

Stewardship is for Everyone

Eastern Oklahoma Presbytery

What is Stewardship?

Stewardship is the prayerful exercise of discernment of God's will, followed by careful choices that show Christ is the cornerstone of our lives. Stewardship requires us to be good caretakers of the world God has entrusted to us, and to seek to do for others as Jesus would do. According to the *Book of Order*, one of the central affirmations of faith in the Reformed tradition is "faithful stewardship" that "shuns ostentation and seeks proper use of the gifts of God's creation" (G-2.0500a). Practicing stewardship is far more than raising funds; it is nothing less than our exercise of discipleship as followers of Jesus Christ.

From Funding Christ's Mission, adopted by 218th General Assembly 2008

Biblical Foundations

Genesis 1:1-2, 26

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters....

²⁶Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion 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."

Psalms 24

The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it,
the world, and those who live in it;
for he has founded it on the seas,
and established it on the rivers.

Acts 2:42-47

⁴²They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ⁴³Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. ⁴⁴All who believed were together and had all things in common; ⁴⁵they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

2 Corinthians 9:6-8

The point is this: 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, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good

Resources

Types of Campaigns (The Stewardship Manual PDS #72530-94-001)

1. Every-Member Visitation

Strengths: materials are available; face-to-face discussions allow questions, answers, interaction; effective in allowing personal growth and acceptance; good starting point for stewardship education; updates membership roles; follow-up is usually included

Limitations: requires lots of time, leadership and training; challenging to recruit enough visitors; follow-up is difficult to complete; calls are interpreted as asking for money

2. Small Group Meetings

Strengths: allows for dialogue and discussion; organize members by areas, interests or availability; strengthens fellowship; creates high level of interest; allows personal input in program; provides setting for stewardship education

Limitations: time consuming; needs telephone callers to set up and remind members; requires host/hostess training; requires careful organization; doesn't reach uncommitted; difficult for large congregation; negative voices can dominate; reaches only those who attend; requires extensive follow-up

3. Sunday Worship

Strengths: places stewardship commitment in context of worship; emphasizes spiritual dimension of commitment; requires less time or training; low cost; can be combined with other approaches; single, focused presentation; requires little calling

Limitations: may rise or fall on strength of sermon; offers no opportunity for dialogue; doesn't reach shut-ins, nonresidents, or uncommitted; reaches only those attending; requires much follow-up; offers minimal opportunity for involvement

4. Direct Mail

Strengths: allows for creativity in writing; requires little time; includes all members; easy to manage; efficient use of effort; consistency in message; requires little leadership; non-confrontational; updates membership rolls

Limitations: lacks face-to-face dialogue; materials must be top quality; ineffective if discontent present in congregation; resembles secular appeals; requires efficient way to receive commitments; follow-up is difficult

5. Congregational Dinner

Strengths: can have several dinners to reach more members; requires less time; everyone hears same presentation; good use of audiovisuals; often low cost; strengthens fellowship; face-to-face contact; can distribute materials easily

Limitations: doesn't reach shut-ins, nonresidents or uncommitted; large crowd can inhibit sharing; reaches only those in attendance; requires extensive follow-up

6. Telephone Approach

Strengths: requires less time; low cost; allows for questions, answers and interaction; easier to enlist callers than visitors

Limitations: lacks face-to-face dialogue; materials being mailed must be top quality; often ineffective if discontent in congregation; resembles secular appeals; requires efficient way to receive commitments; follow-up is difficult

7. Consecration Day

Strengths: requires little time or training; distribute materials easily; low cost; can be combined with other approaches; single-effective presentation; can use guest speaker; little calling; involves celebration

Limitations: rise or fall on strength of speaker; no opportunity for dialogue; minimal involvement; doesn't reach shut-ins, nonresidents or uncommitted; reaches only those in attendance; may require extensive follow-up; effective guest speakers are difficult to find

8. Personal Delivery

Strengths: cuts down on travel time; little training; highlights confidentiality; involves large number of people; requires little time; fun—can stimulate creative, playful spirit; reaches uncommitted members

Limitations: can encounter delays/breakdowns in delivery system; process can be more important than objective; difficult for shut-ins to participate; needs trained "trail bosses" or leaders; encourages little dialogue about work of church; includes no training for "riders"; little opportunity for stewardship education

RESOURCES FROM PRESBYTERIAN DISTRIBUTION SERVICE (800) 524-2612

On the PCUSA website: Church Store (<http://store.pcusa.org/>)

<i>Item Number</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Price</i>
7253094002	A Stewardship Manual: A Guide to Year-round Stewardship Planning	\$5.00
1912011910	2011 Giving Magazine: Growing Joyful Stewards in Your Congregation	Free

Our newsletter

The GAMC has just launched a stewardship newsletter, Stewardship Ministry, through which we hope the whole church will share resources, best practices and insights which will inspire us to greater and better stewardship in all areas of our lives. If you or someone you know would like to be on the mailing list please email, tonia.trice@pcusa.org.

Websites that Might Be Helpful

www.stewardshipresources.org

Annual campaign theme and resources; information regarding national workshops and other stewardship resources from the Ecumenical Stewardship Center

www.pcusa.org/stewardship

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) resources for stewardship in general and stewardship education.

www.stewardshipkaleidoscope.org

Resources from the Kaleidoscope Stewardship Annual PCUSA event

www.henrinouwen.org/home/booklet

For a free copy of Nouwen's booklet titled [The Spirituality of Fundraising](#)

www.luthersem.edu/stewardship

Online Stewardship newsletter and other resources

Books that Might Be Helpful

[Creating Congregations of Generous People](#), Michael Durall

A very good book on the spiritual nature of financial discipleship. The last two chapters outline some practical steps to annual campaigns.

[Revolutionizing Christian Stewardship for the 21st Century: Lessons from Copernicus](#); Dan R. Dick

The book describes a viable alternative to a church being driven by structure and budget. The author calls us to reorient ourselves in relationship to God and God's church. He describes what may be considered a radical reorientation in thinking about Christian stewardship.

The Dancing Steward: Exploring Christian Stewardship Lifestyles; Christopher Levan
Great discussion starters. The end of each chapter or selection offers experiential learning suggestions as well as questions for discussion.

More Than Money: Portraits of Transformative Stewardship; Patrick H. McNamara; Alban Institute
Publication
Glimpses of churches where "it works" and the common themes among this diverse group

The Price of Faith: Exploring our Choices about Money and Wealth Cross, Marie T.
A very good ten session study course with instructions on how to use the material in the book.

Graceful Living: Your Faith, Values, and Money in Changing Times Dunham, Laura *Reading this book is easy and enjoyable—and you'll learn something, too! It provides a good context for talking about money and practical steps for addressing people's needs at various life stages.*

At Ease: discussing money and values in small groups Ronsvalle, John & Sylvia
This book contains three levels of questions that bring a small group every deeper into the subject of money, values and faith. Good background information and instructions as to how to use the book with a small group.

Ministry and Money: A Practical Guide for Pastors Janet T. Jamieson and Philip D. Jamieson
Meant as a text book for seminary students it is one of the only practical resources that gives a very good biblical, historical and theological perspective on money.

Not Your Parents' Offering Plate: A New Vision for Financial Stewardship Clif Christopher
Written with the needs of pastors and stewardship teams in mind providing immediate, practical guidance to all who seek to help God's people be better stewards of their resources.

Whose Offering Plate Is It?: New Strategies for Financial Stewardship Clif Christopher
Offers simple, strategic advice on such difficult questions as: "Exactly how do I go about gaining access to the donor records when my church has prohibited it for a hundred years?" "How do I explain a meeting with just those who are strong givers without alienating those who are not?" "How can we advocate online giving without encouraging some to abuse their credit cards?" "What should letters to different giving constituencies look like?"

Stewardship for Vital Congregations Anthony B. Robinson
Practical tools informed by faith's convictions and Scripture's insight. Each chapter includes strategies, questions for further reflection, discussion and action.

For Further Reading and Background

Plain Talk about Churches and Money; Dean Hoge, et. al

This book is the result of listening to what pastors and congregation members say and think about money. It explodes myths, reveals facts and explores out motivations for giving. A helpful and very readable book. Excellent for pastors and committee members to read and discuss.

Behind the Stain Glass Windows: Money Dynamics in the Church; John and Sylvia Ronsvale

This book is written by nationally recognized leaders in the field of giving to the church in the United States. Great background.

Sharing Possessions: Mandate and Symbol of Faith Johnson, Luke T.

This is a great book! It is detailed but was very helpful to me. Don't read this first... Written almost thirty years ago it is out of print. Will take some looking...

Faith's Freedom: A Classic Spirituality for Contemporary Christians Johnson, Luke T.,

Besides other great stuff this one has a chapter on financial discipleship

Passing the Plate Christian Smith & Michael Emerson

Written 2008 this book gives recent statistics and trends that are helpful in understanding who we are as givers.

Growing Givers Hearts: Treating Fundraising as Ministry; Thomas H. Jeavons & Rebekah Burch Basinger

Looking at the whole issue from the funds development standpoint. Many themes are the same as other thinkers in this area today, however, the first I have seen to tackle what it means to be in Christian funds development. Many good thoughts on the giver and faith and money issues.

Generous Saints: Congregations Rethinking Ethics and Money, James Hudnut-Beumler, Alban Institute Publication

This book is meant to be used by congregational leaders to help put our economic challenges in a larger theological perspective. This book deals in a realistic way with many money issues that confront congregations today.