

# The Celebrate Generosity Stewardship Program

By  
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## ***The Celebrate Generosity Stewardship Program***

*By Eugene Grimm*

**Theme Scripture: 1 Cor. 16:1-4**

*Now concerning the contribution for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as you may prosper, so that contributions need not be made when I come. And when I arrive, I will send those whom you accredit by letter to carry your gift to Jerusalem. If it seems advisable that I should go also, they will accompany me.*

***Celebrate Generosity*** is a four-week program designed to help members discover the joys of giving through growth in giving. The primary reason for an annual financial response program is spiritual growth. Congregations conduct stewardship programs for a variety of reasons. For many, the bottom line in a stewardship program is more money. For others, the primary reason is to share the vision for mission of the congregational leadership. While these are usually outcomes of conducting a program, they are secondary. The best reason for a financial stewardship program is spiritual growth. People find that as they discover the joy of giving, they also grow spiritually.

Goals:

***Celebrate Generosity*** is designed to help people grow spiritually through:

- Growth in giving, including the prayerful deliberate growth toward or beyond a tithe.
- Growth in their understanding of stewardship.
- Growth in joyful celebration of the mission and ministry of their congregation.
- Discovery of a simple yet deliberate way to grow that nearly everyone can adopt.
- Measuring the increase accurately.

***Celebrate Generosity*** acknowledges that our God is a God of abundance. God provides sufficient resources to accomplish the entire mission and ministry our Lord calls us to do. Recall the words of St. Paul, “...*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 work*” (2 Cor. 9:8).

Christian stewardship involves vision. Members find greater joy in giving through a church when they know where it’s going and how it serves others. Congregational prosperity is the manifestation of big, exciting, service-oriented goals. While it is not possible to share your entire vision in a short financial response program (full disclosure of mission and ministry belongs in your year-round stewardship education and mission interpretation), you can provide snippets about your vision. These can be addressed by the pastor in sermons or by those sharing stewardship talks.

Share your vision, never your fears. In Luke 12:32, we see both an admonition not to fear and a promise of the Kingdom. “*Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure, to give you the kingdom.*” Whining never inspires anyone to give joyfully. Yes, members may sometimes dig a little deeper for a short time, but without a vision, it will wane. Worse yet, it creates a sense of desperation or doom about the ministry of the congregation. Whining is often

an inadvertent attempt to use guilt. Guilt doesn't work; people don't give from a sense of guilt. People do give from a sense of joy and excitement. Share your vision! Share your joy!

Christian discipleship involves growth—and discipleship includes stewardship. We encourage our members to grow in all spiritual disciplines. We ask people to pray more, read scripture more, and grow in grace and knowledge of the truth. Growth in giving by celebrating and practicing generosity is one way this is enabled.

For many years, churches have encouraged members to grow in their giving by one percent of their income. Part of that challenge was also for the congregation to increase its mission support outside the congregation by one percent. Indeed, this worked very well for some members. Others, however, may have accepted the challenge for a year or so, but then discontinued their growth.

Growing by one percent of one's income is still a good idea, however, *Celebrate Generosity* offers an additional invitation. *Celebrate Generosity* invites our members to grow by one dollar each week. Thus, if your current offering is \$50.00, this challenge encourages you to give \$51 next week, \$52 the following week, growing until you reach a tithe or whatever goal you feel God is calling you to give. A tithe is not a ceiling. One does not have to stop growing at ten percent of income.

Most of us don't miss a buck! A buck is a Diet Coke, a small bottle of water, or a cup of coffee, We drop a buck with little consideration almost every day...and never miss it. The "Grow a Buck" Challenge is a challenge to *Celebrate Generosity*. Growing a buck not only allows most members to reach a tithe much more quickly than by using the one percent of income per year, it has had a strong track record in helping congregations eradicate income deficits.

In order to maximize your results, it is important to have a special catered *Celebrate Generosity* Luncheon on *Celebrate Generosity* Sunday. It is a given that many congregations experience declines in attendance on a stewardship Sunday. One way to avoid this is to hold a special catered luncheon. When people commit to participate in a catered lunch, they most likely will be present unless special circumstances such as illness arise. (See [Tools C](#) for further instructions on the *Celebrate Generosity* Luncheon.)

The *Celebrate Generosity Luncheon* is a good time to announce the results of your program. By following the simple guidelines in [Tools B](#), you will be able to announce your projected increase by the end of the luncheon.

***Note to congregational leaders:***

Please remember as your congregational members celebrate God's abundance through their giving, it is crucial that your congregation set an example. Leaders lead! Therefore we invite you to increase your congregation's support to the larger mission of the Body of Christ. We urge you to lead by setting a larger goal for Mission Support (Benevolence) beyond the congregation, both to your Church body, and for increased mission and service to your local community. ***An Action Possibility:*** Increase your congregation's Mission Support by whatever percentage your members increase their giving. Thus, if congregational giving grows by twenty percent, we invite you to increase your Mission Support by twenty percent. Be sure the whole congregation is aware of this.

## Job Descriptions

### Pastor

Stewardship is directly related to pastoral leadership. When pastors take an active role in the stewardship ministry, people grow spiritually and better giving results. The pastor should therefore be present and involved with all the meetings of the *Celebrate Generosity* Leadership Team. The pastor preaches on the theme of the day. These should not be “*honorable mention*” sermons, but *full* stewardship sermons.

### The Guest Leader

The guest leader will help strengthen the program in a number of ways.

- Help committee members understand the sequence and purpose of each aspect of the program in a meeting six to eight weeks prior to the program with the Celebrate Generosity Leadership Team and your Guest Leader.
- Assist the leadership to inspire a larger than average attendance (sometimes stewardship Sundays are poorly attended) by coordinating contacts for those who have not made reservations for the Luncheon or Brunches on Celebrate Generosity Sunday.
- Preach on the final Sunday and receiving the estimate of giving cards. Be sure to choose a guest leader who is comfortable asking members to grow in giving. See “Suggestions for Receiving Estimates of Giving in [Tools A](#).”

### General Chair

The general chairperson is the guardian of the timeline. S/he will contact every person involved with the program to be certain that everything is happening on schedule.

### The Prayer Chair

A stewardship program without prayer is like a Christian Church without Jesus Christ. The prayer chair performs the vital task of inviting the congregation to pray about its mission and ministry. About six weeks before *Celebrate Generosity* Sunday, the prayer chair sends a letter to the congregation informing them of the program and asking them to keep the stewardship ministry in their prayers. The letter asks for volunteers from the congregation to remember the *Celebrate Generosity* program in daily prayer. The prayer chair then begins actively recruiting members to pray by phoning members and asking them to pray regularly for the program. Ask regular prayer groups in your congregation to pray for the *Celebrate Generosity*. Include a note and insert in each weekly bulletin to assist people in signing up. Send notes to those who are home bound, inviting their participation. It may be a cliché, but it’s true—prayer changes things! The prayer chair should also arrange for opening and closing prayer at all Leadership Team meetings. See [Tools D](#) for a sample Prayer Chair letter.

### Person for Stewardship Talk #1, 2, 3, and 4

A lay member of the congregation shares these talks during each of the weeks of the program. Do not stress the need of the church for money. Discuss instead that an important part of our faith is the need to give and the joy of giving. See further guidelines in the Timeline.

### The Financial Secretary

The financial secretary (or the person who records the giving in the congregation) does the final

tally on *Celebrate Generosity* Sunday. Since most congregations regard this information as confidential, anyone assisting should also be involved in the financial ministry of the congregation. Instructions for this tally are in [Tools B](#).

## Sermon/Worship Themes

### ***Week One—Giving is an Act of Worship.***

**Key verse:** “*On the first day of the week, each of you is to set something aside and store it up, as you may prosper, so that offerings need not be made when I come*” (1 Cor. 16:2).

On the first day of the week...giving is an act of worship. On the first day of the week, celebrate the generosity of God by being generous. On the first day of the week, when you celebrate the Christian Sabbath, give

- For the sake of others
- For the sake of Christ’s church
  - The Body of Christ,
  - For ministry beyond the doors.
- For the your own sake:
  - The giver needs to give.
- In order to demonstrate our trust:
  - The first day of the week has often been called the Christian Sabbath.
  - Sabbath means that we trust God to provide.
  - Example: Collection of manna in the wilderness is an example of trust. They trusted God and collected only enough for the day. Those who over-gathered found theirs spoiled.

**Other Lessons to consider using:** (Remember: the lectionary was made for us, not us for the lectionary.) Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 2 Cor. 8:7; Romans 12:2; Matthew 2:1-12; Mark 12:41-44

Be sure to emphasize the role of prayer in decisions about giving.

We also refer the user to **Dr. Mark Allen Powell’s** book, ***Giving to God: The Bible’s Good News about a Generous Life*** (Eerdmans’s Publishing House, 2006). This book is a wonderful source to help you prepare for this first weekend.

Part One discusses Belonging to God. The three topics are 1) An Act of Worship, 2) An Expression of Faith, and 3) A Spiritual Discipline.

Part Two: Our Duty and Delight. The four topics covered in Part Two include:

Faithful Living.

Faithful Giving

Support and Sacrifice

How Much?

### ***Week Two—Giving is Systematic***

**Key verse:** “*On the first day of the week, each of you is to set something aside and store it up, as you may prosper, so that offerings need not be made when I come*” (1 Cor. 16:2). In St Paul’s

day, most people were paid on a day-by-day basis. Since Sunday worship had already begun by the time of Paul's writing, "on the first day of the week" is one way of saying, when the Body comes together, give.

- Give regularly...give systematically, proactively (2 Cor. 9:7)
- Weekly giving helps reaffirm that our giving is an offering to God
- Giving regularly is good for us
- Giving regularly is good for your church

**Note:**

For Lutherans, we highly recommend "Simply Giving," an automatic withdrawal program produced by Thrivent Financial Services. If your congregation has not considered using it, we encourage you to check it out at [www.thrivent.com/](http://www.thrivent.com/). For other denominations, check with your church body to see if an automatic withdrawal program is available.

Be sure to emphasize the role of prayer in decisions about giving.

**Other Lessons to consider using:**

1 John 4:1-19; James 1:17-18; Matthew 6:25-33 (Systematic stewardship is about trusting God.)

***Week Three—Giving is in Proportion to Income.***

*"On the first day of the week, each of you is to set something aside and store it up, as you may prosper, so that offerings need not be made when I come" (1 Cor. 16:2).*

Give according to your blessings. Give as God has given to you. Give trusting God to provide. Paul doesn't list what proportion should be given, but the proportion most commonly discussed throughout scripture is the tithe. A tithe is ten percent of one's income.

Tithing is a blessing. It is rare to find the person who claims **not** to believe in tithing, who tithes. Nowhere does scripture tell us that we are second-class Christians if we don't tithe. Those who tithe, however, constantly witness to the blessing they receive. Some of us are so blessed that a tithe could hardly be considered sacrificial. Perhaps if that is the case, such people should consider going beyond a tithe, or even double-tithing.

Giving in proportion to income also suggests that giving should be a priority in our life. The real joy of giving begins when we make giving a priority. If I really believe that the Church is the Body of Christ, then giving to my church will rank higher than giving to charitable organizations.

The Church of Jesus Christ is not just a charity.

Be sure to emphasize the role of prayer in decisions about giving.

**Other Lessons to consider using:**

Exodus 36:1-7—The people of Israel gave so much for the Tabernacle, Moses had to tell them to stop giving

Deut. 14:22-29—Set apart your tithe; celebrate.

I Timothy 6:17-19—Vs. 17, God’s abundance is “for your enjoyment.”

### ***Week Four—Plan Your Giving in Advance***

*“On the first day of the week, each of you is to set something aside and store it up, as you may prosper, so that contributions need not be made when I come” (1 Cor. 16:2).*

Paul knew that if people waited to the last minute to set aside an offering for the saints of Judea, the gift would be much smaller than if they gathered the gift over a period of time. If they waited until he arrived, many would likely not be able to give at all. By giving weekly (systematically), in proportion to income, everyone would be able to give something and most would be able to give more.

It’s true. No scripture says, “Thou shalt surely fill out a commitment card annually.” However, just as the Corinthians were able to give more by giving in advance of Paul’s coming, we’re able to give more when we plan for it. While prayer is the primary way to plan our giving, a commitment card is another way. It helps us be intentional about our giving rather than merely giving whatever is left over. Giving becomes a conscious decision rather than an occasional reflex to the passing of an offering plate.

Studies have shown that members that fill out an estimate of giving card give twice as much as those who don’t. People who fill out an estimate of giving based on a percentage of income, give three times as much as those who don’t. Intentional giving helps us grow in our giving. And the more we grow, the more we discover the joy.

Again, be sure to emphasize the role of prayer in decisions about giving.

## Timeline

**Eight weeks before *Celebrate Generosity Sunday*** the leadership team meets with the Guest Leader to work through the timeline and clarify the roles of each member of the team. Committee personnel are as follows (Write the name and phone number of each person on the line and fill in The Celebrate Generosity Flow Chart in [Tools E](#)):

_____	Pastor
_____	Guest Leader
_____	General Chairperson
_____	Prayer Chair
_____	Person to arrange for the caterer and make contacts with the restaurant for the Sunday evening before Celebrate Generosity Sunday.
_____	Person to arrange the dinner the week before Celebrate Generosity Sunday
_____	Person to share Stewardship Talk #1
_____	Person to share Stewardship Talk #2
_____	Person to share Stewardship Talk #3
_____	Person to share Stewardship Talk #4
_____	Financial Secretary (the one who records weekly giving records) to prepare for final tally. See <a href="#">Tools B</a> for further instructions.

**Seven weeks before *Celebrate Generosity Sunday***, the Prayer Chair sends a letter to the members announcing the ***Celebrate Generosity Stewardship Program*** and invites members to join her/him daily in asking that God lead in members' decisions during the coming few weeks. Include an "It's Coming" type letter that explains the direction of our program and the desire that people will not only celebrate generosity, but will experience a significant growth spiritually.

**Seven weeks prior to the *Celebrate Generosity Sunday***, the Prayer Chair recruits a team to commit to daily prayer. These should be faithful members of the congregation that have set examples in both their leadership and giving.

**Six weeks before *Celebrate Generosity Sunday***, the Prayer Chair sends an E-mail update to all members for whom you have E-mail addresses and again asks for prayer team members to make phone calls on members. See [Tools D](#) for samples.

**Three Sundays before *Celebrate Generosity* Sunday**, the theme of the worship service and the sermon is “*Giving is an Act of Worship.*” Copy the bulletin insert “*Why Estimate Giving?*” from [Tools E](#) for the Church bulletin.

The first stewardship talk is shared. Perhaps the best time to share the talk is in the early part of the service, or whenever the pastor shares his/her greeting and announcements. It introduces the program to the members and invites them to prayerfully consider God’s call to giving.

Do not stress the need of the church for money. Discuss instead that an important part of our faith is the call to give and the joy of giving. The outline of the talk includes:

- A brief introduction to the ***Celebrate Generosity*** program. Include the fact that there will be a special catered ***Celebrate Generosity*** Luncheon following services. We will receive reservations beginning next Sunday.
- Please remember, the primary reason for the talk is a personal witness about the importance of giving as an act of worship in his/her own life.
- Remind members of the letter from the prayer chair inviting them to pray for ***Celebrate Generosity*** and for God’s guidance in their own giving.
- Point out that giving is an act of worship and an important part of our whole Christian life.
- The following are some thoughts that may also be included:
  - Why do you suppose we put the offering where we do in our worship service?
  - Have you noticed? It's not a commercial; it's not an intermission. It's part of our worship.
  - We start our service with confession and forgiveness and the hymn of praise.
  - We continue with the reading of the word, the preaching of the word and the confession of faith in the word (the Creed).
  - After all that comes the offering. The offering is an act of worship. It's our first opportunity to respond to all that's gone before it. It's our chance to personally thank God for all our blessings.
  - The offering is both a congregational act of worship and an individual act of worship.
  - Of course, we participate all the way through the service so all of it is personal.
  - Maybe the thing that makes the offering a bit more personal to me is that it's the chance to put my money where my mouth is.
  - 2 Cor. 8:24 reminds us that love and giving go together. Paul says it flatly. “Giving is proof of the genuineness of our love.” He’s kind of saying, “You say you love Jesus—okay, prove it. Prove it by your giving.”
  - God has richly blessed us with “stuff”. In our country, we have so much stuff we sometimes even build bigger houses so we can put our stuff in them. Now, I'm not trying to be critical; or suggest that everyone should become monks. I'm merely stating a fact. We all have a lot of stuff. There's nothing wrong with having stuff, as long as we remember to celebrate it as the gift of God...and use it to his glory. The offering is a chance to ***celebrate God’s generosity with our own generosity.***
  - Share a personal witness about:
    - Your joy in tithing.
    - Your discovery of a new way to give and how fast it helps you reach a tithe,
    - Or, You give as a personal response to what God has already given you in Christ as well as in things.

**On Monday**, a letter from the *Celebrate Generosity* Committee Chairperson (see [Tools D](#)) is mailed. This letter is “built-in redundancy” and shares much the same information as the stewardship talk the day before. Not all members, indeed, not even all active members, will hear the talk, so it’s important to share the information in more ways than one.

**Two Sundays before *Celebrate Generosity* Sunday** the theme of the worship service and the sermon is “*Giving is Systematic.*” Include the bulletin insert, “Am I tithing yet?” ([Tools E.](#))

The second stewardship talk is shared. Do not stress the need of the church for money. Discuss instead that an important part of our faith is the need to give and the joy of giving—see talk Number One. The outline of the talk includes:

- Our lesson text says, “On the first day of the week, each of you is to set something aside and store it up....” In Paul’s day, most people were day laborers, so it was natural that giving systematically meant giving weekly. We’re aware that in today’s world, people receive their income in many ways.
- This morning, I’d like to talk not just about systematic giving, but systematic growing. Have you every considered a buck? If you handed a beggar a dollar (a buck), would you consider it an act of generosity, or just a way to get on with what you were doing? The beggar might or might not see it as generous, but would it be real generosity? How many dollars do you normally have in your purse or wallet? Are you prepared to meet up with a beggar?
- When I consider a dollar, I think of the number of things I buy each week for a dollar that I hardly ever consider. If I buy a cup of coffee, or a Diet Coke, I may drop a buck or more and think nothing of it.
- What we’re asking our members to do during the coming year is prayerfully consider growing by a dollar a week...that’s one dollar every week. So, if you’re currently giving \$50.00, then next week you’d give \$51.00, the following week \$52.00, and so on until you reach a tithe, or for as long as you feel the Lord is calling you to grow.
- Scripture invites us to give systematically. One reality of our modern church is that many members often give only when they attend church rather than as they receive their income. It doesn’t concern us whether you write a check (or give through automatic withdrawal) every week, every two weeks, or once a month. What we’d like to ask you to do is break it down to weekly giving. If you give every two weeks, then we’re inviting you to grow by two dollars.
- Ask members to note the “Am I Tithing Yet?” bulletin insert.
- Share a personal witness about the importance of worshipful, systematic giving for you.
- Ask ushers to pass out *Celebrate Generosity* Luncheon reservation slips. While they’re passing them out, say, “Our *Celebrate Generosity* stewardship speaker last week mentioned there would be a special catered luncheon on *Celebrate Generosity* Sunday. Because this luncheon will be catered, we need to inform the caterer (name the caterer even if another church) of a precise count. For this reason we’re asking that everyone fill out one of the slips that are being passed out. If families are not sitting together (for example, one of you is in the choir) then each of you should feel free to fill one out. We’ll remove duplications. In a moment, the ushers will pick up the cards. If your circumstances change this week, you may still change your reservation next Sunday, but we’re asking you to go ahead and fill one out this morning. Please note that **we’re going to try to**

**contact every member for whom we do not have a card in person, so please, help us cut down on our work.** Fill one out and pass it to the center isle.”

**On Monday**, a letter is mailed from the congregational president (governing board chair), inviting members to grow a dollar each week. Again, this is “built-in redundancy” from the talk on Sunday. (See [Tools D](#)).

This is also a good time to share a prayer update. Send an E-mail to the congregation saying, “We have \_\_\_\_\_ members who have agreed to serve on our prayer committee so far. We hope that this week, you’ll join them. Wouldn’t it be great if half or more of our congregation participates in prayer daily for our *Celebrate Generosity* program and especially that our church’s vision may attract many others to the exciting ministry we have here at \_\_\_\_\_.

**Also on Monday**, a second letter is sent from the *Celebrate Generosity* chairperson to the members of the Church Council (Governing Board), the *Celebrate Generosity* committee and their spouses inviting them to a dinner the following Sunday evening. Note that members will be asked to contact all active members who have not made a reservation for the *Celebrate Generosity* brunch or lunch. If it seems likely that more than three to five contacts will be necessary, invite additional leaders to attend. These may be members who are retired and can call on other retired persons during the daylight hours. Other committees such as the Witness committee may be invited to participate. (See [Tools D](#).)

### **One Sunday before Celebrate Generosity Sunday**

The theme of the worship service and sermon is “Giving is Proportionate to Income.” Include the bulletin insert from [Tools E](#), “Celebrate Generosity by Growing One Percent of Income.”

A third stewardship talk is shared. Do not stress the need of the church for money. Discuss instead that an important part of our faith is the need to give and the joy of giving.

An outline for the talk includes:

- On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as you may prosper. “As you may prosper” is often said, “in proportion to what one has earned.”
- What portion should we give? Well, the Bible has a great suggestion. Scripture calls us to give a tithe (ten percent) of our income. In fact, in most scripture passages one reads about first fruits giving, it also talks about the tithe.
- I believe in the ministry of this church, as do we all. I/we plan to take a step up in my/our giving this year. I’d like to invite you, during this coming week, to pray with me about this, and make your commitment to grow.
- However, you choose to grow, whether you grow a buck a week, or a percent of income, or by a flat dollar amount, seek the Lord’s guidance. If it’s God’s will, you’ll find a way.
- We’ve been talking about the “buck a week” growth for the past couple of weeks. Let me say a few words about growing one percent.
- Our invitation is to prayerfully consider growing by a buck a week, or one percent of your annual income per year.
- Take a look at the bulletin insert for this week, *Celebrate Generosity* by Growing a Percent of Income.
- Invite members to note the \$1000 a week income line. (This is a nice round number.) Ask

them to note that if their income is \$1000 per week, and they are giving \$100 per week, they're giving ten percent (a tithe). If their giving is \$50.00 per week, they're giving five percent. If they are giving \$10.00 per week, they're giving one percent. What we'd like to invite our members to do this week is prayerfully consider growing by "a buck a week" or by one percent of their annual income.

- Share a personal witness.
- Ask ushers to pass out ***Celebrate Generosity*** Luncheon reservation slips. (See [Tools C.](#)) While they're passing them out, say, "You've no doubt heard there will be a special catered luncheon on ***Celebrate Generosity*** Sunday. Because this luncheon *will be* catered, we need to inform the caterer (name the caterer even if another church) of a precise count. For this reason we're asking that everyone fill out one of the slips that are being passed out. If families are not sitting together (for example, one of you is in the choir) then each of you should feel free to fill one out. We'll remove duplications. In a moment, the ushers will pick up the cards. If your circumstances change this week, you may still change your reservation next Sunday, but we're asking you to go ahead and fill one out this morning. **Please know that we're going to try to contact every member for whom we do not have a card**, so please, help us cut down on our work. Fill one out and pass it to the center isle."

**On Sunday evening**, the Guest Leader meets with the Church Council (Governing Board), the *Celebrate Generosity* Committee and their spouses for dinner. This meeting is best held at a restaurant. If members prefer, each may cover their own costs. The guest leader shares a brief inspirational talk highlighting the importance of contacting every active member who has not made a reservation for the *Celebrate Generosity* brunch/luncheon. Keep the number of contacts to no more than three to five families. If it seems that more visits will be necessary, invite other leaders to the Leadership Dinner.

#### **In Preparation, print a set of mailing labels.**

- Mark on the labels the number in each family who will attend the brunch or luncheon. If there are multiples services, include which service and brunch or lunch they will attend.
- Tear off labels for those who indicated they will be present and place it on sheet marked "Yes" along with along with the number of family members attending. Count the number attending.
- Tear off labels for those who indicated they will **NOT** be present and place on another sheet labeled "no".
- Determine from those remaining who, if any, should be removed for pastoral reasons (examples might be those who are non-resident members, those who are homebound, or those who are inactive).
- Remove the remaining names and place them on the reservation slips/cards to be contacted by those at the dinner one week before Consecration Sunday on Sunday or Monday evening.

**On Monday**, the pastor sends another letter inviting the members as they have prospered by growing a buck or by a percentage of income. Leaders lead. The pastor is urged to set the example in giving, and to share his/her witness to that growth. A "Won't you join me in growing a buck?" will be much more effective than a "Won't you grow?" The former is a witness; the latter can sound a bit like begging. (See [Tools D.](#))

**On Monday through Wednesday**, leaders make personal visits on members who have not made a reservation for the *Celebrate Generosity* brunch or luncheon. Please note that merely contacting members by phone will reduce the number of positive responses. When members are contacted by phone, the number of reservations typically grows by ten to twenty percent. When they are contacted in person, the reservations typically increase by forty to sixty percent. The more people present on *Celebrate Generosity* Sunday, the greater the increase will be.

***Celebrate Generosity* Sunday is just that.** It's a *celebration* of God's generosity, and of the generosity of God's people. This should be a festive and inspirational service. Commitment cards are received at the close of the worship service. (See "Suggestions for Receiving Estimates of Giving—[Tools A.](#)") A walk to the altar is recommended. However, if the church's altar requires steps that are difficult for some, a stand with an offering plate at the foot of the stairs is acceptable. People are invited to go directly there after the walk to the altar. A final hymn may be placed just *before* the commitment time and benediction rather than *after* as is the custom in many congregations. The catered celebration luncheon avoids putting a burden on the church's cooks, and allows for reservations to be received the two weeks **before *Celebrate Generosity* Sunday**. This almost guarantees a strong attendance on *Celebrate Generosity* Sunday, especially if church leaders follow-up with a drop-by visit to those who have not made reservations to ask if they can attend.

**On Monday**, a follow-up letter is mailed to all who did not make an estimate of giving (or did not indicate they declined to do so). The letter should include a personalized commitment card. Personalizing the card greatly increases the return rate.

**On Monday**, the following week, a personalized thank you letter is mailed. The two most important words in our stewardship vocabulary are "thank you." With the thank you letter, share what members indicated they would give. This letter should come from the financial secretary and pastor. It is good to include a mailing label that can be placed inside the offering envelope box lid. It will read,

**"My estimate of giving for the coming year includes:**

\_\_\_\_\_ growing by a dollar a week until I reach  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ growing by one percent of income by giving  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ a week/month/year

\_\_\_\_\_ growing by giving \$ \_\_\_\_\_

If someone other than the financial secretary sends this letter, include a P.S. "The financial secretary has appended to my thank you letter a mailing label that contains the amount we understanding that you are planning to give. Please stick this inside the lid of your offering box as a constant reminder. If we have made an error, please inform the financial secretary at phone number \_\_\_\_\_."

## *Tools A*

### *Suggestions for Receiving the Estimates of Giving*

I'd like to invite the ushers to start passing out the commitment cards while I speak. After you receive yours, would you please hold it for a moment while I say a few words about them? First of all, if you're a visitor this morning, please don't be uncomfortable. This is something we're doing as a part of our ***Celebrate Generosity Stewardship Program***. However, I would invite you to think about how you plan your giving. That's a question that all Christians should prayerfully consider at least once a year. I'd also like to invite you to stay after our service for our ***Celebrate Generosity*** brunch/luncheon.

Also, if you're a member, I don't want you to be uncomfortable. We're well aware there are faithful members throughout the church who are uncomfortable with estimates. If you're one of these, please follow your conscience. Personally, I find the estimate of giving very helpful. It helps remind me to be intentional about my giving. It reminds me that before filling it out, I should pray, asking God to guide my giving and my growth in giving.

Take a look at the commitment card with me. "Because God is a God who gives abundantly, and because I want to be a faithful steward, I will take a step up in my giving." Notice there are three ways to grow. The first is the dollar a week growth we've been talking about for the past few weeks. (Read)

**I plan to grow toward or beyond a tithe by growing \$1.00 every week until I reach \$\_\_\_\_\_ per week. My starting point will be \$\_\_\_\_\_ for next week's offering. Each week, I will add \$1.00 to the previous week's giving**

You'll see there are three options. Please mark one or more that applies

- \_\_\_\_\_ **for the next year.**  
 \_\_\_\_\_ **until I reach \$\_\_\_\_\_ per week.**  
 \_\_\_\_\_ **until I reach a tithe of my income or beyond.**  
 \_\_\_\_\_ **until I move beyond a tithe to \_\_\_\_\_ percent of my income.**

The second option is to grow by one percent of income:

**I plan to grow toward or beyond a tithe by growing one percent of my income per year. My first step, beginning next Sunday, will be \$\_\_\_\_\_ per week.**

The third is to grow by whatever amount you have prayerfully decided.

**I plan to grow toward or beyond a tithe by giving \$\_\_\_\_\_ per week.**

At the bottom, we simply ask you to print your name. Folks, this estimate is not a contract with God, or a contract with \_\_\_\_\_ Church. This is an estimate of giving based on what you know right now about your income. If your circumstances change, we assume so will your giving.

In a moment, after a word of prayer and the benediction, I'm going to ask you to bring your cards forward and place them on the altar. In the Old Testament, the altar was a place of sacrifice.

Since the New Testament, we no longer sacrifice on the altar because Christ was our sacrifice once and for all time. Even so, I'd like to invite you to place your card, which represents your sacrificial giving on the altar. *(If the altar is up too many steps for older members, it may be necessary to revise a bit and place a small table at the bottom of the steps. Do not have the ushers let people out row by row. This causes undue discomfort for anyone unwilling to fill out a card. Instead, invite them to come forward as they're ready.)*

Prayer:

- Ask God to bless each gift and each giver.
- Offer thanks for the joy of giving.
- If the luncheon is held at the church (highly recommended), you may include a table prayer so people may start through the line when they arrive in the fellowship area.

Benediction

You may come forward as your ready. (Invite everyone to the luncheon.) We invite you then to go straight to the fellowship area and start through the line. The tally will be done during the luncheon, and we'll make every attempt to announce the results before you all leave..



## EXPLANATION OF WORKSHEET

How successful was your program? Did it work? Determining the success of a stewardship program goes a bit beyond whether it felt good (or succeeded in offending no one). The *Gospel* of stewardship never offends people of God. Whether to repeat a program a second or third year will in part be determined by the more empirical results. Certainly you want to know the subjective side—did our people grow spiritually as a result of using the program? How did we grow? Just as certainly, you want to know the more objective results—did this program result in increased giving by our members, and by how much?

It is also much easier to *Celebrate Generosity* if one can announce at the *Celebrate Generosity Luncheon* what financial results are anticipated.

1. Approximately two weeks before *Celebrate Generosity* Sunday, the Financial Secretary should have completed the preliminary data necessary on the above sheet. Be sure to tally the total giving on the last sheet. If you prefer to use a computer spreadsheet, bring the total down on columns two and three.
2. First, fill in the family names in alphabetical order. Next, complete columns three and four using actual giving records (not pledges) for the past twelve months. ***It is important that the information be used for the last twelve months, rather than simply going back to last year's giving records. This system will be more up to date. It is also important that the figures used reflect the actual giving to ongoing ministry concerns of the congregation, and that it EXCLUDES SPECIAL PASS-THROUGH receipts (extra budgetary giving that comes in and turns right around such as Disaster Relief or World Hunger.)***
3. On *Celebrate Generosity* Sunday, the Financial Secretary, and assistants (persons privy to giving records) should tally column 4 (members' estimates of giving per week next year. When people agree to grow by a buck a week, take the average for the time they agree to grow. That will be the average growth per week. For example, if members agree to grow for the next year (fifty-two weeks), you would calculate that they intend to grow by an average of \$26.50 per week. See Chart in [Tools E](#).
4. After recording all incoming estimates of giving, go back through the list to those lines with no figure in column four. Place in column 5 the figures in column 3 (**ONLY** for those who have a blank line in column 4.) It is easier if one person reads the commitment card, and enters the growth amount into a calculator. Another adds the number to the fourth column. After entering all new estimates of giving, the person who has entered the numbers on the tally sheet then reads the numbers in column three where no estimate of giving was made. Numbers can be physically added to column five after people have responded to the follow-up letter.
5. Total Columns 4 and 5 individually, and then add them together.
6. Subtract the total of column 3 from the combined columns 4 and 5.
7. Divide the difference by the total of column 3 for the percentage of increase anticipated in the coming year.

8. Fill in the final report on the next page and report to the Luncheon.
9. Be sure to calculate the **loose offering** and **other income** you received last year for inclusion in the final tally on lines three and four on the next page.
10. Fill out the *Celebrate Generosity Results* sheet on the following page and announce the results to those attending the *Celebrate Generosity Luncheon*.

## Celebrate Generosity Results

- \_\_\_\_\_ Number of giving units (couples or single persons) filling out estimates of giving for the next 12 months.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Number of giving units, filling out cards, who increased their commitment over the last twelve months.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Percentage of members giving who increased their commitment over last year's giving.
1. \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Total weekly commitment from those filling out cards today. (Column 4)
  2. \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Based on giving records of the past 12 months, this amount can be anticipated from those not present or filling out commitment cards. (Column 5).
  3. \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Loose offering received last year.
  4. \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Amount received annually from other sources: non-member giving; investments, rentals, etc.
  5. \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Grand Total weekly income anticipated for the next 12 months. (Add 1, 2, 3, and 4 above)
  6. \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Total annual income next 12 months (5 above times 52 weeks).

### ***Announcement***

We're pleased to announce the results of our ***Celebrate Generosity Stewardship Program***. Today a total of \_\_\_\_\_ giving units filled in Estimate of Giving cards. Of these, \_\_\_\_\_ have increased their estimate of giving over their last year's giving. This means, of those who estimated their giving, a total of \_\_\_\_\_ percent have indicated that they will grow in the coming year.

Total income of the congregation during the past 12 months was (5) \$ \_\_\_\_\_. Next year, our anticipated income is expected to be \$ \_\_\_\_\_, an increase of \$ \_\_\_\_\_. This is an overall increase of \_\_\_\_\_ percent.

## *Tools C*

### *The Celebrate Generosity Luncheon*

Many congregations have a history of poorer attendance on a stewardship commitment Sunday, unless special measures are taken. Attendance will be greatly enhanced on ***Celebrate Generosity*** Sunday if you hold a catered ***Celebrate Generosity Luncheon***. When people indicate that they will attend a catered meal, they usually do, unless special circumstances arise. When more people attend on ***Celebrate Generosity*** Sunday, your increase in giving will be higher. Follow-up can result in a few more percentage points, but a large attendance is a key to success. If your church has multiple services, have a light brunch after the earlier services, and a light lunch after the last service. If you have a Saturday night worship service, a light dinner or even a dessert is advised. Often, a neighboring congregation will be able to cater your luncheon less expensively than a catering service.

A “catered” meal is important. A potluck dinner may well result in better food and a better selection, but no commitment to attend is necessary. For the two weeks prior to ***Celebrate Generosity*** Sunday, invite members and friends (regular visitors) to fill out a reservation slip after the stewardship talk. Pass these slips out, and receive them after people have had an opportunity to fill them out. Do not ask members to put them in the offering plate. Inform people that you will be contacting all members who do not fill out a card the week before ***Celebrate Generosity*** Sunday. Remind them to be sure to put their name on the card even if they cannot attend. Ask them to make your work easier. If they don’t put their name on the slip, you won’t know they’ve turned in a response and will have to contact them.

On the Sunday night before ***Celebrate Generosity*** Sunday, gather the leaders of the congregation for a leadership dinner. This is best held at a local restaurant. The church may cover the cost of the meal, or if leaders have agreed, each may pay for their own. Ask them. Most leaders are glad to pay for their own dinner. Invite Church Council (Governing Board) members, ***Celebrate Generosity*** Committee members, Witness/Evangelism Committee members and others to attend. Retired members are often delighted to make visits.

Prepare the names of those who have not filled out reservations. An easy way to do this is to run a set of mailing labels. After you receive the reservations, place the number of people attending from each family on their label. For those that are unable to attend, place a “no” on their label. Peel off all non-resident members and homebound members. Place those that are left on ***Celebrate Generosity*** Luncheon reservation slips. At the leadership dinner, pass the slips out to leaders asking them to make a personal drop-by visit, to ask non-responders if they are able to attend. Place the number on the slip, and call it in to the church office or chairperson by Thursday evening.

Sample reservation slips:

***Celebrate Generosity Luncheon Reservation***  
 I/we plan to attend our ***Celebrate Generosity*** Luncheon on Sunday, (date). The number attending from our family \_\_\_\_\_

Will attend the luncheon following:  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Saturday night service  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Sunday \_\_\_\_\_ a.m. service  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Sunday \_\_\_\_\_ a.m. service  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Sunday \_\_\_\_\_ a.m. service

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Commitment to Prayer**

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, because I believe that prayer is a key to anything our church does, I will join the prayer team. I will pray daily for our Celebrate Generosity Stewardship Program. I will ask God to grant that our congregation will grow spiritually, and grow in income so that \_\_\_\_\_ (name) \_\_\_\_\_ Church may accomplish the mission our Lord is calling us to do. Further, I commit to pray about my own giving.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

***Tools D  
Letters  
Some letters written by Carrie Fulton  
and Eugene Grimm  
Prayer Letter***

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We have all heard the old cliché that prayer changes everything, and we are in need of people to pray.

You may have already heard that our Stewardship campaign this year is The *Celebrate Generosity Stewardship Program*. We are going to be celebrating all types of generosity during the weekend of (date). But we also want to be celebrating a successful Stewardship campaign.

We believe that the best way to have a successful campaign is to begin with and focus on prayer, and I am looking for volunteers to simply pray everyday for the campaign.

It doesn't cost anything, doesn't take much time and can even be done during everyday things like washing dishes, driving to work or walking the dog. If as a congregation we can each pray for this Stewardship campaign once per day we will be following 1 Thessalonians 5:17 and "pray without ceasing".

Why are we doing this? Because we truly want our congregation to follow what God is calling us to do when we all fill out our annual estimate of giving cards on the weekend of \_\_\_\_\_. We ask you to pray for guidance for the congregation towards fulfilling what God is calling each member to do so we can fulfill God's plans for our church and it's ministries for the coming year.

You will be called and asked to pray by a team of volunteers. If you are willing to help me make these calls as part of this team, please contact me at (E-Mail). The more volunteers I get the fewer calls each will have to make.

I will be praying for you and hope you join me in calling the congregation and praying for God's plans for our church!

Yours in Christ,

### ***E-Mail from Prayer Chair***

*Be sure to send E-mails from the church's computer where it will be far less likely to end up in a spam/junk mail folder.*

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am writing to you today as the Prayer Chair for \_\_\_\_\_'s Fall Stewardship emphasis, *The Celebrate Generosity Stewardship Program*. The key date to mark on your calendar now is the weekend of \_\_\_\_\_, when we will have our Celebrate Generosity weekend, culminating in a luncheon during which we will share the good news.

You may be asking, what is a prayer chair? I was asking the same thing just a short time ago. But as all of you know, **prayer changes things!** And in our Fall Stewardship campaign, we are going to ask you to help us by lifting up in prayer the Celebrate Generosity program, the volunteers working on the stewardship campaign, the stewards of our time and talents within \_\_\_\_\_, and all of us who take the time to give of ourselves and our blessings to the work of God. It will be my job to lead you in prayer.

I come to you today asking for volunteers to join me in prayer. If you are willing to join the prayer team, please fill out the response card below and drop it in the offering plate during the next service.

Serving in His name,

\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_ Yes, because I believe that prayer is a key to anything our church does, I will join the prayer team. I will pray daily for our Celebrate Generosity Stewardship Program. I will ask God to grant that our congregation will grow spiritually through:

- Growth in giving, including the prayerful deliberate growth toward or beyond a tithe
- Growth in our understanding of stewardship
- Growth in joyful celebration of the mission and ministry of our congregation
- Growth in income so that \_\_\_\_\_ Church may accomplish the entire mission our Lord is calling us to do.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

*Letter from Chairperson*

It's hard to believe it's fall again. Children are back in school, leaves will soon be changing, daylight hours will be shorter and the air will soon feel crisper. (Or, if your program is in the spring, "It's hard to believe, Easter will be soon upon us [or come and gone]. Daylight Savings Time is old news and the days are getting longer. It's also a time of year when things start to grow.)

Here at \_\_\_\_\_ Church, it is also Stewardship time and a time to grow in a different way. Instead of simply asking our members to give this year, we want to celebrate you! We want to celebrate each of you and how your generosity has blessed our congregation and our community.

Our program this year is entitled "***Celebrate Generosity***". It's a time to celebrate the generosity of God through our own generosity.

You have already received \_\_\_\_\_'s letter about the Celebrate Generosity prayer team. We've all heard about the power of prayer, and I truly believe that this is a key part of the program. It will ensure that we focus on God's will for our congregation and that as members are listening to God's call on our hearts.

I believe that a prayer team is critical this year in particular because we have just begun renewing our vision for our church. We want to make sure we are staying focused on what God wants our church to do and prayer is the best way to help that happen. I urge you to consider joining the Celebrate Generosity prayer team.

Another different event we'll be having this year is the Celebrate Generosity luncheon. It will be held on \_\_\_\_\_ and will be a true celebration of our generosity as a congregation. You will be reminded of \_\_\_\_\_'s ministries and how your contributions both of time and money have blessed others and honored God at the same time.

**The other key dates include:**

\_\_\_\_\_ – We will be passing out reservations to our Celebrate Generosity luncheon. Please take the time to respond so that we may plan accordingly.

\_\_\_\_\_ – You will receive Estimate of Giving Cards to be returned during a special ceremony during the following week's services. Please take time to truly pray after you receive your Estimate of Giving Card to hear what God is calling you to give this year.

Most of us say how blessed we feel to have what we have, and we say how much we love God. I know that God is calling you to do something, and I pray that each of you "should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7).

Serving in His Name,

*Letter from Stewardship Chairperson*

Dear Fellow Members of \_\_\_\_\_,

By now I am sure that you are aware that “Celebrate Generosity” is our stewardship theme this fall. I certainly agree with what name and name have shared about the importance of prayer and I believe with all of my heart that \_\_\_\_\_ is a strong, spirit filled church! I am writing to encourage you to consider what your estimate of giving will be for the coming year.

As was described during the worship service this past weekend, we are asking that people consider **growing** their estimates of giving by a “buck (one dollar) a week.” According to our financial secretary however, we have no record of an estimate of giving for your family. As a result, you might be thinking this “buck a week” thing doesn’t apply to you, but it can. If you have never filled out an estimate of giving before, I encourage you to think about what you’re giving now, and start there; then grow your giving by one dollar every week (above the previous week) for as long as you believe God is calling you to grow.

This may be difficult to reconcile for some of you. To help with that, I have a passage from Eugene Grimm’s book *Generous People* that was meaningful to me in this context—a passage that talks about acting into a new way of thinking.

“...No, it was what came next. You then said, ‘It is far easier for Christians to act our way into a new way of thinking than it is to think our way into a new way of acting.’ That blew my mind at first, but I wrote it down so I wouldn’t forget about it. At lunch, I commented to Ted that I always thought it was the other way around. We’ve always been taught that good theology and biblical understand lead to good actions. But you seemed to be saying that the other way works too.”

“That’s right, Karen. Our church does believe in the value of correct biblical interpretation. But if our actions are sound, they too can lead us to new levels of biblical awareness. I think that when it comes to Christian giving, our actions often will lead us to better understanding and commitment. A step of faith is worth a thousand thoughts.

“For example, some people commit themselves to Christ, and then as a part of that commitment, start to tithe. Often they even find that, for them, tithing becomes a minimum standard for giving; many grow beyond the tithe. This principle comes through in the Scripture, too—we are told to imitate Christ. Doing what Jesus did often leads us to think as Jesus thought.”

So, I am asking that you consider acting your way into a new way of thinking and joining the rest of the congregation in our attempt to “grow a buck” with our estimate of giving to \_\_\_\_\_. I hope that this may be a painless way to increase your giving. If we all increase our giving by a buck a week; we will have helped Christ lead our church to carry out the mission that he sets before us. Please prayerfully consider what blessings our Lord has given you this past year as you make your estimate of giving to \_\_\_\_\_ for the coming year. Thank you for your continued support through your prayers, your time and your gifts.

God’s peace to you,

*Letter from Church Council/Board President*

Dear Fellow Members of \_\_\_\_\_,

By now I am sure that you are aware that “*Celebrate Generosity*” is our stewardship theme this fall. I certainly agree with what \_\_\_\_\_ have shared about the importance of prayer and I believe with all of my heart that \_\_\_\_\_ is a strong, spirit filled church! I am writing to encourage you to consider what your estimate of giving will be for the coming year. As was described during the worship service this past weekend, we are asking that you consider growing your estimate of giving by a buck (one dollar) a week each week until you reach your generosity goal.

Some of you may be aware that I like my coffee and that Starbucks is one of my favorite stops. I think nothing of paying a \$1.55 for a tall brew of the day or \$3.00 for a mocha light Frappuccino. You may be wondering why I share this with you. Well, when I see all that God is calling us to do at \_\_\_\_\_, I can’t help but believe that one less Starbucks a week is well worth it!

I recently learned about where the term “buck” came from. In the early settlement of our country, a deerskin (buckskin) was worth about a dollar. People often did not convert their hides to cash until they got to a market that made it worthy to do so. When a merchant had something that cost a dollar, the patron might just hand over a buckskin...hence the term buck for a dollar was born! While I am not an economist, I think today’s dollar (or buck) equates to what I used to spend on penny candy as a child. I would love to ride my bike down to Miller’s Market in Portland, NY and get a small lunch bag’s worth of treats that cost me from 1 to 5 cents each. In turn, my own children have enjoyed going to the Dollar Stores to find all kinds of treasures as they have grown up.

So, I am asking that you consider taking an extra buck’s worth of your spending money each week to increase your weekly estimate of giving to \_\_\_\_\_. I believe that this is a painless way to increase your giving. If we all increase our giving by a buck a week each and every week over the previous week’s offering, we will have helped Christ lead our church to carry out the mission that he sets before us.

The included insert, provided by our financial secretary, is an aid to show you how your annual estimate of giving would change with an additional one dollar per week each week, two weeks and one month for 2007.

I would ask that you consider doing this until you have reached the tithe (ten percent of your income). Deuteronomy 14:22 states, “You shall truly tithe all the increase of your grain that the field produces year by year.” Please prayerfully consider what blessings our Lord has given you this past year as you make your estimate of giving to \_\_\_\_\_ for the coming year. Thank you for your continued support through your prayers, time and your gifts.

God’s peace to you,  
\_\_\_\_\_, Church Council President

*Letter from Pastor to be sent the Monday before Celebrate Generosity Sunday*

Dear friends in Christ,

God is good. We've heard that so often we tend to think of it as just a cliché, but it's true beyond our wildest ability to conceive. God has blessed us with an abundance that is unprecedented in history.

One of my favorite scriptures is found in 2 Cor 9:8, "And God is able to supply you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work" (NRSV). Yes, Paul makes what today might be considered a grammatical booboo. He uses a derivative of the word abundant twice in the same sentence. But I noticed something. The first time he refers to the abundance of God. God's abundance supplies us with abundance. (There I did it too.) Paul's second use is about our giving as God has given to us...abundantly...our abundance. (Okay English teachers, don't count the times I used it in one paragraph. This is after all, a letter about abundance.)

I'm truly grateful that our God has given us so much. Sometimes when the checkbook balance gets a bit low, we may tend to slip into a scarcity mode and think about what we don't have. I'm asking you today not to think about cash flow, but instead to contemplate how much God has blessed you.

Many of us have traveled in the so-called third world. One of the things reported by almost everyone I've ever talked to is that the poorest of the poor rarely grouse about their condition. Actually, they're most often deeply grateful for what they do have. In our country of abundance, in a community of abundance, we sometimes fall into the trap of comparing ourselves with others and thinking about what we don't have. Instead of thinking about what others might have that's more than what you have, think instead about those who have little and yet are grateful for it.

The stewardship **posture** of a Christian is one of **prayer, gratitude and generosity**. That's what I want to ask of you as we approach our Celebrate Generosity weekend. Will you

- Take a few moments each day to pray for our church, for each other, and for guidance in your giving?
- Take a few moments to say thank you to God for our Lord's generosity on the cross?
- Take a few moments to ask God to guide you in the way of generosity.

Bless you as you pray,

\_\_\_\_\_, Pastor

# Let's Celebrate Generosity!

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We had a wonderful turnout and excellent response for this year's Celebrate Generosity Weekend. While we have not received your estimate of giving card, we hope that you will have a chance to fill it out soon. (If you have just returned it, we thank you for doing so and appreciate your generosity)

The reason pledging is so important is because we need to know what resources we will have for our ministries next year. The Church Council (Governing Board) will be spending the next several weeks deciding on next year's budget. On a more personal level, I believe that regular giving is key to spiritual growth because it encourages you to think about your commitment to Christ and all He has done each time you give.

I urge you to say a simple prayer and ask God what He wants you to do this year. If God is calling you to fill out an estimate of giving, please fill out the estimate of giving card included with this letter and return it to the church office this week or place it in the offering plate on Sunday. We very much appreciate each and every response.

We also hope you will continue to pray for all the ministries of \_\_\_\_\_ and ask that you offer up a special prayer asking for guidance and discernment on behalf of the Church Council as they prepare a budget for \_\_\_\_\_ and determine how best to use the generous gifts you and others have committed to give as well as those members participating in the Grow a Buck program.

On behalf of the Stewardship Committee and all those who participate and are blessed by the ministries of \_\_\_\_\_, thank you for your consideration and thank you for your generosity.

Serving in Christ,

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Stewardship Committee Chair

***Tools E***  
***Celebrate Generosity***  
***Estimate of Giving Card***

***Because God gives abundantly, and because I want to be a faithful steward, I/we will take a step up in my/our giving.***

\_\_\_\_\_ I/we plan to grow toward or beyond a tithe by growing \$1.00 every week until I/we reach \$\_\_\_\_\_ per week. The starting point will be \$\_\_\_\_\_ for next week's offering. Each week, I will add \$1.00 to the previous week's giving.

\_\_\_\_\_ I plan to grow toward or beyond a tithe by growing one percent of my income per year. Beginning next Sunday, I/we will give \$\_\_\_\_\_ per week.

\_\_\_\_\_ I plan to grow toward or beyond a tithe by giving \$\_\_\_\_\_ per week

Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

***Because God gives abundantly, and because I want to be a faithful steward, I/we will take a step up in my/our giving.***

\_\_\_\_\_ I/we plan to grow toward or beyond a tithe by growing \$1.00 every week until I/we reach \$\_\_\_\_\_ per week. The starting point will be \$\_\_\_\_\_ for next week's offering. Each week, I will add \$1.00 to the previous week's giving.

\_\_\_\_\_ I plan to grow toward or beyond a tithe by growing one percent of my income per year. Beginning next Sunday, I/we will give \$\_\_\_\_\_ per week.

\_\_\_\_\_ I plan to grow toward or beyond a tithe by giving \$\_\_\_\_\_ per week

Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

***Why Estimate Giving***

On the first *SUNDAY OF THE PROGRAM*, use the following bulletin insert on the following page.

## ***WHY ESTIMATE GIVING?***

**Estimate of Giving, Plan for Giving, Faith Commitment, Promise, Covenant or whatever you call it—it is important in the life of our church today. The rapid change taking place in the world and the needs of the world make it very important that I develop a plan for proportionate giving to and through my church, write down my weekly intention, and put my name to it....**

***Because*** I desire to make plans at least **once each year to grow** in my giving and manage to the best of my ability the dollar resources with which God has blessed me.

***Because*** God gives me the grace to give, and that **grace moves me to make a firm commitment** to my church -- contributing a portion of my time, talents and financial blessings for our Lord's mission and ministry.

***Because*** in estimating my giving I make an effort to show just how much God is the God of my life, and in growing in my commitment each year I give external evidence of my internal priorities. **I put God first. I risk in faith. I trust in God to provide.**

***Because*** **God has asked for my commitment**—not just that I give—but that I be committed to justice and mercy and faith in all the world. As a Christian, my estimate of giving is **foundational to all ministry** and helps my church plan for and provide such programs of ministry.

***Because*** **God is important in my life** and my personal support of our Lord's ministry is a way to make a difference in the world.

***Because*** **Christians lead by example.** Jesus set the example for me

to follow in stewardship. If Christ was not afraid to be nailed to the cross for me, I certainly am not afraid to affix my name to an estimate of giving for his work. It is an outward expression of my love for and trust in him.

***Because*** I know that the **discipline of making an estimate and sticking to it** is in direct response to a loving God who gave his life for me at Calvary

***Because*** the **programs for ministry** that my congregation and my church at large provides for me and my family **are important** in our life, and **anything so important takes planning and commitment.**

***Because*** I do not believe that our **church's leadership can make meaningful decisions concerning ministry without first knowing what can be expected** in support of those ministries.

***Because*** my estimate **is free and open.** It is **neither legal nor legally binding.** My congregation believes that it expresses my hopes and cares for the programs of ministry that proclaim Christ's love for the world.

***Because*** it enables me to be **truly intentional** about my own personal stewardship. I can **prayerfully consider** what God is calling me to give to the ministry of Christ's Church and make a conscientious decision about my response.

***And, because*** growing in my giving enables me to experience even more spiritual growth and joy in giving.

(Source Unknown)  
Edited by Eugene Grimm

## Am I Tithing Yet?

By Pr. Woodrow Chamberlain

A member asked, “I give \$50 a week. That’s \$15 a week more than last year, “Am I tithing yet?” And the answer had to be, “I don’t know.” But you can decide for yourself since “tithing” is based on the Biblical principle of giving 10% of our income. The New Testament book of Hebrews reminds us of Abraham’s gifts, “...Abraham gave one-tenth of all he had...” (Hebrews 7:2, The Good News Bible.)

Compare the following chart with your weekly paycheck or your IRS return. If you are not tithing, we invite you to grow toward a tithe. If you are tithing, we invite you *Celebrate Generosity* by growing beyond a tithe. Choose which growth step works for you, growing by 1% of your income each year, or growing by \$1.00 each week.

IF YOUR WEEKLY OFFERING IS:	YOUR INCOME WOULD BE:	
	WEEK	YEAR
\$2	\$20	\$1,040
5	50	2,600
10	100	5,200
15	150	7,800
30	300	15,600
40	400	20,800
50	500	26,600
65	650	33,800
75	750	39,000
85	850	44,200
90	900	46,800
100	1,000	52,000
150	1,500	\$78,000

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100	1,000	52,000
150	1,500	\$78,000

<b>Grow a Dollar for ___ Weeks</b>	<b>Accumulated Giving for ___ Weeks</b>	<b>Average Growth in Giving Per Week; Add this number to their previous Giving</b>	<b>Grow a Buck for ___ Weeks</b>	<b>Accumulated Giving for ___ Weeks</b>	<b>Average Growth in Giving Per Week; Add this giving to their previous Giving</b>
1	1	\$0.02	26	351	\$6.75
2	3	\$0.06	27	378	\$7.27
3	6	\$0.12	28	406	\$7.81
4	10	\$0.19	29	435	\$8.37
5	15	\$0.29	30	465	\$8.94
6	21	\$0.40	31	496	\$9.54
7	28	\$0.54	32	528	\$10.15
8	36	\$0.69	33	561	\$10.79
9	45	\$0.87	34	595	\$11.44
10	55	\$1.06	35	630	\$12.12
11	66	\$1.27	36	666	\$12.81
12	78	\$1.50	37	703	\$13.52
13	91	\$1.75	38	741	\$14.25
14	105	\$2.02	39	780	\$15.00
15	120	\$2.31	40	820	\$15.77
16	136	\$2.62	41	861	\$16.56
17	153	\$2.94	42	903	\$17.37
18	171	\$3.29	43	946	\$18.19
19	190	\$3.65	44	990	\$19.04
20	210	\$4.04	45	1035	\$19.90
21	231	\$4.44	46	1081	\$20.79
22	253	\$4.87	47	1128	\$21.69
23	276	\$5.31	48	1176	\$22.62
24	300	\$5.77	49	1225	\$23.56
25	325	\$6.25	50	1275	\$24.52
			51	1326	\$25.50
			52	1378	\$26.50

**Celebrate Generosity by Growing One Percent of Income**

Weekly Income	Weekly Giving:				Tithe	Upper Range Giving					Lower Range Giving				
	Annual Income	Beyond a Tithe				9%	8%	7%	6%	5%	4%	3%	2%	1%	
		15%	12%	11%	10%										
\$3,000	\$156,000	\$450	\$360	\$330	\$300	\$270	\$240	\$210	\$180	\$150	\$120	\$90	\$60	\$30	
\$2,900	\$150,800	\$435	\$348	\$319	\$290	\$261	\$232	\$203	\$174	\$145	\$116	\$87	\$58	\$29	
\$2,800	\$145,600	\$420	\$336	\$308	\$280	\$252	\$224	\$196	\$168	\$140	\$112	\$84	\$56	\$28	
\$2,700	\$140,400	\$405	\$324	\$297	\$270	\$243	\$216	\$189	\$162	\$135	\$108	\$81	\$54	\$27	
\$2,600	\$135,200	\$390	\$312	\$286	\$260	\$234	\$208	\$182	\$156	\$130	\$104	\$78	\$52	\$26	
\$2,500	\$130,000	\$375	\$300	\$275	\$250	\$225	\$200	\$175	\$150	\$125	\$100	\$75	\$50	\$25	
\$2,300	\$119,600	\$345	\$276	\$253	\$230	\$207	\$184	\$161	\$138	\$115	\$92	\$69	\$46	\$23	
\$2,200	\$114,400	\$330	\$264	\$242	\$220	\$198	\$176	\$154	\$132	\$110	\$88	\$66	\$44	\$22	
\$2,100	\$109,200	\$315	\$252	\$231	\$210	\$189	\$168	\$147	\$126	\$105	\$84	\$63	\$42	\$21	
\$2,000	\$104,000	\$300	\$240	\$220	\$200	\$180	\$160	\$140	\$120	\$100	\$80	\$60	\$40	\$20	
\$1,900	\$98,800	\$285	\$228	\$209	\$190	\$171	\$152	\$133	\$114	\$95	\$76	\$57	\$38	\$19	
\$1,800	\$93,600	\$270	\$216	\$198	\$180	\$162	\$144	\$126	\$108	\$90	\$72	\$54	\$36	\$18	
\$1,700	\$88,400	\$255	\$204	\$187	\$170	\$153	\$136	\$119	\$102	\$85	\$68	\$51	\$34	\$17	
\$1,600	\$83,200	\$240	\$192	\$176	\$160	\$144	\$128	\$112	\$96	\$80	\$64	\$48	\$32	\$16	
\$1,500	\$78,000	\$225	\$180	\$165	\$150	\$135	\$120	\$105	\$90	\$75	\$60	\$45	\$30	\$15	
\$1,400	\$72,800	\$210	\$168	\$154	\$140	\$126	\$112	\$98	\$84	\$70	\$56	\$42	\$28	\$14	
\$1,300	\$67,600	\$195	\$156	\$143	\$130	\$117	\$104	\$91	\$78	\$65	\$52	\$39	\$26	\$13	
\$1,200	\$62,400	\$180	\$144	\$132	\$120	\$108	\$96	\$84	\$72	\$60	\$48	\$36	\$24	\$12	
\$1,100	\$57,200	\$165	\$132	\$121	\$110	\$99	\$88	\$77	\$66	\$55	\$44	\$33	\$22	\$11	
\$1,000	\$52,000	\$150	\$120	\$110	\$100	\$90	\$80	\$70	\$60	\$50	\$40	\$30	\$20	\$10	
\$900	\$46,800	\$135	\$108	\$99	\$90	\$81	\$72	\$63	\$54	\$45	\$36	\$27	\$18	\$9	
\$800	\$41,600	\$120	\$96	\$88	\$80	\$72	\$64	\$56	\$48	\$40	\$32	\$24	\$16	\$8	
\$700	\$36,400	\$105	\$84	\$77	\$70	\$63	\$56	\$49	\$42	\$35	\$28	\$21	\$14	\$7	
\$600	\$31,200	\$90	\$72	\$66	\$60	\$54	\$48	\$42	\$36	\$30	\$24	\$18	\$12	\$6	
\$500	\$26,000	\$75	\$60	\$55	\$50	\$45	\$40	\$35	\$30	\$25	\$20	\$15	\$10	\$5	
\$400	\$20,800	\$60	\$48	\$44	\$40	\$36	\$32	\$28	\$24	\$20	\$16	\$12	\$8	\$4	
\$300	\$15,600	\$45	\$36	\$33	\$30	\$27	\$24	\$21	\$18	\$15	\$12	\$9	\$6	\$3	
\$200	\$10,400	\$30	\$24	\$22	\$20	\$18	\$16	\$14	\$12	\$10	\$8	\$6	\$4	\$2	
\$100	\$5,200	\$15	\$12	\$11	\$10	\$9	\$8	\$7	\$6	\$5	\$4	\$3	\$2	\$1	

Task	Start Date	End Date	Responsible	Complete?
Communicate to council intent to use Celebrate Generosity Program				
Determine Celebrate Generosity Leadership Team (Prayer Chair, Guest Leader, Dinner Planner, Guest Leader.)				
Write newsletter article announcing intent to use Celebrate Generosity program (See Tools D, page 23.)				
Determine Full Communications plan (specific format and structure for prayer letter, general letter and other communications)				
Notify secretary of Calendar of Events and staff needs for mailings				
Write newsletter article talking about details of program				
Prayer Letter to Congregation				
Recruit people to pray for program				
Recruit people to call members asking them to pray (during the last two weeks of the program.)				
Write newsletter article talking about stewardship and giving (book passage)				
Write newsletter article talking about Celebrate Generosity Luncheon				
Stewardship Talk 1 by:				
Sermon - Giving Is An Act of Worship				
General Letter from Chair				
Stewardship Talk 2 by:				
Sermon - Giving is Systematic				
Pass out and receive Luncheon Reservation Slips				
Grow a Buck letter from President				
E-mail Prayer Update				
Stewardship Talk 3 by				
Sermon - Giving is in Proportion to Income				
Leadership Dinner at local restaurant with Guest Leader (Pass out contacts)				
Pastor Letter (to include tithing chart)				
Sunday evening dinner with guest leader and leadership the week before Celebrate Generosity Sunday)				
Celebrate Generosity Luncheon Followup Visits				
Write newsletter article talking about Simply Giving program (Lutheran only)				
Celebrate Generosity Sunday				
Stewardship Talk 4				
Sermon - Plan your Giving in Advance				
Celebrate Generosity Luncheon				
Give out Estimate of Giving Cards				
Announce results at luncheon				
Follow Up Letter with Personalized commitment card for no estimates				
Thank You Letters with estimates				

***THANK YOU***

***for your Generosity!***

We gratefully acknowledge the receipt of your 2007 "Estimate of Giving" card indicating your intention to give:

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Per \_\_\_\_\_

to the Operating Fund for the coming year as well as

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Per \_\_\_\_\_ to

the \_\_\_\_\_

(If we have misunderstood your intention, please contact \_\_\_\_\_ at (Phone)

*Thank you for your ongoing support of the ministries at \_\_\_\_\_*

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