doing good enough? In a word, no. Among the core activities of any church is moving people toward fully committed discipleship.

However, according to the Gallup Organization, only about one in five church members is a fully committed disciple*. Yet, Gallup has shown that committed disciples are more satisfied with their lives, do more inviting of others to church events, spend more time volunteering in their communities, and give more financially. Stewardship best practices help us move toward Christian perfection, as John Wesley encouraged us to do. What will you do to increase your own spiritual commitment? What will you do to increase the spiritual commitment of others in your congregation?

* A fully committed disciple will strongly agree with most of these statements:
1) I spend time in worship or prayer every day, 2) My faith is involved in every aspect of my life, 3) Because of my faith, I have forgiven people who have hurt me deeply, 4) Because of my faith, I have meaning and purpose in my life, 5) My faith has called me to develop my given strengths, 6) I will take unpopular stands to defend my faith, 7) My faith gives me an inner peace, 8) I speak words of kindness to those in need of encouragement, 9) I am a person who is spiritually committed.

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Helps for the Stewardship Chair

Challenge Grant 2.0
Activity Category: Stewardship Leadership

Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. (Daniel 12:3)

Many church stewardship teams, including both clergy and laity, have little sense that stewardship is both an essential practice of discipleship and an essential component of the relationship between a member-supported organization and its constituents. They are unaware that there are best practices of stewardship, that these are skills to be learned and applied, and that appropriate application of these skills can result in increased giving. This translates into both mature discipleship and enhanced financial support of the church.

The Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation is kicking off **Stewardship Challenge Grant 2.0** to encourage and reward churches (up to \$2000 over three years) for using best practice of stewardship. We have divided the best practices into four activity categories: Leadership for Stewardship; Praise and Thanksgiving; Creating a Culture for Giving; and Education on Principles and Concepts.

This month we talk about **Leadership for Stewardship**. Good leaders are able to create an environment that will encourage all the members of their congregation to develop their skills and imagination, so that they can contribute to the common goals and vision of the church.

In this category are three required activities: 1) Convening a Stewardship Taskforce, 2. Conducting Monthly Stewardship Activities, and 3. Preaching Stewardship Sermons, preferably throughout the year.

Optional activities include monitoring giving patterns to trigger pastoral care, attending a stewardship training event, developing a three-to-five year stewardship plan, writing an endowment fund policy, and providing quarterly stewardship updates to the congregation.

In the coming months, I will describe the other Best Practice Activity Categories

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GIVING

Questions for a Money Autobiography, Pt 4 July 2018

From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded. (Luke 12:48)

From Writing a Money Autobiography by Dan Dick

A money autobiography is a reflection process on the role and influence of money and material possessions in our life. It challenges us to explore the past to see how our attitudes, assumptions, and values concerning money and wealth were formed.

Lifestyle Questions concerning money & wealth

- Does the fact that 2/3 of the earth's people lives below the U.S. poverty line affect your attitude toward money? Why? Or why not?
- How do you feel when people approach you for money on the street? When you receive phone solicitations for charities?
- Which words best describe you and why? Affluent, comfortable, average, impoverished, poor, struggling, wealthy, working class.
- What kind of legacy would you like to leave when you die? Of your worldly possessions, what would you leave to whom, and why?
- One strong theme of our faith is that wealth is given for the common good of the whole community. What does this mean to you? Does anyone have a claim to your money and possessions other than you?
- In what ways does your relationship with money affect your faith? In what ways does your faith affect your relationship with money?
- In what ways do you feel your relationship with money is a spiritual issue? What does it mean to you to be a good steward?

It is useful to create a **money autobiography journal** to record your thoughts, reflections, and feelings. Then, you can return to the money autobiography journal months and years afterward.

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Helps for the Stewardship Chair

Asking, Pt. 4

If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town. (Matthew 10:14)

In his book "The God Ask", Steve Shadrach describes how to ask for ministry support: 1) Meet everyone you know face-to-face; 2) Share the ministry vision; 3) Ask for support; 4) Quietly wait for an answer.

This month we talk about waiting for an answer. Waiting is not something that most people do well. Anxiety, the desire to know, and the high stakes involved get the better of them. These observations certainly apply in asking for support. Now is not the time to have a failure of nerve.

If we are following Steve Shadrach's prescription, then we have shown our potential supporters the respect of meeting with them face-to-face, of opening ourselves and sharing our ministry vision, and of deeming them important enough to be asked for support. Now, we need to show them respect by waiting patiently, quietly for them to decide how they will respond.

This is the stage in the conversation where we, the askers, stop talking. We have made our case; now we must await the answer. The desire to keep on talking is great, but we need to give our potential supporter the gift of time and space to contemplate what we have shared, what it means to them and what it might mean to those affected by our ministry (our church or community, specific people in need, etc.).

I think you will find that most people in your church will be surprised to be asked for support in this way. It is not the usual practice. Most churches and ministries do not make face-to-face contact, make a poor case for support, and surprisingly often fail to **ask** for support!

Congregants in these churches are often simply confused as to what is needed. It is important for us to practice the dual disciplines of asking for support and waiting—prayerfully, respectfully—for an answer.

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GIVING

Questions for a Money Autobiography, Pt 3

June 2018

His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' (Matthew 25:23)

From Writing a Money Autobiography by Dan Dick

A money autobiography is a reflection process on the role and influence of money and material possessions in our life. It challenges us to explore the past to see how our attitudes, assumptions, and values concerning money and wealth were formed.

Management Questions concerning money and wealth

- In what ways are you a good manager of money? In what ways are you a poor manager of money?
- How do you feel about talking about your finances with other people? Why do you feel this way?
- Do you use credit cards? Do you pay the monthly balances in full? How does buying on credit make you feel? Why?
- How much money do you wish you had in the bank/invested? How did you arrive at this figure? How close is this to what you have?
- How much money do you give to church and charity? Do you tithe? How do you decide how much to give? Where to give?
- Do you have a personal budget? Why? How do you make decisions about what to spend, what to save, and what to give?
- What are your greatest financial concerns? How have you made decisions concerning retirement, insurance, drafting a will, etc? If you have not done so, why not?

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Helps for the Stewardship Chair

Asking, Pt. 3

If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town. (Matthew 10:14)

In his book "The God Ask", Steve Shadrach describes how to ask for ministry support: 1) Meet everyone you know face-to-face; 2) Share the ministry vision; 3) Ask for support; 4) Quietly wait for an answer.

This month we talk about asking for support. These questions will inspire, help build interest, and open the asking conversation.

1. **What Inspires Your Giving?**—When you discover why your major giver has given in the past, then you are able to create a deeper stewardship experience for her or him.
2. **I'd Love To Know Your Story.**—Your donor is dying to share their story. But no one is asking. And they'd enjoy so much, sharing it.
3. **Then What Happened?**--You honor your donor by listening.
4. **What Are Your Impressions of Our Church?**—Find out what is on a donor's mind, to move forward in a trusting relationship.
5. **What Part of Our Work Interests You Most?**—Have the conversation that will give you clues on how to design a personalized experience for their giving.
6. **How Did You Come To Be So Generous?**—Major donors are happy to share their philanthropic vision and appreciate being asked.
7. **Ask for Advice and Input.**—This engages donors in the strategy part of your fundraising effort. They know so much!
8. **How Could You See Yourself Becoming More Involved in Our Church?**—It is important not to assume a donor's level of interest.
9. **If You Made A Major Gift, What Would You Like to Accomplish?**—When you have an engaged a donor, it is perfectly fine to ask them to support the church.
10. **Would You Like to Know More About How You Could Impact This Church?**—Let the donor lead the way by "asking for permission to ask."

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GIVING

Questions for a Money Autobiography, Pt 2 May 2018

Each of 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)

From Writing a Money Autobiography by Dan Dick

A money autobiography is a reflection process on the role and influence of money and material possessions in our life. It challenges us to explore the past to see how our attitudes, assumptions, and values concerning money and wealth were formed.

Values Questions concerning money & wealth

- In what ways are you a spender? A saver? In what ways are you generous? Stingy?
- Although money can't buy happiness, what are some of the things money can buy that bring happiness?
- What do you like best about money? What do you like least?
- What things in life are worth more than money? How does your lifestyle reflect the relative importance of these things to money?
- How has gender influenced your thinking about money? What differences do you see in how men and women relate to money?
- Which of the following words best communicates your attitudes and feelings about money? Why? Money is... power, security, hope, love, pleasure, prestige, dirty, value, anxiety, identity, a tool, freedom, protection, evil, comfort, fun.
- Reflect on times when you have given to meet the needs of another. Or, when you were on the receiving end of a gift? How did you feel?

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Helps for the Stewardship Chair

Asking, Pt. 2

If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town. (Matthew 10:14)

In his book "The God Ask", Steve Shadrach describes how to ask for ministry support: 1) Meet everyone you know face-to-face; 2) Share the ministry vision; 3) Ask for support; 4) Quietly wait for an answer.

This month we talk about sharing the ministry vision. Fundraising consists of a number of *skills* such as communication of purpose and goal, putting together a team with appropriate talents, budgeting, and asking for support (more on that next month). A skill is simply the ability to perform the steps of an activity. Often, we concentrate on learning and performing the steps of fundraising while ignoring the motivation. In our churches the motivation is (or should be) supporting the mission and ministry of the church.

[Note: we are speaking here of the elements of ministry support. The first motivation for giving is always to praise, please and obey God. It is why we tithe. Beyond that, giving is for reaching others and that is about supporting mission and ministry.]

I have observed that communicating the vision of ministry is typically the weakest part of any church fundraising whether it be for the annual operating budget or for capital improvements. Yet, how one feels about the ministry for which support is being sought is probably the single most important determinant of whether and how much a giver will give.

Who will give more to support your church, the one who gets great joy from knowing that missions and ministries she values will be supported, or the one who gives because of a sense of duty or out of habit? **When your stewardship teams meet with givers, the conversation should center on identifying the givers passion for mission and ministry.** Where you find their joy, you will find their support.

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GIVING

Questions for a Money Autobiography, Pt 1 April 2018

*Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for you reap whatever you sow.
(Galatians 6:7)*

From Writing a Money Autobiography by Dan Dick

A money autobiography is a reflection process on the role and influence of money and material possessions in our life. It challenges us to explore the past to see how our attitudes, assumptions, and values concerning money and wealth were formed.

Formative Questions

Reflect on these questions relating to how your family treated money when you were growing up:

- What is your earliest memory of money?
- What is your happiest memory in connection with money?
- What is your unhappiest money memory?
- What attitudes about money did your parents and other family members have?
- Did you feel rich, poor, or neither growing up? Did you worry about money when you were a child? A teenager?
- Where did your money come from? (Did you work for it, receive an allowance, have your parents buy you things, etc.?)
- Who governed how you related to money – how you spent money, saved money, gave money to charity or church?

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Helps for the Stewardship Chair

Asking, Pt. 1

If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town. (Matthew 10:14)

In his book "The God Ask", Steve Shadrach describes how to ask for ministry support: 1) Meet everyone you know face-to-face; 2) Share the ministry vision; 3) Ask for support; 4) Quietly wait for an answer.

This month we talk about meeting everyone face-to-face. I remember going on a volunteer in mission trip to Costa Rica. I met with many people to ask them to support my trip, including not just my travel, but also the materials we would need for our ministry.

Why should supporting our church budgets be any different? In my church 20 households, give 66 percent of the annual budget. Certainly, they deserve our thanks (in a handwritten note is considered best). However, shouldn't we also **meet with them** to better understand why they so strongly support the church, what their passion for ministry is, and what kind of growth they would support in the future?

I believe that people often give the same from year to year because they cannot envision how the church would productively use a larger contribution. **If we have one-on-one conversations that frankly discuss people's gifts and the good they might do, we will elicit even more generosity.**

In addition, what about the next 19 households that account for another 22 percent of the budget? Shouldn't they be asked the same questions?

Telling our congregations that we need their support without giving them input seems backward. I propose a new approach to stewardship that has the stewardship team, including the pastor, meeting with top givers at least annually and outside the normal stewardship campaign. Try this and see if it doesn't have a positive effect on giving.

As this becomes the norm, I think our churches will find it easier and more productive to meet regularly with members at all giving levels.

If you have questions or want to learn more, contact:

Jim Wells, Director of Stewardship & Capital Campaigns, Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation at 608-837-9582 or jwells@wumf.org.

GIVING

Leave a Legacy

March 2018

We recently shared with Stewardship leaders, this service of the Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation. Now we share it with you.

By preparing a will, you can extend your Christian stewardship beyond your lifetime. In addition to providing for your family's needs, your will can direct how your assets will continue to support the missions and ministries you have supported in life.

A simple, cost-effective way to do it is to insert this text in your wills: **"After all my bills are paid, I want [x] percent of my estate to go to the Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation, Inc., to be used for such exempt purposes of the Foundation as are provided in a specific written instrument."**

Then you provide the Foundation with a letter of instruction that says, **"In accordance with the will I have prepared, I have designated that [x] percent of my estate will be given to charity. The Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation, Inc. has been designated to receive this bequest. I request the Foundation to distribute this bequest as follows:"**

You may then specify percentages to be given to a specific United Methodist church, Wisconsin UM health or welfare ministry, UM college or seminary, specific missionary or local community outreach organization. In fact any religious or not-for-profit organization.

You may want to spend some time praying and thinking about the kinds of ministries that you have a calling to support. UM Global Ministries has a browsable, searchable list of mission projects by category, region, focus area, population served, etc. My wife, Pastor Barbara Wells, and I recently added this provision to our will to remember the causes we support.

If you need assistance with preparing your letter of instruction or wish to know more about leaving a gift to your favorite church or charitable organization, contact the **Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation** toll-free at 1-888-903-9863 or email us at wumf@wumf.org.

Jim Wells, Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation

Visit the Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation at
www.wumf.org or [Facebook/wumf.org](https://www.facebook.com/wumf.org)
Or call 1-888-903-9863

Helps for the Stewardship Chair

Anxiety and Church Finance

Anxiety (anx•i•e•ty) n. A disorder characterized by a state of excessive uneasiness and apprehension, typically with compulsive behavior or panic attacks.

Does this sound like the approach to finance at your church?

Church consultant Margaret Marcuson has identified a number of ways in which anxiety appears in the financial life of the church (See *Money and Your Ministry*, 2014, Marcuson Leadership Circle, pp.18-19).

- Secrecy around money
- Denial around financial realities—thinking there isn't enough when there is, or thinking there is enough when there isn't
- Overestimating or underestimating giving capacity
- Regular "crises" around finances, real or imagined
- Embezzlement or mismanagement
- Resisting necessary expenses like deferred maintenance
- High reactivity [strong emotions] around the way church leadership raises funds
- Never talking about money or, conversely, always talking about money
- Blind trust in the leadership around money matters or, conversely, extreme suspicion of leadership

It should be clear that anxiety is often a result of a lack of balance growing out of inordinate fear. We contribute to this greatly when financial matters in the church lack transparency and when areas of mutual responsibility are unclear. The Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation can help you design finance/stewardship operations that work.

If you have questions or need help with any of these, contact:

Jim Wells, Director of Stewardship & Capital Campaigns, Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation at 608-837-9582 or jwells@wumf.org.

GIVING
Consistency Counts
February 2018

Now concerning the collection for the saints: you should follow the directions I gave to the churches of Galatia. ²On the first day of every week, each of you is to put aside and save whatever extra you earn, so that collections need not be taken when I come. (1 Corinthians 16:1-2)

Give with consistent gratitude • Give to God first

Give with consistent sacrifice • Give with consistent praise

Paul was clearly a believer in consistency. He encouraged the Corinthians to donate regularly on the Sabbath to store up funds for relief of their poor brothers and sisters in Jerusalem. We still collect donations in our churches on a weekly basis on the Sabbath (although some of us give biweekly, monthly or even annually).

We also set aside time in each worship service to express our gratitude to God and to praise God for the many blessings God gives us (for which gratitude our gifts are a token). This we do consistently. Not during a season of thankfulness or holiday of praise, but every week.

Many consistently put God first as well: giving to God before taking anything for themselves. One faithful son of our congregation gives an annual gift at year-end. I surmise this is from a bonus he receives and he gives the church a tithe from it.

Moreover, we give with consistent sacrifice. If the gift means nothing to you, then it means nothing to God. Conversely, the greater the cost the greater the gift. This does not necessarily mean the size of the gift in dollars, but rather the labor that went into earning it, the needs forgone that allowed it to be given, and the recognition that others' needs are as important as our own.

May we all pray to be consistent in our faithfulness!

Jim Wells, Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation

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Helps for the Stewardship Chair

Does Your Church Have a Culture of Generosity?

Shared Responsibility for Generosity

- Does the Stewardship function have a seat at the leadership table with equivalent influence to Missions, Trustees, Finance, etc.?
- Do pastor and church leaders take responsibility for growing generosity in the church?
- Are those who have negative things to say about giving or fundraising immediately challenged and educated?

Integration and Alignment with Mission & Ministry

- How much time do stewardship leaders spend catching up on the church's missions and ministry activities?
- Is a culture of generosity integrated into all church activities?

A Focus on Stewardship as Discipleship

- Does the church embrace generosity as a core value?
- Are opportunities for growth in generosity provided year-round as they are for worship, service, outreach, fellowship and spiritual growth?

Strong Relationships with Givers

- Are givers regularly, immediately, and personally thanked for supporting the mission and ministry of the church?
- Are givers asked, "What's your generosity story?" and helped to find ways to express their Stewardship identity?
- Do the mission and ministry of the church reflect the passions of its donors?

Adapted from: Kihlstedt, Andrea, *Capital Campaigns: Strategies that Work*, 4th Edition. 2016. New York: Jones & Bartlett Learning. & Gibson, Cynthia, *Beyond Fundraising: What Does it Mean to Build a Culture of Philanthropy?* www.haasjr.org/sites/default/files/resources/Haas_CultureofPhilanthropy_F1_o.pdf.

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GIVING
God At Work!
January 2018

For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. (Matthew 25:29)

Matthew 25 shares a series of parables describing the Kingdom of God. In the parable of the talents (Matt 25:14-30) the master leaves his immense wealth (the equivalent of 160 annual salaries) in the hands of his servants. Two servants double what they were entrusted with; while one only returns the talent he was given. The master rewards the two successful servants with even more responsibility, but casts out the unsuccessful servant. Clearly, stewardship is central to discipleship in the Kingdom of God.

The punishment of the poor steward seems severe, but the stakes were incredibly high. Thus, it is with our stewardship. Making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world is our job alone. What will we have to show for it when the Master returns?

Therefore, we must strengthen our stewardship so we can be the best disciples possible, not out of fear of punishment, but out of an abundant desire to do what is right and what pleases the Lord. Like a gymnast or musician, we are always looking for those occasions when it all seems to happen perfectly—in our prayers, presence, service, witness and in our giving. God does not just want our average performance, but our best prayers, our most engaged presence, our most selfless service to others, our deep and abiding witness, and our sacrificial giving. Of course, we know there will be difficulties along the way, but we have the assurance of God's abundance.

Jim Wells, Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation

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Helps for the Stewardship Chair

Super Bowl of Stewardship
February 3 • Summerfield UMC, Milwaukee

The **SUPER BOWL OF STEWARDSHIP 2018** will be hosted by **Summerfield United Methodist Church**, 728 E. Juneau Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53202 on Saturday February 3, 2018.

Rev Anna-Lisa Hunter will provide the keynote address, "**Digital Tools for Stewardship**". Jim Wells will present, "**Using Data to Guide Stewardship**".

Other workshops will include:

- "**Helping Your Congregation Save & Give More**" – Tools to effectively deal with personal finances using Biblical principles.
- "**Year-Round Stewardship Planning**" – Creating a plan that embraces year-round stewardship and looks ahead 3-5 years.
- "**Stewardship Is More Than Fundraising**" – Methods, tools and best practices for effective church financial operations.

Bring yourself or your whole church team for the day to create or refine your annual stewardship plan and attend workshops on current and compelling stewardship topics.

See www.wumf.org/upcoming-events to register and to see workshop details.

The event costs \$10/person and includes lunch and materials.

If you have questions or require additional information, please contact:

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