



Fall Stewardship Helps

Whether you have a full-fledged, Christ-centered, story-laden Fall Stewardship Appeal ready to go, or if you're not sure you have the bandwidth to do a full appeal this year, there are some simple things that you and your congregation can keep in heart and mind, and some simple steps to take, to make sure God's call to generosity is not forgotten in the rush of autumn activities.

-Money follows Mission: What is your congregation's purpose? What is the call you're answering in your community? How does your assembly change lives, both within and outside the church? Tell these stories, and tell them often. Include little snippets in the bulletin, or have a time of testimony during offering. Call on people young and aged to say how your community, gathered in the name of Christ, changes their life and then encourage people to keep your life-changing ministry going by making a pledge to next year's ministry.

-Something Old, Something New: Each year that passes stands on the shoulders of the previous year. Could the founders of your congregation have ever envisioned how far you've come? Honor their legacy. And, with them in mind, what is next for your community? What's the new thing God has placed on your heart? Legacy pulls at the heart, and newness tingles the imagination. Start talking about something new you want to do next year, and encourage your community to bring it to fruition with their time, talent, and treasure!

-Emails, Letters, Social Media, Oh My!: You have so many outlets where stories can be told. Stories about how your ministry impacts people happen every week. Take advantage! Too many communities use these mediums for pure informational purposes, talking about calendars or something coming up. But what if you saw these mediums as primarily ways to share inspiration rather than information? Don't just report on how many people were in worship, talk about how they saw God in your community that Sunday. Don't just report on the dry giving numbers, but give an example of how congregational giving is put into action! Share the good news of Jesus Christ alive in your congregation!

-Write it Down: Many communities have gotten out of the habit of writing down their pledges each year, but we know that putting pen to paper (or doing it electronically) helps ensure that commitments are met. Have a commitment Sunday after a month full of the above activities where people bring forth their pledge forms. They need not be fancy or elaborate, just a commitment of how they plan to fuel your ministry as God has called them to engage next year. Then, and this is radical, actually look at the pledges and thank each person, no matter the pledge, for sharing their gifts!