

STEWARDSHIP RESOURCES – Introduction

We have used the word “stewardship” for many years. Unfortunately it has not always had the best reception. We are moving toward using the word generosity. The word has a wider scope and points to a more positive way of speaking about our relationship with God/Faith/Money.

Here are some initial conversations to have about stewardship and generosity.

GENEROSITY HISTORY – spend some time researching a History of Generosity in your church. How have people responded in the past. What issues or programs have generated a generous response? How much has been given away and what were the causes?

GENEROSITY HISTORY (Personal) – What is your generosity history? What are causes and issues you support? Who did you learn generosity from? What tugs at your heart strings? Who has been generous to you? What is the best gift you ever gave? What is the best gift you ever received? (These could be shared in a speed dating kind of style giving each person 2 minutes to answer and then trade to the other.)

MONEY IN CHURCH – How does your congregation talk about money? Does your congregation talk about money? What stories do you talk about money and giving? How do donors know what their gifts to the church do? What sense of ownership do donors have? How does your congregation thank donors? How does it celebrate gifts given? How does your congregation raise up and train new givers?

ABUNDANCE – Which describes your congregation’s attitude toward money: Abundance or scarcity? How are people motivated to give – out of gratitude or obligation? How can your congregation move from a “pay the bills” mentality to a “share the vision” mentality?

MISSION AND VISION – What is the mission of the congregation? Does everyone know it? How is it communicated? Does everyone agree? Mission is the overarching purpose and vision is the current guiding purpose and goals. What is the current vision of the congregation? How does your congregation keep statements about who you are and what is your current vision in front of the congregation?

GENEROSITY AND MISSION STORYTELLING – How are stories shared about generosity? How do people know that the money they are giving is actually touching the lives of people? How could the congregation invite and use people who have been touched by the congregation’s generosity?

PERSONAL GENEROSITY – Spend time on a philanthropic Autobiography. Look at your budget, both assets and liabilities. Then think about your personal generosity. Where you give your money? Consider support to family, congregations, non-profits, and other related giving. What values and causes drive your giving?

MEANS – How do you people give: online, by check, cash, card, automatic withdrawal, required minimum distribution. Make sure that all these bases are covered.

LEGACY GIVING - Do you have a will? Is there planned giving as a part of that will? Is the congregation set up to receive planned giving? Is there a policy about designated giving? Does the congregation have an endowment? Are their guidelines in place for the use of an endowment? Can it be used for outreach projects only or can it also be used for the ongoing ministry of the church?

GENERATIONAL GIVING – There could be up to 4 different generations worshiping in a congregation at any given time. Each generation is motivated and gives differently. No one letter or program or giving style will motivate all generations.