



# Thanks to You...

A Newsletter from the Southeast District Stewardship Team | Volume 3, Issue 3 | August, 2011

507 North Broadway Street | Mount Pleasant, Iowa 52641 | Phone: 319.986.2095 | Fax: 319.986.2098

*The purpose of the Southeast District Stewardship Team is to cultivate extravagant generosity within the people and congregations of the district through practical emphasis on prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness.*

## Southeast District Stewardship Team

*Tom Bates*

Sigourney UMC

*Rose Blank*

Conference Superintendent

*Phil Carver*

Field Outreach Minister

*Laverne Hueholt*

Spring Grove UMC, Burlington

*Norma Morrison*

Wesley UMC, Muscatine

*Bruce Ursin*

Wesley UMC, Muscatine

*Lori Walsh*

Christ UMC, Davenport

## Growing Generosity Asking Makes a Difference

**I**f you or members of your congregation are feeling reluctant to consider using a stewardship program this fall, keep in mind one important thing: Asking makes a difference!

Research from Denny Buwalda and Wayne Barrett from the West Michigan United Methodist Foundation Office suggests that contributions to the ministry of the church will double, or even triple, if we take the time to ask.

Consider their findings:

- When no specific contribution is requested of church members, the average annual gift from a household is \$400, or about 1.5% of household income.
- When church members are asked to identify a specific dollar amount, the average annual gift per household is \$800, or about 2.9% of household income.

- When church members are asked to commit a percentage of their household income, the average annual gift per household is \$1,200, or 4.6% of household income.

### *Develop a Multi-Year Plan*

Effective stewardship education should reflect a variety of methods, because each person responds to different aspects of giving as a spiritual discipline.

For best results, make plans to do significant activities during months when giving is at its peak. A multi-year cycle of events helps to keep stewardship fresh.

**1** A worship celebration in the first year encourages an awareness that we share as a congregation in our commitment to God and serving the world through our gifts.

**2** A member visitation program in the sec-

ond year gives us a chance to speak personally with others who give to the ministries of the church.

**3** A relay program in the third year provides a gentle reminder to affirm our membership vows to give of our prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness to God through the ministries of our congregation.

**4** Holding small group meetings in the fourth year allows time to share with friends how much we rejoice in giving back to God from the many blessings in our lives.

An additional benefit of using an annual stewardship program is that you can then build your budget for the coming year with a clear sense of your available funds. Plan now for an event this fall.

For suggestions of stewardship programs suited to your congregation visit the General Board of Discipleship website, [gbod.org/stewardship](http://gbod.org/stewardship).



*Best Practices:*  
**Stewardship  
 Nuggets for  
 Families**  
 with Lori Walsh

It is our responsibility and challenge to present stewardship in such a way that our children and youth can begin to make the conversion of heart that is necessary to develop a life of stewardship. Family devotions and Sunday school lessons can contribute to this aspect of spiritual growth.

Christian stewardship education and formation helps children and youth realize that they are unique gifts from God, understand that they have special talents and gifts, and discover all that God has given them. This can be accomplished in a number of ways during religious education at all grade levels. Just as Christian stewardship education is an ongoing process for adults, we must also continually educate children and youth.

Consider using the forty “Stewardship Nuggets for Families and Children,” available from the General Board of Discipleship’s Center for Christian Stewardship at [www.discipleshipresources.org/images/drdownloads/nuggets.pdf](http://www.discipleshipresources.org/images/drdownloads/nuggets.pdf). Each nugget includes a scripture, a short lesson or devotion, a prayer, and questions for discussion.

For example, one nugget written by Janet Zimmerman is called “Gifts from God.” It begins with a quote from Proverbs:

Honor the Lord with your substance and with the first fruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine.  
 — Proverbs 13:9-10

Students are invited to consider the ways God has blessed their lives. Questions for discussion address the meaning of the word “blessing” and how Christians honor God by the choices they make.

The devotion concludes with the following prayer:

Thank you God for all of the blessings that you have given me. Help me not to take them for granted, but to use these blessings in ways that honor you. Amen.

## Iowa Wesleyan College A District Mission Partner

Iowa Wesleyan College is affiliated with the Iowa Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. In accordance with its Wesleyan heritage, Iowa Wesleyan College seeks to promote spiritual development as well as intellectual growth in all of its students. The college encourages its students to participate in the worship, study, and fellowship of the religious community of their choice in the area.

The Rev. David Bracht-Wagner (pictured) serves Iowa Wesleyan College as their Campus Minister. The Campus Minister is a pastor and chaplain for the students, staff, and faculty, willing to assist in many different ways to help the students grow in their faith. The Campus Minister is also one of the many persons on and off campus who are available for counseling.



Another important way to support Iowa Wesleyan College is to encourage students you know to enroll there. Learn more at [www.iwc.edu](http://www.iwc.edu).

Iowa Wesleyan College is a mission partner with the congregations in the southeast region of Iowa through District Askings. Your financial support — at 30¢ per member — helps to encourage the spiritual development of students, staff, and faculty as well as the many guests and visitors to the campus.

The other five ministries supported by local church mission gifts to District Askings include:

|                                      |     |
|--------------------------------------|-----|
| Mobile United Methodist Missionaries | 60¢ |
| Southeast District Latino Task Force | 60¢ |
| Justice for Our Neighbors            | 30¢ |
| St. Paul’s Hispanic Worship Center   | 30¢ |
| Emerging Ministries                  | 30¢ |

District Askings amount to \$2.40 per member per year. For more information please contact the Southeast District office. Thank you for your generous support of these vital ministries.

**We invite you to reprint articles from  
*Thanks to You* in your local church newsletters and bulletins, as well as on websites.**