DUTY AND DELIGHT

Stewardship Program

By the Rev. Dr. Eugene Grimm
This stewardship program is intended for use with the Bible study “Duty and Delight: A Journey of Faith in Living and Giving” introduced at the 2017 Convocation of the North American Lutheran Church. Both the study and the program are available for download by clicking Stewardship under the Resources link at thenalc.org.
Marty Haugen, in his liturgy “Now the Feast and Celebration,” begins the preface to the Holy Communion with, “It is our duty and delight that we should everywhere and always offer thanks and praise to you, O God, through Jesus Christ….”

Duty and delight are a wonderful combination. In Romans 15:27, Paul wrote, “For they were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them.” One of my seminary professors used to say, “A text without a context is a pretext,” and he was certainly correct. Paul is talking about going on to Spain by way of Rome, but first he’s going to carry some relief for the saints to Jerusalem. Sharing that offering brought those who gave it a sense of both duty and delight.

“They were pleased to do it…,” suggests delight; “and indeed they owe it to them” means they realized it was their duty. For the mature Christian, the offering is an act of worship. The mystic Evelyn Underhill wrote that the primary purpose of worship is to adore God. Our worship through the offering should always be our delightful duty — indeed, our adoration of God. The story is told of a pastor who, upon receiving a rather skimpy offering one Sunday, presented it at the altar, raised his head and voice, and said, “Well, God, this is what we think of you.”

Our Duty and Delight Stewardship Program sets forth a four-week effort designed to help our people grow spiritually. When that happens, they will also grow in their giving. The four weeks look at:

- Faith — A Foundation of Duty and Delight
- Hope — A Foundation of Duty and Delight
- Love — A Foundation of Duty and Delight
- Joy — A Foundation of Duty and Delight

There is a timeline (see page 8) that will assist your stewardship team by helping your members prayerfully consider what God is calling them to give during the coming 12 months. It is designed to keep the program moving and ensure that key steps will not be missed.

There is also a tools section (see page 12) that includes:

- Suggestions for receiving estimates of giving
- A final tally worksheet and report
- Suggested letters and emails to congregation members
- A sample Estimate of Giving card
- A Grow One Percent chart

Any stewardship program is designed to provide a systematic approach to helping a congregation discover and rediscover the joy of giving. Any program will work, provided it is approached step by step and provided the congregation prays. Whatever process your church decides to use this year,

Remember to PRAY!
Duty

I will always remember a wonderful woman from a church I served in the mid-1970s and early '80s. She was in her 90s by the time I moved from that congregation. Her son was also a faithful member and once told me that she had decided to include our church in her will. She was a very generous woman. I remember many things about her, but one thing that always pops into my mind is that every January when I took the monthly home communion to her, she would ask the same question: “Pastor, what are our dues for this year?” Every year I would try to explain to her that we did not use a dues system any longer, but that we asked people to prayerfully consider what God was calling them to give, and commit that amount. While she had all of her mental faculties, she was still someone stuck in the early 1900s — a time when the church asked for “dues” to keep the congregation going. She considered it her “duty” to pay her “dues” to the church.

In spite of the fact that she could not get out of that rut, she did experience the joy of giving. Duty is a wonderful thing. We do have a duty to God. Our duty is in response to God's saving grace in Jesus Christ. Duty is found frequently throughout Scripture. In Luke 17:10, Jesus said, “So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, ‘We are unworthy servants, we have only done what was our duty.’”

Duty has to do with obligation. We have obligations to pay our bills, to care for our families, to serve our communities and our country, and the list goes on.

In the Parable of the Unjust Steward there are elements of accountability and responsibility. Membership in a congregation carries responsibility and also accountability. We are a part of the body of Christ, with all parts of the body working together that all may know Christ's love.

As Christians, we take delight in our duty. Serving our Lord Jesus Christ is a joy. Duty is not a dirty word. The more active we become in serving our Lord through our church, the closer we walk with him.

Delight

As stated in our accompanying Bible study, for every Biblical use of the word “duty,” there are approximately seven uses of the word “delight.” Of these, roughly half speak of God’s own delight, especially God’s delight in his called servants. The other half address instances of human delight, especially human delight in God, and in the ways of God. For references of each, please see the accompanying Bible study for this program.

God delights in us, and we delight in God. In his liturgy “Now the Feast and Celebration,” Marty Haugen begins his preface to the Holy Communion with, “It is our duty and delight that we should everywhere and always offer thanks and praise to you, O God, through Jesus Christ…” [emphasis added].

Duty and Delight seem to work best when they play off one another. We can think of the delightful duty of serving our Lord Jesus Christ. Duty is not a chore. There have been times when we Lutherans have been stuck on duty, and so need to move from duty to delight. This is all right as long as we don’t stop thinking of them together.

Our Duty and Delight Stewardship Program examines four themes surrounding concepts of duty and delight. These are Faith, Hope, Love, and Joy. All of these emanate from and produce duty and delight.
A Word of Advice

All stewardship programs work best if they are followed precisely. It has been demonstrated many times that when congregations tinker with published programs, their results are greatly diminished. Congregations that follow published programs precisely often achieve 10 percent, 20 percent, 30 percent increases — and occasionally much more.

The goal of our Duty and Delight Stewardship Program is twofold. First, all stewardship programs are designed to help members grow spiritually. The second is to help our members discover and rediscover the joy of giving. It is a fact that stewardship programs should only secondarily be about money. There are differences between a stewardship program and a fundraising program:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FUNDRAISING</th>
<th>STEWARDSHIP</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main issue: Money to operate</td>
<td>Main issue: Spiritual growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key: Generosity and duty</td>
<td>Key: God's love and our faithful response to that love in JOY!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Based on an understanding of the recipient's needs</td>
<td>Based on an understanding of our giftedness</td>
</tr>
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<td>Is dependent on case statements</td>
<td>Is dependent on the need of the giver to give</td>
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Please do not misunderstand. There is absolutely nothing wrong with good, ethical fundraising, but in Christ’s church, we have an advantage over the not-for-profits. Few would suggest much of a spiritual benefit from giving to a non-profit. In the church and in church institutions such as our seminary, good stewardship often results in spiritual growth.

By moving away from a fundraising model to a stewardship model, churches can create a new climate. Getting away from fundraising phrases such as “Dig a little deeper,” or “We need you to give more,” or, worse yet, “If you don’t give more, we’ll have to close our doors,” will enable congregations to experience the delight of giving as well as have a healthy understanding of duty.

Stewardship is More than Money

While stewardship is more than money, it does include money. Money is a fact of life in our 21st century world. Stewardship includes the Ministry of Money. Money enables us to do ministry for Christ’s sake. Money enables our presence where we cannot physically go. For example, most of us cannot go to a mission field, but we can extend Christ’s great commission around the world through giving.

Our NALC has a Great Commission Society that enables us to do ministry in many places. “The purpose of the Great Commission Society of the NALC is to mobilize disciples for the work of the Great Commission. Our mission is to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a world that is in desperate need of the Good News. We propose to do this by networking congregations and individuals who have a passion for the proclamation of the Gospel and a commitment to the calling of the Great Commission” (from our GCS Brochure).

Stewardship has many dimensions and is interlaced. Note the following diagram. Stewardship is Ministry, Discipleship, and Service. Ministry is Stewardship, Discipleship and Service. Discipleship is Stewardship, Ministry, and Service. Service is Stewardship, Ministry and Discipleship.
St. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 9:11-15, “You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God. For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God. By their approval of this service, they will glorify God because of your submission that comes from your confession of the gospel of Christ, and the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others, while they long for you and pray for you, because of the surpassing grace of God upon you. Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift.”

Giving to congregations has little to do with the economy. In both bull and bear markets, some congregations report declines in offerings, while others say giving has never been better. The latter group is made up of churches that have cultivated a climate for stewardship rather than merely doing fundraising.

Prayer is a Key

A key to spiritual growth, and a key to growth in giving, is prayer. Many of us grew up with little plaques in our homes that said, “Prayer Changes Things!” It was so common, it became almost a cliché, but it is true.

Prayer is a key to everything we do in the Christian life. Paul wrote, “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17). In our modern world, prayer has actually been relegated to snippets, but of course, even snippet prayers are heard. In this 500th anniversary year of the posting of the Ninety-Five Theses at Wittenberg, Germany, many Luther quotes come to mind. The story is told that Luther would pray for no less than two hours every day. On occasion, he would comment to Katie, “I have so much to do that if I don’t spend at least four hours in prayer I would never get it all done.”

One of the most important things any congregation can do to enhance its stewardship ministry is pray. For that reason, your stewardship committee or task force for the Duty and Delight Stewardship Program should have a prayer chair. One of the duties of that prayer chair is to enlist a team of people committed to pray.

Stewardship Task Force

Whether your program task force is made of members of your standing stewardship committee, or whether you establish a special group, it should consist of:

- The Senior Pastor — for overall theological guidance.
- The General Chairperson — to keep the program on schedule.
- The Prayer Chair — to enlist a cadre of prayer warriors.
- A person for the Stewardship Talk on each Sunday of the program.
- The Financial Secretary — to prepare for and conduct the tally of results.
- The Bible Study Coordinator — to enlist members for a Bible study in Sunday school or other gatherings.

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 benevolence ministries beyond the congregation, both to the NALC and for increased mission and service to your local community.
Six weeks before Commitment Sunday

PRAYER CHAIR
The prayer chair of the task force announces the theme for the upcoming stewardship program, and asks members to pray for the upcoming Duty and Delight Stewardship Program. The prayer chair also asks members to begin praying now about what God would have them to give during the coming twelve months. (See page 15 for a sample letter.)

TASK FORCE
The Task Force meets for the first time to organize for the program and be sure everyone’s assignments are clear. Go through this timeline step by step. It is also a good idea to include the church’s secretary so the letters may be prepared in advance.

PRAYER CHAIR
The following day, the prayer chair sends out an email blast to members asking for their prayers. (See page 15 for a sample email.)

Three Sundays before Commitment Sunday

DATE: ________________________________

The theme of the worship service is Faith, a Foundation for Duty and Delight.

In Hebrews 11:1-3, we read, “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the people of old received their commendation. By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.”

“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works. So that no one may boast” (Ephesians 2:8,9).

“And Jesus answered them, ‘Truly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, “Be taken up and thrown into the sea,” it will happen’” (Matthew 21:21).

“Yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified” (Galatians 2:16).

Faith is a gift from God, but it is a gift that grows with exercise. The more we grow in faith, the more we feel a sense of duty to God. For Martin Luther, duty was not only an important subject but also a key motivator. Duty is what we owe God. In Luther’s Small Catechism, the meaning of the first article of the Apostle’s Creed concludes, “…for all which I owe it to Him to thank, praise, serve, and obey him.” Our duty to God, what we owe God, is always a response to what Christ has done for us. Older translations of the catechism use “it is my duty” in place of “I owe it to Him”.

Faith also brings us to a sense of delight. As we grow in grace and knowledge of the truth, our faith deepens our delight in the Lord. And, it deepens God’s delight in us. Faithful giving also includes regular giving. We encourage our members to give weekly. Since giving is an act of worship, if members make it a practice to give each week, the sense of worshipping through our tithes and offerings is enhanced.

THE FIRST STEWARDSHIP TALK IS SHARED.
Perhaps the best time for the talk is in the early part of the worship service, or whenever the pastor shares the greeting and announcements. The talk introduces the theme and invites members to prayerfully consider God’s call to faithful giving.

**Do not stress the need of the church for money. Discuss instead that an important part of our faith is the call to faithful giving.** Please remember that the primary reason for the talk is a personal witness about the importance of giving in the speaker’s personal life. It may include:

- **How growth in faith in his/her personal life has also resulted in growth in giving.**
- **Point out that for them giving is an act of faith that emanates from both duty and their delight in the Lord.**
- **Share a personal witness about:**
  - Your joy in tithing.
  - That your giving is a personal response to the gift of faith that God has bestowed on you.

MONDAY

DATE: ________________________________

A letter or email from the Congregational President is sent. (See page 16 for a sample letter.) Again, this letter is “built-in redundancy.” Not all members will hear the talk, so it’s important to share the information in more ways than one.
Two Sundays before Commitment Sunday

DATE: ____________________________________________

The theme of the worship service is **Hope, A Foundation for Duty and Delight**.

“Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us” (Romans 5:1-5).

“For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience” (Romans 8:24-25).

“...in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect…” (1 Peter 3:15).

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:13).

God delights in those who hope in the Lord. Hope grows toward certainty as we grow in grace. Our hope in Christ results in our obedience, and obedience is a choice. Our hearts often lag behind but as we become more obedient to Christ, our heart catches up. When mind and heart are integrated, we are fully giving ourselves to the Lord — not out of “have to,” but because of a “want to.”

That ties into our giving as well. Giving becomes a “want to” instead of a “have to.” When we start giving, it may be something of a sense of obligation, but as we grow in our giving it transcends mere duty to become duty and delight.

Our capacity to love and give of ourselves in the present is based upon the hope we have regarding our future. Faith, when genuine produces hope. Our faith in Christ, gives us hope in a future. Our faith in Christ gives us hope that we are forgiven. And thus, my future is secure. So what is there to worry about? We have enough. And if we have more than enough, we have still more to give away.

Christian hope is not based on feelings and it’s not wishful thinking — such as “I hope this or that will happen.” It is a confident expectation in the promises of God. It is a living hope (1 Peter 3:3). In the death and resurrection of Jesus, we have an eternal destiny. It is the hope we have regarding our eternal destiny that frees us to love in the present.

And genuine love does not hold back. It lacks nothing. It fears nothing, and thus is free to give. When we have hope, we know we have not only a future, but a promise that Christ will come again. We no longer have to live in scarcity but in the joy of abundance. No longer do we live for ourselves. No longer do we have to be selfish with our time, talents, treasure, and testimony. For our hope is based on God’s inexhaustible grace toward us in the promise of salvation.

**THE SECOND STEWARDSHIP TALK IS SHARED.**

Again, 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.

- Consider the hymn “My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness; no merit of my own I claim, but wholly lean on Jesus’ name” (Lutheran Book of Worship 293, 294). This song reminds us that our hope is every bit as certain as Jesus’ death and resurrection.
- Christian hope is not wishful thinking. It is a confident expectation that our Lord is in charge, and that we’ll pass from death unto life.
- Share a witness about hope in your own life.
- How does your hope in Christ relate to your giving through Christ’s church?
One Sunday before
Commitment Sunday

DATE: ________________________________

The theme of the worship service is Love, A Foundation of Duty and Delight.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him” (John 3:16,17).

“Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends” (1 Corinthians 13:4-8a).

“So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love” (1 Corinthians 13:13).

Depending upon which translation one is reading, the word “love” is found about 550 times in the Bible. God’s love for us prompted the gift of Jesus Christ to die for our sins. Our love for God prompts us to want to serve him in every way possible. But did you know that Jesus spoke about money and possessions more than any other subject in the Bible? There are about 361 verses that deal with prayer, about 398 on faith, but 2,172 verses in the Bible deal with money and possessions. In 16 of 38 parables (42 percent), Jesus spoke of money. One of seven verses in the synoptic gospels is about money. That drops a bit if you add the Gospel of John. One in ten (a tithe!) of the verses in the four gospels speak of money.

When we give, it is both from a sense of duty and delight. We give because God first loved us. We give because we love Jesus. We often hear that Jesus never talked about tithing. Actually, he did — once! In Matthew 23:23 we read, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others” [emphasis added]. Few people tithe only because they think it’s their duty — most tithe because their delight is in the Lord. Yes, some may start out tithing because they think they ought to. If they start out tithing as a duty, however, it soon becomes a delight.

Include in the bulletin a Grow One Percent Chart. This chart is the core of the stewardship talk.

A THIRD STEWARDSHIP TALK IS Shared.

Include your thoughts on giving as a joyful and cheerful response to God’s gifts to you. It should conclude with a look at the Grow One Percent Chart. (See page 19 for a reproducible chart.)

• 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.
• No matter how you choose to grow, whether by a percent of income or by a flat dollar amount, seek the Lord’s guidance. If it is God’s will, you’ll find a way.
• Our invitation is to prayerfully consider growing by one percent of your annual income per year.
• Take a look at the Grow One Percent Chart in your bulletin.
• 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 per week, they’re giving five percent. If they are giving $10 per week, they’re giving one percent.
• Share a personal witness.

MONDAY

DATE: ________________________________

A letter is mailed or emailed from the pastor, inviting members to grow in their giving each week for the coming year. (See page 16 for a sample letter.)
On Commitment Sunday

DATE: ________________________________

The theme for the worship is Joy, A Foundation for Duty and Delight.

“Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.” (Luke 15:10,11).

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law” (Galatians 5:22,23).

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:4-7).

“These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full” (John 15:11).

“And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age’” (Matthew 28:18-20).

Most people probably equate joy with happiness, exultation and delight. We all take joy in our service to our Lord. Part of our joy is in fulfilling our duty. Perhaps the greatest duty we have is summed up in the Great Commission. It is also our greatest delight.

Obedience to Christ is not based on a feeling but a choice to commit. Many times we may not feel like giving of ourselves or our talents, time or treasure (our heart lags behind), but at that point if we override our feelings with a choice to obey, our heart is transformed. And this gives us joy that we persevered. God is thrilled, blessed when we are obedient. The more we love him, the more we will desire to obey him. The more we obey him, the more we grow in faith and love of him. Do this enough and the heart catches up and giving becomes automatic, not an afterthought, or a second thought but our first thought!

The law has always been a gift. It gives us life because it convicts us and turns us to Christ who saves us. Duty is not a negative thing. Duty is a privilege and a responsibility that brings great joy and delight.

DURING THE WORSHIP SERVICE

Commitment cards are received. (See page 12 for a sample way to receive the cards; see page 18 for a sample card.) A walk to the altar is recommended. However, if the church's altar requires steps that are difficult for some, a stand with a basket or box at the foot of the stairs is acceptable.

MONDAY

DATE: ________________________________

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 commitment card with the name of the member on it. Personalizing the card greatly increases the return rate. (See page 17 for a sample letter.)

MONDAY THE FOLLOWING WEEK

DATE: ________________________________

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 Duty and Delight Task Force chairperson. (See page 17 for a sample letter.)
TOOL 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 Duty and Delight Stewardship Program. However, I would invite you to think about how you plan your giving wherever you may be a member. That’s a question that all Christians should prayerfully consider at least once a year.

“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 I should pray before filling it out, 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/we want to be a faithful steward, I/we will take a step up in my giving.’ Notice there are two ways to grow.

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

“Or, plan to grow by whatever amount you have prayerfully decided.

“I/we 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 our church. This is an estimate of giving based on what you know right now about your income. If your circumstances change, we assume your giving will also.

“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 (or, at the foot of the altar in the basket).”

PRAYER

• Ask God to bless each gift and each giver.
• Offer thanks for the joy of giving.

BENEDICTION
**TOOL B**

**Final Tally Worksheets**

How successful was your process? Did it work? Determining the success of a stewardship process goes a bit beyond whether it felt good. The Gospel of stewardship never offends people of God. Whether to repeat a process 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 process? How did we grow? Just as certainly, you want to know the more objective results — did this process result in increased giving by our members, and by how much?

Create a chart like this one, or set up a spreadsheet in this way:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name (last name, first name)</th>
<th>Giving last 12 months per week (divide column 2 by 52)</th>
<th>Estimate of giving per week (turned in on commitment Sunday, or using Estimate of Giving cards)</th>
<th>Estimate for those who did not make commitment (based on last year’s giving — column 3)</th>
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1. Approximately two weeks before Duty and Delight Commitment 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 line. If you prefer to use a computer spreadsheet, bring the total down on columns 2 and 3.

2. First, fill in the family names in alphabetical order. Next, complete columns 2 and 3 using actual giving records (not pledges) for the past 12 months. It is important that the information be used for the last 12 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 (that is, extra-budgetary giving that comes in and turns right around, such as Disaster Relief or World Hunger).

3. On Duty and Delight Commitment Sunday, the Financial Secretary and assistants (people privy to giving records) should populate column 4 using the Estimate of Giving cards. It is easier if one person reads the commitment card and, if using a paper record, simultaneously enters the giving amount into a calculator to calculate the total. Another person then enters the giving number in column 4.

4. After recording all incoming estimates of giving, go back through the list to those lines with no figure in column 4. The person entering information in the tally sheet places in column 5 the figures in column 3 for those who have a blank line in column 4. (Numbers can also be added to column 4 or column 5 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. Be sure to calculate the loose offering and other income you received last year for inclusion in the final tally on lines 3 and 4 on the results tool on page 14.
Duty and Delight Stewardship Program Results

_____ Number of giving units (couples or individuals) filling out estimates of giving for the next 12 months.

_____ Number of giving units filling out estimates who increased their commitment over the last 12 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 lines 1, 2, 3, and 4 above).

6. $__________ Total annual income next 12 months (line 5 above times 52 weeks).

ANNOUNCEMENT

We're pleased to announce the results of our Duty and Delight Stewardship Program. Today a total of ______ giving units filled in Estimate of Giving cards. Of these, ______ have increased their estimate of giving over 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 (figure from column 5) $_____________. Next year, our anticipated income is expected to be $_____________, an increase of $_____________. This is an overall increase of ________ percent over last year’s giving.
REQUEST FOR CONGREGATIONAL PRAYERS (SEE PAGE 8)

To be sent six weeks before Commitment Sunday.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We have all heard the old cliché that prayer changes things, and we are in need of people to pray. Our Stewardship campaign this year is called The Duty and Delight Stewardship Program. Throughout the process we will celebrate both God's generosity and our own. On _________ (date) we will have our celebration Sunday (or weekend).

But stewardship without prayer is like a church without Jesus. That's why I'm writing to you today — to ask you to pray. Pray that we will all contemplate and celebrate God's generosity to us. Pray that our church will be filled with a spirit of generosity. And please pray for our members and for yourself as all of us determine what God is calling us to give for the coming year.

Why are we doing this? Because we truly want our congregation to follow what God is calling us to do when we fill out our annual Estimate of Giving cards the weekend of _________ (date).

We ask you to pray for guidance for the congregation towards fulfilling what God is calling each of us to do so we can fulfill God's plans for our church and its ministries for the coming year.

I will be praying for you and hope you join me praying that God's plans for our church may be fully realized!

Yours in Christ,
{typed name}
Prayer Chair

EMAIL FROM PRAYER CHAIR (SEE PAGE 8)

To be sent six weeks before Commitment Sunday. Be sure to send emails from the church's email address, so that it will be far less likely to end up in a spam/junk mail folder. If possible, create an email account at the church for the Prayer Chair.

Hello, my name is {name of prayer chair}. I am writing to you today as the Prayer Chair for our church's stewardship emphasis, The Duty and Delight Stewardship Program. The key date to mark on your calendar now is ____________, when we will have our Duty and Delight weekend.

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 stewardship campaign, we are going to ask you to help us by lifting up in prayer the Duty and Delight Stewardship Program, the volunteers working on the stewardship process, 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 respond to this email. If you're willing to pray, please hit “reply” and say, “I'll pray!”
LETTER OR EMAIL BLAST FROM CONGREGATIONAL PRESIDENT (SEE PAGE 8)

To be sent the Monday after the Sunday three weeks before Commitment Sunday.

Dear friends,

Greeting for churches with stewardship emphasis in autumn: It's hard to believe this time of year is here again. Children are back in school, leaves will soon be changing, daylight hours will be shorter and the air will soon feel crisper.

Greeting for churches with stewardship emphasis in spring: It's hard to believe Easter will soon be upon us [or has come and gone]. Daylight saving time is old news and the days are getting longer. It's also a time of year when things start to grow.

Here at {name of congregation}, 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 stewardship emphasis this year is titled “The Duty and Delight Stewardship Program.” It’s a time to celebrate God’s generosity by responding with our own generosity. You have already received {name of prayer chair}’s letter about the Duty and Delight prayer team. We’ve all heard about the power of prayer, and I truly believe that this is a key part of the process. It will ensure that we focus on God’s will for our congregation and that as members we 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 Duty and Delight prayer team.

Serving in his Name,
{typed name}
Congregational President

LETTER OR EMAIL BLAST FROM PASTOR (SEE PAGE 10)

To be sent the Monday before Duty and Delight Commitment 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.

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.

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 Duty and Delight Sunday. Will you:

• Take a few moments to say “thank you” to God for our Lord’s generosity on the cross?
• Take a few moments each day to pray for our church and for each other for guidance as we approach our Duty and Delight Commitment Sunday?
• Take a few moments to ask God to guide you in the way of generosity?

Bless you as you pray,
{typed name}
Pastor
FOLLOW-UP LETTER

To be sent the day after Duty and Delight Commitment Sunday

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We had a wonderful turnout and excellent response for this year’s Duty and Delight Commitment Sunday {or Weekend}. For those people from whom we have not received an 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 it lets us know what resources we will have for our ministries next year. The Church Council will be spending the next several weeks finishing up next year’s budget. On a more personal level, I believe that regular giving is key to spiritual growth because each time you give it encourages you to think about your commitment to Christ and all He has done.

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 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 {name of congregation} 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 (year) and determine how best to use the generous gifts you and others have committed to give.

On behalf of the Stewardship Committee and all those who participate and are blessed by the ministries of {name of congregation}, thank you for your consideration and thank you for your generosity.

Serving in Christ,
{typed name}
Duty and Delight Stewardship Committee Chair

THANK-YOU LETTER

Personalize each letter with the family’s name, perhaps using a mail merge.

Dear ____________,

“Thank you” doesn’t seem to be a strong enough word to express our gratitude for the generosity of our congregation. The results of our Duty and Delight Stewardship Program the week before last were gratifying, to say the least. ___ member families thus far have completed their Estimate of Giving cards. Of those, ____ anticipate increasing their giving over last year’s actual giving. That means that ____ percent of our members grew in their giving. Impressive! It also means that our congregation expects to see an increase in giving of $________ over last year, for an increase of _____ percent.

We also thank you for your part in our congregation’s ministry. Bless you for all that you do for our church, not only in terms of your giving, but for sharing your time, your talents and service to our Lord’s work. May God richly bless you for all that you do.

In Christ’s Service,
{typed name}
Duty and Delight Stewardship Committee Chair
Duty and Delight Estimate of Giving Card

If your congregation has a standard card that you use each year, please feel free to use it for this program. If not, you might consider the following or a similar card for your Duty and Delight Commitment Sunday.

**Duty and Delight Commitment Sunday**

**ESTIMATE OF GIVING**

Because God gives abundantly, and because I want to be a faithful steward, I/we will commit to give the following during the coming year:

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

_____ I/we plan to grow toward or beyond a tithe by giving $_________ per week.

NAME (PLEASE PRINT) _________________________________________________________
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