

REPORT OF THE STEWARDSHIP DIRECTOR

DEFINITION OF CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

Christian stewardship is the free and joyous activity of the child of God and God's family, the Church, in managing all of life and life's resources for God's purposes.

STEWARDSHIP DIRECTOR RESPONSIBILITIES

In addition to providing stewardship education, soliciting district budget funds and serving the fiscal committee, I also provided all the reports, wrote all the correspondence and attended all the meetings connected with the duties of district stewardship director. Sincere thanks is extended to Rev. Warren Huffines, Rev. Ronald Meyr, Rev. Gary Scharrer and Rev. Joseph Weatherell who served as circuit stewardship representatives.

STEWARDSHIP EDUCATION

Christian stewardship begins with the fundamental truth that God is the owner of all things. Christians are stewards (managers, caretakers) of His possessions. Love for Christ through faith in the Gospel is the motivating power for true Christian stewardship. Educational resources containing Bible studies, worship services, devotional material, financial helps, church newsletter/bulletin articles and program suggestions were purchased annually for each congregation. The materials listed below were produced by Ron Chewing of Stewardship Advisors, Birmingham, MI.

2006 - "Financial Counsel from God's Word"

2007 - "Maturing as Stewards through Faith, Love and Hope"

2008 - "Stewards Living a God-pleasing Life"

Pastors were encouraged to engage their congregations in the use of the "Congregational Stewardship Workbook", a large, comprehensive resource of stewardship information (weighing 8 lbs) made available to all congregations to be used for years to come. Stewardship articles were produced regularly for the Beacon. Financial reports and stewardship education resources were shared at pastoral conferences. Information was shared at orientation meetings for new pastors entering the district.

Consecrated Sunday Stewardship Program

I conducted four stewardship programs titled, "Consecration Sunday", developed by Herb Miller, to increase annual giving.

April 9, 2006	St Mark, Cleveland, OH	+\$30,600 (+18.5%)
June 11, 2006	Zion, Norridge, IL	+\$17,115 (+11.5%)
Oct. 22, 2006	Christ, New Castle, PA	+\$11,631 (+12.5%)
March 25, 2007	St. John, Cudahy, WI	+\$122,101 (+46.4%)

Consecrated Stewards Stewardship Program

Rev. Warren Huffines and Rev. Joseph Weatherell were trained and certified to lead the synodical stewardship program, "Consecrated Stewards", based on Herb Miller's program.

Rev. Weatherell lead a program:

June 1, 2008	St. Matthew, Wilkes Barre, PA	+\$24,579 (+26.1%)
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Rev. Huffines lead a program:

Oct. 5, 2008	St. Lucas, St. Louis, MO	+\$37,000 (+30%)
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Consecration Stewardship Programs Emphasize Biblical Giving

Both Herb Miller's and the LCMS stewardship programs are designed to free congregations from the attitude of "Need Giving". Needs are simply indicators of where to exert Christian love. "Biblical Giving" is emphasized with a focus on the spiritual need of the giver to give in response to God's love in Christ rather than on the need of the Church to meet budgets. Members, motivated by love for Christ, are encouraged to become proportionate, regular, first-fruit Biblical givers.

FUNDING THE BUDGET

Suggested Congregational Budget Goal Increases

Congregational increases were suggested every Fall to fund the SELC budget. Congregations were strongly urged to remit on a monthly basis to enable a stable cash flow for district disbursements. Suggested increases:

	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>
Inflation Factor	+3.2%	+3.8%	+2.5%
Growth Challenge	+1.8%	+1.7%	+2.5%
	+5.0%	+5.5%	+5.0%

Average per Communicant Contributions

2006 - \$40.57 2007 - \$40.08 2008 - \$40.50

Suggested goals are not calculated on the basis of communicant membership.

Increases are based on the accepted goal of the previous year multiplied by a suggested percentage increase determined by the inflation rate plus a growth challenge. This allows each congregation the privilege of establishing a reasonable goal suited to its financial circumstances. Some smaller congregations actually contributed more than some larger ones. In 2008 the highest per communicant average was **\$118.21** from Zion, Chicago. The lowest average was **\$1.90**. The largest total dollar contribution was **\$126,707.00** from St. Luke, Oviedo. The word, "synod", comes from a Greek word which means "walking together". As a district, our congregations should walk together, each pulling a fair share of the financial load. Christ's love compels us! (2 Cor. 5:14)

Congregational Goals & Budget Receipts

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Goals</u>		<u>Receipts</u>	
2006	\$764,200	\$541,407	102.06%	\$552,553	+3.48%
2007	\$772,200	\$556,360	97.67%	\$543,382	(-1.65%)
2008	\$749,600	\$574,272	95.24%	\$546,965	+0.66%

COMMUNICANT MEMBERSHIP

	<u>Congregations</u>	<u>Communicants</u>	<u>Increase-Decrease</u>
2006	53	13,619	+43 0.31%
2007	53	13,566	(-63 0.46%)
2008	53	13,504	(-52 0.38%)

Three Year Overall Decrease - 72 Communicants (-0.53%)

BUDGETS

The SELC Fiscal Committee, consisting of Mr. Keith Balla, treasurer; Mr. Clarence Cook, financial secretary; Mrs. Lou Ann Gotch; Dr. Carl Krueger, district president; and Rev. Thomas Soltis, stewardship director, met annually in January to prepare a district budget. The budgets below were approved by the district board of directors.

	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>
SELC Missions	\$300,700	\$214,500	\$178,000
Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod	190,800	190,800	196,000
Two Seminaries	21,200	21,200	21,800
Lutheran Haven	55,000	55,000	60,000
District Programs/Education	75,200	88,300	89,800
District Service Ministries	121,300	202,400	204,000
Total	\$764,200	\$772,200	\$749,600

Budgets were established in excess of projected receipts in order to diminish reserve funds. It is anticipated reserves will be depleted in the near future, eliminating the luxury of deficit budgets.

Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Budgets

2006-07	\$ 88,163,564
*2007-08	\$100,503,473
2008-09	\$ 84,690,924

*The large increase in fiscal year 2007-08 was due to synodical convention and national youth gathering expenses totaling \$13,672,000.

LCMS Synodical Statistics for the Year 2007

Number of Congregations	6167	
*Baptized Members	2,383,084	(down 34,913)
Confirmed Members	1,835,064	(down 21,719)
Average Worship Attendance	165.7	(down 6.8)
Clergy	9,164	(Serving Parishes 5,356)
Missionaries	811	
Educators	26,662	
Schools	Preschools 1,336 - Elementary 977	
	High Schools 109 - Colleges 10 - Seminaries 2	
Total Contributions of Members	- \$1,399,774,702 (up \$44,316,144)	
Average per Communicant Annual Giving	- \$762.79 (up \$32.79)	

*Membership declines in the synod continue a trend over more than 30 years.

BIBLICAL GIVING

PROPORTIONATE - Percentage of Income (1 Cor. 16:2)

REGULAR - Weekly Giving (1 Cor. 16:2)

FIRST-FRUIT - Funding God First (Prov. 3:9)

Rev. Thomas Soltis, EM, Stewardship Director