A TWELVE-MONTH PLAN FOR STEWARDSHIP
IN THE LOCAL CHURCH
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Churches that are doing stewardship well focus on it more than a couple of weeks in the fall. We suggest a year-round strategy for helping your folks learn that being a faithful steward is about more than how the church gets its bills paid! Herb Mather offers one comprehensive plan that a church might use in developing a year-round stewardship strategy.

COMPONENTS FOR A 12-MONTH PLAN

I. Actions and Programs
   1. Personal Witness
   2. Preaching
   3. Telling the Stories
   4. An Annual Emphasis

II. Subject Matters
   5. Tithing
   6. Time and Talent
   7. Planned Giving
   8. Personal Financial Management

III. Procedural Issues
   9. Budget Building and Management
   10. Accounting and Reporting System

The ten components are divided into three groupings. The first group (1-4) includes actions and programs. Numbers 5-8 are subject matters. Actions and programs are needed to communicate these subject matters. The final two items (9-10) are procedural issues unlikely to increase giving. However, without these systems in place, trust is diminished, which will result in lower giving.
SETTINGS

Examine each of the above components and explore the settings where each is most appropriate within each congregation or parish. Settings will vary depending on the size and “style” of the congregation. Settings may include (but are not limited to):

1. Worship Services
2. Children’s Classes and Groups
3. Youth Classes and Groups
4. Adult Classes and Groups
5. Confirmation Classes
6. Adult New Member Orientation/Formation Groups
7. United Methodist Women and United Methodist Men
8. Programs at Fellowship Dinners and Family Night Programs

A MODEL FOR A 12-MONTH EMPHASIS ENCOURAGEMENT TOWARD GENEROSITY

JANUARY

1. Send a letter written by pastor to all members. (See the book by Herb Mather, Letters for all Seasons)
2. Lay witness—“What giving means to me.”
3. Develop Stewardship education goals for the year.
4. Prepare human-interest articles for the church newsletter about what giving can accomplish in people’s lives.
5. Review information received from phone calls made to persons who pledged in previous years but have not done so this year.
FEBRUARY
1. Send a letter written by a young adult woman to all members. (See Letters for All Seasons)
2. Lay witness—“What giving means to me.”
3. Plan a mission festival/fair.
4. Develop bulletin boards that depict aspects of the church’s ministry. Assign responsibility for each board.
5. Arrange a phone conversation with a missionary related to your conference.
6. Articulate a vision for the ministry of the church (pastor).
7. Plan a “Managing Your Money” seminar for empty nesters.

MARCH
1. Send a letter written by a member of the Committee of Finance to all members. (See Letters for All Seasons)
2. Lay witness—“How my giving relates to the sacrificial gift of Jesus.”
3. Develop a task group to explore ways the offering can better reflect what we believe about giving.
4. Hold a new member information class on the relationship of giving to faith.
5. Send a quarterly statement of giving, along with testimonies and stories about how the money is used to help people.

APRIL
1. Send a letter written by a proportionate giver to all members. (See Letters for All Seasons)
2. Lay witness—“How my giving relates to the sacrificial gift of Jesus.”
3. Review materials for the fall giving campaign.
4. Plan a “Communicating Healthy Money Values to Your Children” seminar for young adults.
MAY
1. Send a letter written by an older member to all members. (See Letters for All Seasons)
2. Lay witness—“How my giving relates to the gifts of life.”
3. Select leaders for the giving campaign (if it’s held in fall).
4. Memorial Sunday—Encourage persons to draw up wills that express their faith commitments.

JUNE
1. Send a letter written by a schoolteacher or a social worker to all members. (See Letters for All Seasons)
2. Lay witness—“How my giving relates to my spiritual growth.”
3. Invite a returned missionary or a person from another country to talk about her/his faith experience.
4. Assign a task group to plan a month of tithing emphasis at an appropriate time. Send a quarterly statement of giving, along with testimonies and stories about how the money is used to help people.

JULY
1. Send a letter to all members, written by someone who has been to a church-supported mission project. (See Letters for All Seasons)
2. Lay witness—“How my giving connects faith and living.”
3. Hold special Sunday school sessions using stewardship education materials.
4. Meet with a local banker to explore offering the option of direct bank fund transfer as a method of giving.
5. Invite persons to consider the church in their estate plans.
AUGUST

1. Send a letter written by a youth to all members. (See Letters for All Seasons)
2. Lay witness—“How my giving is an investment in what is important to me.”
3. Invite small groups to share their dreams for the church’s ministry. Provide a means of feedback.
4. Plan a “Managing Your Money” seminar for retirees.

SEPTEMBER

1. Send a letter written by an enthusiastic layperson to all members. (See Letters for All Seasons)
2. Lay witness—“How my giving relates to Matthew 25.”
3. Activate a giving campaign committee.
4. Publish a “giving chart” in the parish newsletter. (See pages 72-73, Don’t Shoot the Horse.)
5. Send a quarterly statement of giving, along with testimonies and stories about how the money is used to help people.

OCTOBER

1. Send a letter written by a Sunday school teacher to all members. (See Letters for All Seasons)
2. Lay witness—“How my giving relates to the ministry of our church.”
3. Follow through on giving campaign plans.
4. Order “Year-End Giving” brochures.
**NOVEMBER**

1. Send a letter written by a farmer or gardener to all members. (See *Letters for All Seasons*)
2. Lay witness—“How my giving relates to thankfulness.”
3. Celebrate Thanksgiving!
4. Celebrate a successful campaign.

**DECEMBER**

1. Send “Year-End Giving” brochure
2. Send a letter written by a generous giver to all members. (See *Letters for All Seasons*)
3. Lay witness—“How my giving relates to the gifts of the magi and the gift of Jesus.”
4. Send a statement of giving early in the month.
5. Thank the people for their commitments along with testimonies and stories of how the money for next year’s ministries is used to help people.

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**CONTENT WRITTEN BY HERB MATHER. HERB IS RETIRED FROM DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRIES.**

*LETTERS FOR ALL SEASONS* BY HERBERT MATHER (ABINGDON PRESS, 1994).

*DON’T SHOOT THE HORSE (‘TIL YOU KNOW HOW TO DRIVE THE TRACTOR): MOVING FROM ANNUAL FUND RAISING TO A LIFE OF GIVING* BY HERB MATHER (DISCIPLESHIP RESOURCES, 2003).