RENEWED STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

For Consideration:

(2 Corinthians 8:8‑9) I say this not as a command, but to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich. (RSV)

(2 Corinthians 9:6‑8) The point is this: he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must do as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have enough of everything and may provide in abundance for every good work. (RSV)

(2 Corinthians 9:12‑13) for the rendering of this service not only supplies the wants of the saints but also overflows in many thanksgivings to God. Under the test of this service, you will glorify God by your obedience in acknowledging the gospel of Christ, and by the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others; (RSV)

1. With nearly half of our congregation giving **[Dollar Amount]** or less per week it has become evident that we lack a solid understanding of Biblical Stewardship.
2. For many years we have been passive in our approach to providing God’s people at **[NAME OF CHURCH]** opportunity to grow in managing their lives for Christ.
3. It is evident that we need a multi-year process for stewardship education and mutual encouragement.
4. Small group meetings utilizing *“With A Grateful Heart”* will be at the center of this process, with the remainder of the congregation being addressed through personal letters from the pastor.
5. Attendance at Commitment Sunday Celebrations will be encouraged, with a follow-up procedure in place to seek out those who do not participate in the grace of giving.
6. The Board of Stewardship shall oversee this project.
7. The following committees, and any others deemed necessary, shall be formed:

Every Member Letter (2 members)

Cottage Meeting (3 members)

Follow-up (4 members)

Commitment Sunday (3 members)

**EVERY MEMBER LETTER:** (Pastor)

Prepare letters for suggested increases; invitation to cottage meeting with r.s.v.p.; and encouragement to attend commitment Sunday & render a pledge:

**Current Picture & Suggested Challenges [This was the measure of the original congregation]**

180 - No pledge, or under $1 per week contribution - what of worship attendance?

 81 - Between $1-10 per week - challenge to 2% giving

 85 - Between $10-30 per week - challenge to increase by 10% of current giving, or strive for tithe

 54 - Over $30 per week - challenge to increase by 5%, or strive for tithe

**Also**

8th Graders included above - suggest $.50 per week or tithe of allowance or income

9th Graders included above - suggest $.75 per week or tithe of allowance or income

10th Graders included above - suggest $1.00 per week or tithe of allowance or income

11th-12th Graders included above suggest $1.50 per week or tithe of allowance or income

See attached letters

Consider a tract to go with mailing

**COTTAGE MEETING:**

Q: Who do we invite to Cottage Meetings?

A: Pastor will create list in consultation with Cottage mtg. Comm.

Q: How many time choices do we give them?

A: \*Cottage Meeting Comm. (End of Sept.-Oct.)

Q: How many facilitators will we recruit?

A: \*Cottage Meeting Comm.

Q: How will we recruit the facilitators?

A: \*Cottage Meeting Comm.

Q: How will we train the facilitators?

A: \*Cottage Meeting Comm.

Q: Do we train Cottage Meeting Facilitators to do follow-up also?

A: \*Cottage Meeting Comm. & Follow-up Comm.

**Possible Outline For Cottage Meeting -**

1. Welcome & Opening Devotion from 2 Corinthians 8-9 - Pastor (5 Minutes)

2. Intro. video - suggest missed opportunities for joyful stewardship as a reason for the meeting -

 Stewardship Board Rep. (3 Minutes)

3. View Video (20 Minutes)

4. Break-out groups with facilitators (10-15 Minutes)

Recap Video, encourage further reflection on blessings & response, seek commitment.

Main Thoughts Of Video

• Christian Stewardship Involves A New Focus On How We Manage Our Lives

 1. We do not focus on what we give up, but on the wealth of blessings we

 have and will receive from God.

2. A strong devotional life which focuses on God’s grace can change our perspective.

1. God is the owner of all things. Nothing is ours to keep. We can get all wrapped up in it now, only to give it up at death, or we can share it now, and invest in heavenly treasures.
2. God is our provider, he will always give us what we need, and more.

5. God owns us and all that we have not merely by creation, but by redemption. We were bought at a price, the blood of Christ.

• Stewardship involves our response to God’s blessings.

1. There is a negative view of stewardship, an institutional view that many of us share with the stewardship committee in the video.
2. The real motivation that comes from gratitude
3. Consider how grateful your current level of stewardship of time, talents and treasures shows you to be.

• Stewardship Involves Service.

1. Consider the need for every person to be involved.
2. The “somebody” to whom everyone is looking to do “something” may be you.

• Stewardship involves the joyful giving of ourselves and our treasures

1. Gifts to the Lord offered begrudgingly are not acceptable to him.
2. The joy is in actually being a partner with our Savior.

• Willing response to God’s love

1. We give not because we must.
2. With the Macedonians we plead for an opportunity to share in the eternal work of God, and to give others reason to praise God.

• Challenge to Change and Grow

1. What is really important, and where should our priorities be.
2. This is a point to challenge one another how much more you might be able to commit to the Lord’s work over the next year. Could there be a long range plan for continued growth over the next five years. Consider the relationship between what you are able to commit, to what you have been and are willing to commit. Look over proportionate giving tables & pledge cards. What kind of realistic increase could you expect from yourself by God’s grace? Consider Simply-Giving program...other?

• Change of Heart

1. Know who you are, and what you are here for.
2. See every day as a gift from God, and an opportunity to make a difference for eternity.

5. Wrap-up & Closing Prayer (2 Minutes)

Other Details of the meeting

**LIST OF POSSIBLE FACILITATORS:**

Stewardship Board Members:

Others:

**FOLLOW-UP:**

Q: How will we follow-up on those who do not attend?

A: \*Follow-up Comm.

Q: What subsequent contacts will we make with those who do not attend Cottage Meeting & those who do not pledge on commitment Sunday?

A: \*Follow-up Comm.

Q: Do we train Cottage Meeting Facilitators to do follow-up also?

A: \*Cottage Meeting Comm. & Follow-up Comm.

**COMMITMENT SUNDAY:**

Prepare materials in cooperation with Cottage & Follow-up Committees

Create posters to prepare for Commitment Sunday

Create First of November postcards to remind everyone to attend Commitment Sunday, and advise of a follow-up contact if they do not attend it

Arrange bulletin announcements and stewardship talks from laymen

Produce outline of Sunday events

**PROPOSED TIME LINE:**

July 2nd week Send letter for people to serve on committees. (Pastor & Secretaries)

July 4th week Committee meetings. (Pastor)

Aug. 2nd week Send letter to recruit facilitators. (Cottage Mtg. Comm., Pastor & Secretaries)

Aug. 3rd week Meet with & train facilitators. (Cottage Mtg. Comm., Pastor & Steward. Chair)

Sept. 1st week Send Cottage Meeting Invitation Letter. (Pastor & Secretaries)

Sept. 2nd week Send Every Unit letters. (Pastor & Secretaries)

Sept. 2nd -3rd week Compile responses to letters, and follow-up with phone calls if needed to line people

up in Cottage Groups and begin to set follow-up visits. (Cottage Mtg. Comm.)

Sept. 3rd wk-Oct. 2nd wk Send out reminders to Cottage Group Participants. (Cottage Mtg. Comm. & Secretaries)

Sept. 4th wk-Oct. 3rd wk Hold Cottage Group Meetings. (Cottage Mtg. Comm. & Pastor)

After cottage mtgs. Send second every unit letter, suggesting increase.

Oct. 4th wk-Nov. 2nd wk. Follow-up on non-attenders. (Follow-up Comm.)

Last weekend of Oct. 2 weeks prior to Commitment Sunday Lay Talk (Commitment Sun. Committee)

1st weekend of Nov. 1 week prior to Commitment Sunday Lay Talk & Sermon (Commitment Sun. Committee)

2nd weekend of Nov. Commitment Sunday Celebration (Commitment Sun. Committee)

3rd & 4th weeks of Nov. Follow-up letters or visits to those who did not attend commitment Sunday. (Follow-up Comm.)

End of Nov. Meet for evaluation & feedback

September xx, xxxx [1st week of Sept.]

Name

Address

City State Zip

Dear ,

Grace and peace to you from our God and Father, and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I am writing **to invite you to attend a small group meeting** sponsored by **[Congregation's]** Stewardship Board.

As you consider your life of Christian service, I feel that it is necessary to consider three important questions:

• Has the Lord loved and blessed me?

• Do I love the Lord?

• How am I going to respond to His blessings, and demonstrate my love?

In answer to the **first question**, I pray that the Holy Spirit will open your mind and heart to fully appreciate the love and blessings of God in your life. Take time to consider how much God has loved you in sending His Son to die for you, so that you could have eternal life. Look at your life, and all the things you have and enjoy. Every breath...every pleasure...every moment...every good and perfect gift has come to you from your loving, heavenly Father.

In answer to the **second question**, I, again, pray that the Holy Spirit will lead you to confess with St. Peter, “Yes, Lord, You know that I love you!” But more than that I hope that He moves you to put that love into action. Consider how you have managed, or mismanaged, your life for Christ. Confess your love not just with words, but with your entire life.

This brings us to the **third question**, and the most difficult of all. How am I going to respond to His blessings, and demonstrate my love? Here are a few suggestions from the Bible:

1. I will gratefully receive the salvation He offers me, call on His name, and fulfill my vows in His house of worship. (Ps. 116)

1. I will show Him that I love Him by observing His commands, and bearing fruit. (John 15)

3. I will offer all that I am and everything I have to His service. (Romans 12)

4. I will show the sincerity of my love by giving first my heart, and then my treasures to relieve the spiritual and physical sufferings of others for Christ’s sake. (2 Corinthians 8)

In the next three years we would like to teach all the members of the congregation more about what it means to show our love for God. This year **we are asking you to attend a small group meeting** to discuss what it means to manage your life for Christ, and to assist you in making a pledge commitment prior to Commitment Weekend. **If you are unable to attend one of these meetings, a couple of our volunteers may make plans to visit you at your home.**

Keep your eyes open for more information on how the Lord is preparing you to demonstrate your love. Peace be with you.

In Christ,

Pastor

September xx, xxxx [2nd week of Sept.]

Name

Address

City State Zip

Dear ,

Grace and peace to you from our God and Father, and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

As you consider your life of Christian service, under God’s blessing, I invite you to consider three important questions:

• Has the Lord loved and blessed me?

• Do I love the Lord?

• How am I going to respond to His blessings, and demonstrate my love?

In answer to the **first question**, I pray that the Holy Spirit will open your mind and heart to fully appreciate the love and blessings of God in your life. Take time to consider how much God has loved you by sending His Son to die for you, so that you could have eternal life. Look at your life, and all the things you have and enjoy. Every breath...every pleasure...every moment...every good and perfect gift has come to you from your loving, heavenly Father.

In answer to the **second question**, I, again, pray that the Holy Spirit will lead you to confess with St. Peter, “Yes, Lord, You know that I love you!” But more than that I hope that He moves you to put that love into action. Consider how you have managed, or mismanaged, your life for Christ. Have your actions shown God and the world that you love your Lord? Confess your love not just with words, but with your entire life.

This brings us to the **third question**, and the most difficult of all. How am I going to respond to His blessings, and demonstrate my love? Here are a few suggestions from the Bible:

1. I will gratefully receive the salvation He offers me, call on His name, and fulfill my vows in His house of worship. (Ps. 116)

1. I will show Him that I love Him by observing His commands, and bearing fruit. (John 15)

3. I will offer all that I am and everything I have to His service. (Romans 12)

4. I will show the sincerity of my love by giving first my heart, and then my treasures to relieve the spiritual and physical sufferings of others for Christ’s sake. (2 Corinthians 8)

In the past weeks and in those to come you are being given the opportunity to show your love for the Lord in various ways. Last month everyone was given a chance to pledge their time and talents to the Lord’s service. Some of the members will take part in the first of our small group meetings, and others will be encouraged through correspondence this year with the hope of inviting them to similar meetings next year. Finally we will all join together on **[Date of Commitment Sunday]** to commit a generous portion of the treasures we have received from God to His service.

Keep your eyes open for more information on how the Lord is preparing you to demonstrate your love. Peace be with you.

In Christ,

Pastor

October xx, xxxx [October 3rd or 4th week]

Dear Redeemed in Christ,

Grace and peace to you from our God and Father, and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

As we prepare for our stewardship Sunday, I wanted to thank you for attending one of the cottage meetings in which you were challenged to grow in the grace of giving. I pray that through God’s Word, and the witness presented in the film and by fellow members of your St. John’s family, you learned what it means to respond to the Lord’s blessings, and demonstrate your love for your Savior.

With St. Paul I encourage you to show the sincerity of your love first by giving your heart, and then by giving your treasures to relieve the spiritual and physical sufferings of others for Christ’s sake. This is what our offerings through St. John’s are all about. It is our opportunity to return a thank offering to the Lord. It is our privilege to share in the Gospel ministry with our Savior.

I encourage you to consider the suggestions you received at the cottage meeting, and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit in your response to God’s love. On **[Date of Commitment Sunday]** you will have the opportunity of demonstrating your love for God as we, together, celebrate our Commitment Sunday. If have already turned in the white copy of your pledge card, please remember to bring your blue copy to present to the Lord on this occasion.

I am confident that you have dedicated much thought and prayer to your life management decisions this year. I trust that the Holy Spirit has blessed you with a joyful response to God’s grace. Remember, whatever you do, do it to the glory of the Lord with a thankful heart.

Blessings upon your consecrated life!

In Christ,

Pastor

October xx, xxxx [October 3rd or 4th week]

Dear Redeemed in Christ,

Grace and peace to you from our God and Father, and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

In my last letter I challenged you to consider how you might respond to the Lord’s blessings, and demonstrate your love for your Savior. One of the ways, as suggested by St. Paul in the 8th chapter of 2nd Corinthians, is by first giving your heart, and then your treasures to relieve the spiritual and physical sufferings of others for Christ’s sake. This is what our offerings through **[Congregation Name]** are all about.

When it comes to showing the sincerity of our love through the pledging of our treasures to God’s service, the Board of Stewardship would like to offer the following suggestions:

**FOR ALL OF GOD’S PEOPLE**

Always remember that our gifts to the Lord are to come first. They are to be offered sacrificially. They are to be offered with a cheerful spirit. And they are to be given in proportion to the blessings we have received. The Old Testament starting point was 10%, but we have been set free from the law to accomplish far more under grace.

**FOR THOSE CURRENTLY OFFERING LESS THAN ONE DOLLAR PER WEEK**

If you are currently averaging a gift of less than $1 per week, you need to first give yourself to the Lord. You need to return to regular worship and the study of God’s Word. Only after you are again filled with the Holy Spirit, and overwhelmed by Christ’s love, will you be prepared to properly demonstrate love for the Lord through sacrificial offerings in thanksgiving to God.

**FOR THOSE CURRENTLY OFFERING BETWEEN ONE AND TEN DOLLARS PER WEEK**

If you are currently averaging a gift of between $1-10 per week, challenge yourself to begin to give to the Lord, in a first-fruit, sacrificial manner, in proportion to your blessings. It is recommended that you start by setting 2% of your weekly income aside as a love gift to the Lord.

**FOR THOSE CURRENTLY OFFERING BETWEEN TEN AND THIRTY DOLLARS PER WEEK**

If you are currently averaging a gift between $10-30 per week you are encouraged to increase that gift by 10%, or work toward returning 10% or more of your blessings as an expression of thanksgiving and love to the Lord.

**FOR THOSE CURRENTLY OFFERING OVER THIRTY DOLLARS PER WEEK**

If you are currently averaging a gift over $30 per week you are encouraged to increase your current gift by 5% or challenge yourself to return at least 10% of all your blessings to the Lord in loving appreciation for His tremendous sacrifice for you.

I encourage you to consider these suggestions, and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit in your response to God’s love. On **[Date of Commitment Sunday]** you will have the opportunity of demonstrating your love for God as we, together, celebrate our Commitment Sunday. If you are unable to attend, or forget to offer your pledge, someone will come by your home to receive it from you.

I pray the Lord’s blessings upon your consecrated life!

In Christ,

Pastor

October xx, xxxx [October 3rd or 4th week]

Dear Redeemed in Christ,

Grace and peace to you from our God and Father, and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

In my last letter I challenged you to consider how you might respond to the Lord’s blessings, and demonstrate your love for your Savior. One of the ways, as suggested by St. Paul in the 8th chapter of 2nd Corinthians, is by giving first your heart, and then your treasures to relieve the spiritual and physical sufferings of others for Christ’s sake. This is what our offerings through **[Congregation Name]** are all about.

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Always remember that our gifts to the Lord are to come first. They are to be offered sacrificially. They are to be offered with a cheerful spirit. And they are to be given in proportion to the blessings we have received. The Old Testament starting point was 10%, but we have been set free from the law to accomplish far more under grace.

**FOR 8TH GRADE YOUTH**

It is suggested that you challenge yourself to give a minimum of $ .50 per week, or 10% of your weekly allowance or income.

**FOR 9TH GRADE YOUTH**

It is suggested that you challenge yourself to give a minimum of $ .75 per week, or 10% of your weekly allowance or income.

**FOR 10TH GRADE YOUTH**

It is suggested that you challenge yourself to give a minimum of $ 1.00 per week, or 10% of your weekly allowance or income.

**FOR 11TH & 12TH GRADE YOUTH**

It is suggested that you challenge yourself to give a minimum of $ 1.50 per week, or 10% of your weekly allowance or income.

I encourage you to consider these suggestions, and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit in your response to God’s love. On **[Date of Commitment Sunday]** you will have the opportunity of demonstrating your love for God as we, together, celebrate our Commitment Sunday. If you are unable to attend, or forget to offer your pledge, someone will come by your home to receive it from you.

I pray the Lord’s blessings upon your consecrated life!

In Christ,

Pastor

July xx, xxxx

Dear [NAME],

To serve our Lord Jesus Christ is the highest privilege we have in this world. With this letter I am inviting you to claim this privilege, and offering you an opportunity to bring blessings to your **[Name of Congregation]**'s family.

I am asking you to serve on the Commitment Event committee, which is helping us prepare for this years “Commitment Weekend.”

I am choosing you because I am convinced that you not only have a heart for Jesus and that you love your Church, but that you have the God-given ability to serve in a blessed way in this task. To be a part of helping the members of our congregation grow in the management of their life for Christ is one of the most important tasks of your life. I am convinced that once you do this work, you will really enjoy it and you will be thankful for the experience.

The first meeting of your committee will be on **[Date, time & Location of meeting]**. Please set this date aside in your own personal life, for it is extremely important that we make a strong beginning.

I believe the spiritual life, the faith, love and hope of our Christian family will increase under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. And you are blessed to be a part of it. Please pray about it, as I pray for you.

Again, our first meeting will be on **[Date]**. If you are unable to attend this meeting, but are still led to serve please let me know.

God’s rich blessings in your daily walk with Jesus.

In Christ,

Pastor