



Steward Tips

Central/Southern Illinois Synod

December 2015

Part of our stewardship ministry is to assist individuals and congregations with the development of financial strategies that will help them to be good stewards of the resources that God has given them. This issue of “Steward Tips” focuses on estate planning, endowment funds, and stewardship models.



ELCA Foundation

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Estate Planning

Did you know that if you do not have an estate plan, the state of Illinois has a plan for how your estate will be divided? When it comes to the disposition of your assets, do you want to make a plan or would you rather let the state make those decisions for you?

The ELCA Foundation has a document entitled “Will and Trust Workbook: A Helpful Guide for Planning Your Estate”, which is designed to be a planning resource for you as you prepare for a meeting with your legal advisor. While the workbook is not a legal document, it is intended to be a tool to help you prepare and plan for the distribution of your assets.

This 18-page booklet is available as a free download at www.ELCA.org/willtools. It includes: a guide to commonly used terms; a Christian preamble; space to record personal information; an estate inventory and more.

Establishing an Endowment Fund

Some congregations establish an endowment fund as a means of funding current and/or future ministries. Whenever a congregation chooses to set up an endowment fund, it makes a commitment to act as good stewards of the donated assets. When donors give to the fund, they are creating a legacy of stewardship for years to come. The five suggested steps for creating and growing an endowment are as follows:

- Identify the need for an endowment;
- Learn what an endowment is and what it can do;
- Identify the needs and ministries that will be supported by the endowment;
- Establish the endowment fund; and
- Create a plan that includes communication and promotion of the fund.

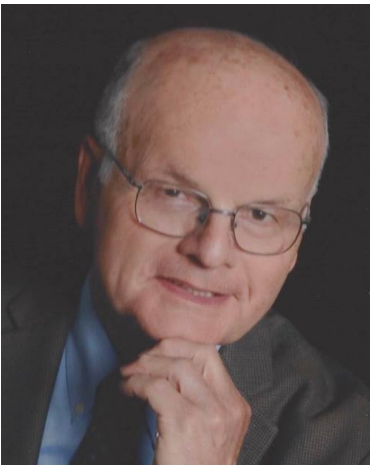
For more information on how your congregation can establish an endowment fund, you may contact ELCA Foundation representative, Michael Dixon at Michael.Dixon@elca.org or (630) 749-5732.



You may send feedback, resource recommendations, and contact information to:
Pastor Bob Dealey at Bob.Dealey@csis-elca.org

Stewardship Perspective, (Part 1)

By Bob Clark



Bob Clark is a member of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Champaign and is involved in the congregation's stewardship ministry. Part II of this article will appear in the next issue of "Steward Tips".

So what is "stewardship"? Our congregational constitution reads in part: the mission of the stewardship committee is to encourage members to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit as we determine what portion of the gifts first given to us shall be returned for the Lord's work through the Church and other related agencies. It is the primary duty of this committee to identify and implement programs that promote growth in giving to help advance God's mission.

There it is. We are not fundraisers or budget-makers. Our job is to educate and increase awareness. Best of all, it is the Holy Spirit who guides and leads us, as we consider our responses to what God has done. What a team! From that perspective, we can move forward and believe that stewardship is an opportunity and not an obstacle to be overcome.

Stewardship Models

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Champaign, has used a number of stewardship models over the years. We have done every member visits—in which 20-25 teams were recruited, trained and sent out to visit each congregational family on stewardship Sunday. We have done cottage meetings; used the Resident Stewardship program; completed mail-in campaigns; requested that pledge cards be filled in at Consecration Sunday worship services; and used the Pony Express model.

The Pony Express model involves using "Trail Bosses", who see that a stewardship packet is passed from one member to another. Each member received information and pledge cards, so that within a two-week period, every family in the congregation would be contacted. A family receives the stewardship packet, makes their pledge, puts it in a sealed envelope and then delivers the pouch to the next family on the list. The last family on the list would then return the saddlebag to the church.

We have used focus groups, adult education classes, videos, skits, and numerous combinations of ideas to tell the story of what God is doing. Each model has advantages and disadvantages. Perhaps you have used similar models like this in your congregation.

There are many good stewardship programs and a key decision for congregations to make is when to hold its stewardship drive. At Good Shepherd, we conduct our annual stewardship campaign during Lent. Because our church year runs from August 1 to July 31, we purposely hold our stewardship campaign apart from budgetary times and annual meetings. Part of the educational process is to remind ourselves that we do not give to support a budget rather we give to further the mission to which God has called us.

Our stewardship year includes a time for recruitment of new workers. Our team conducts a Time and Talent event and a financial commitment campaign for each member. We have done these events jointly or as stand-alone projects. This year, our Time and Talent Fair was held in September. Each church committee had a booth and used a time following our Sunday worship services to inform, recruit, and share ideas about our congregational ministries. By separating the Time and Talents event from the financial campaign, two things happen: 1) It tends to keep stewardship in the forefront throughout the year; and 2) it shows the importance of both using our hands to work and giving in order to further God's kingdom.

