

LIVING GENEROUSLY

STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN 2012

ST. ANDREW PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

2012 STEWARDSHIP
CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE

September 27, 2011

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Dear Friends in Christ,

Your Stewardship Campaign Committee has chosen “Living Generously” as the theme for this year’s stewardship campaign. While giving generously financially is a very important aspect of our campaign (that is, after all, the Committee’s job number 1), we feel that there is so much more that makes St. Andrew special than mere dollars and cents, and we wanted to make this a campaign about generosity in a larger sense.

During the five Sundays in October, fellow members of the church will be sharing with you some of the many ways in which our St. Andrew fellowship serves, worships, and learns together through the miracle of Christ. We hope those stories will inspire you to examine the ways in which you do or, better yet, could contribute to the life and ministry of the church. We also hope the daily devotionals contained in this booklet will compliment those stories and inspire you to reflect more deeply on your own commitment – of time, talent, and treasure – to St. Andrew.

A few Sundays ago, Brandon reminded us that it was the Apostle Andrew who gave Jesus the five barley loaves and two small fish that fed the multitude. Miracles are happening every day all around us in this church named for St. Andrew. Won’t you join us in creating many more new miracles in the future by Living Generously?

Yours in Christ,

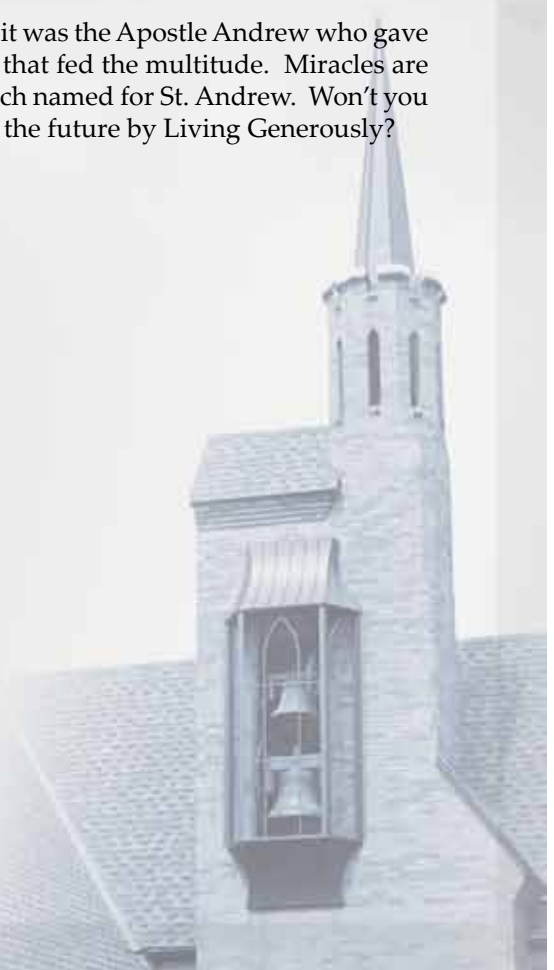
Stewardship Campaign Committee

Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in my house, and thus put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts; see if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing. Malachi 3:10

OCTOBER 3

MATTHEW 6:1-4, 19-21

As we reflect on the theme of stewardship, a good place to begin is with these words of Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount. What do they say about giving, whether in the form of money or simply doing something nice for another person, for the sake of recognition? How might these words apply to your life? Where are you storing up treasure—on earth or in heaven? What evidence is there for your answer?



OCTOBER 4**ROMANS 12:1-21**

Stewardship is not just about money, but is first and foremost about being faithful to Jesus Christ. Because stewardship is discipleship, it touches the whole of life. What is the character of your personal discipleship? Are you conformed to this world, or transformed by the renewing of our minds? Do you try to discern God's will as you make personal and family decisions?

OCTOBER 5**PSALM 24:1**

What do you think of the psalmist's claim that all the earth is the Lord's, and that even our lives are God's possession? Does this throw a different light on your understanding of your time and talent? What about your bank account? When you look at your check register, do you think of the balance as your possession or God's?

OCTOBER 6**GENESIS 1:26-31**

Do you think Christian stewardship plays a role in the way we take care of the earth and its resources? Genesis 1:26 suggests that God wants us to act as under sovereigns of the Sovereign God. What do you think this means as Christians relate not just to other humans, but to the whole of creation?

OCTOBER 7**DEUTERONOMY 14:22-27****LEVITICUS 27:30-34**

In this passage, Israel is steward of the land, which belongs to God. Tithes of produce are, therefore, offered annually. Why do you think Presbyterians are reluctant to embrace the parts of the Bible which call for the tithe, or 10% of our total household income for the collective work of the covenant community? Do a little math. Figure out the percentage of your total household income that you give to the collective ministry of the covenant community. Using the Bible as a guide, how does your giving stack up? Should what the Bible says make a difference in how and what we give?

OCTOBER 8**LUKE 21:1-4; MATTHEW 13:44-46**

Yesterday we reflected on the tithe. As a wise person once said, however, tithing is more than the number 10. It's not purely and simply a matter doing the math correctly, but involves the attitude of the heart. The poor widow gave more with her two copper coins than all the others, said Jesus, because her gift symbolized the offering of her whole life. Today's two parables of Jesus in Matthew 13 add to this the dimension of passion, sacrifice, and joy. Pray today about your personal sense of passion for the gospel, your willingness to make sacrifices for the proclamation of the Good News, and the joy with which you give of yourself to others for the sake of Jesus Christ. Does your giving symbolize the surplus you had left over? Or does it symbolize instead the gift of your whole self?

OCTOBER 10**AMOS 6:4-6; 5:21-24**

Christian stewardship inevitably carries with it the responsibility of social justice. What do you think this means for middle and upper middle class American Presbyterians? How can we do a better job of making a vital

connection between our worship in the sanctuary and ministry to the poor and dispossessed? When God says "Woe to those," in Amos 6:4 (RSV), is God talking to us?

OCTOBER 11**ACTS 2:31-46**

These words indeed sound strange to our ears. What could they possibly mean us to us today? Maybe this. God asks us to use our earthly possessions for the good of the whole community of faith, to invest our money in our collective life together so that the life of the whole church is built up and empowered. What would change around the church if we took this more seriously? Do you have the courage to pray for this spirit of generosity in our congregation?

OCTOBER 12**EXODUS 16:13-21**

What does this simple story suggest about our difficulty in trusting God to take care of us? God graciously and generously provided for the physical needs of the Israelites as they left slavery in Egypt. They were told to trust God because God would provide for the needs of each new day. But they did not listen; they stored up some extra manna—just in case God didn't come through and they had to rely solely on their own resources. Let us pray for the faith to trust God completely. If you were to trust God completely, what changes would you make in your life?

OCTOBER 13**MATTHEW 25:31-46**

Here is another glimpse of the social justice to which the gospel calls us. Let us pray together today for God to open our hearts more fully to our hurting brothers and sisters—the hungry and thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick, and the imprisoned. Why do you think benevolence ministries like these are sometimes the first to be cut in hard times and the slowest to grow in good times? What does this scene of the Final Judgment say to us about stewardship in the context of the whole human family?

OCTOBER 14**1 JOHN 4:7-11**

Our stewardship of time, talent, and treasure is to be rooted not in legalism but in love. Where do you think we often get off track? Were we to begin making our decisions in life based on the Good News that God is love and that we are called to love each other as God loves us, would anything be different? Let us ask God to restore love to the center of our lives.

OCTOBER 15**LUKE 16:19-31**

Why do you think the Bible takes such a dim view of the enormous gulf between the so-called "haves" and "have-nots"? Could it be because God expects us, in the name of Christ, to try and do away with the gulf? Do you think it's possible to be an authentic Christian and not work in behalf of the oppressed? What does it mean that disciples of Jesus are supposed to have a social conscience?

OCTOBER 17**EXODUS 23:14-19**

This mention of the tithe includes a matter worth our thought and prayer—the first fruits of our labor. We are asked to give to the covenant community our first and

our best, not our leftovers. Take an honest look at your checkbook. Which do you give? Your first fruits or your leftovers? In terms of your time and talent, which is it—first fruits or leftovers? Let us ask God to help us to change, so that our stewardship more closely reflects God's will.

OCTOBER 18 **MATTHEW 22:34-40**

Again we are reminded that stewardship, like discipleship, is a matter of love. In terms of your personal life, as well as our congregational life, does love play the key role? Is love for God and neighbor the foundation on which everything else is built? Think of some concrete pictures of what it looks like when people love their neighbors as themselves.

OCTOBER 19 **MATTHEW 25:14-30**

Sometimes we think we are accountable to no one but ourselves. Sound familiar? Yet this parable of Jesus assures us that each of us will one day have to answer to God and give an account of our personal stewardship of God's gifts to us. Again we are reminded that Christians are stewards not of their own possessions, but of God's possessions. Let us make this a matter of prayer and action.

OCTOBER 20 **MARK 8:34-9:1**

We come to this point in our journey through October with one of the pivotal passages of the new Stewardship season. Discipleship to Jesus Christ involves self-denial and sacrifice. How do these words of Jesus play out in an ego-centered culture driven to be happy no matter what it costs? Read these words of Jesus and talk with another member of St. Andrew about their potential impact on our lives. Do we have the courage to pray for the spirit of these words to take deeper root in who we are and how we live?

OCTOBER 21 **LUKE 10:29-37**

The story of the Good Samaritan, one of the most familiar stories of the Bible, asks a haunting question. What does it mean to be a neighbor to the hurting, the one ignored or even pushed aside by an uncaring culture? Jesus said that being a neighbor means showing mercy to the hurting. How might this claim of Jesus influence our stewardship of time, talent, and treasure?

OCTOBER 22 **MARK 10:17-31**

One of the most troubling of Bible stories, this one raises the thorny issue of idolatry. Why do you think Jesus addresses material possessions so often? Maybe it's because material possessions can easily assume priority in our lives. If you had been present as the rich man "went away grieving," what advice would you have given him? Are you willing to take your own advice? What does it mean to use our material possessions faithfully in following Jesus?

OCTOBER 24 **EXODUS 13:11-16**

Once again Scripture raises the issue of giving our first fruits. Today make a commitment to think and pray about what this could mean in practical terms for our lives. How would it affect the way you live, the way you give, the way

you share yourself with others and with the church?

OCTOBER 25 **1 CORINTHIANS 16:1-4**

We sometimes think that the concept of church pledges or planned giving is an invention of the modern church. But here we see that the seed of this idea comes straight from the Bible. Where are you on the issue of systematic giving? Do you take seriously our collective needs as a church in ministry to the community and world? Does your gift itself show that you take this seriously?

OCTOBER 26 **2 CORINTHIANS 9:6-15**

Stewardship is a matter of joy because "God loves a cheerful giver." Do you give cheerfully? Is giving to the church a burden or a privilege for you? When the church asks for money, is it one more irritating obligation or an opportunity for thankful service? Think on these things and pray about them.

OCTOBER 27 **MICAH 6:6-8**

The prophet Micah sums it up with eloquence and penetrating truth. We are to live before God by doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly with our God. When we deal with this in terms of stewardship, it could be a vision both for our personal budgets and the church budget. Does our use of money (individual and collective) reflect a concern for doing justice? Loving kindness? Walking humbly with our God? What is the evidence for your answer?

OCTOBER 28 **LUKE 12:13-21**

We are reminded once again that our relationship to our material possessions is a matter of the soul. For the Christian, dealing with the green stuff we all love to have in our pockets is chiefly a spiritual matter. When one lives with an abundance of possessions, the dangers abound. What, in your view, are some of the dangers of greed? Of having a great deal more than one needs? Of building larger and larger barns (or bank accounts?) What does it mean to be "rich toward God"?

OCTOBER 29 **LUKE 12:22-34**

These words of Jesus ask us to place our ultimate trust not in ourselves, but in God. Is the attitude of self-sufficiency an issue for you? How, as a disciple of Jesus, do you deal with it? Do you have a purse that does not wear out?

OCTOBER 31 **JOHN 13:1-20, 34-35**

What impact could the footwashing have for our life together? For the sharing of time and talent? For our church budget? Do you think the church budget should, in a sense, be a portrait of Christians following their Teacher and Lord by washing the feet of the weary?

NOVEMBER 1 **LUKE 12:41-48**

Taking responsibility for the way we use the time, talent, and treasure God has given us is a constant theme of the gospel. Sometimes we are tempted to say, "I can't do that; I don't have the talent or the money!" But are we guilty of denying our God-given gifts so we won't have to step up to the plate and use them? Today let us pray together

about these words: "From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded." What is Jesus saying to you?

NOVEMBER 2 **1 CORINTHIANS 1:4-9; 12:27-31**
Paul's statement is startling: "You are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ." Not lacking in any spiritual gift? How often we conclude that we don't have what is needed to get the job done. Yet Scripture promises that God has given us everything we need to do God's will. What would it take for us to wake up to the full measure of gifts God has given us?

NOVEMBER 3 **PSALM 119:105**
What should be the relationship between the Bible and the decisions we make about our lives? In the area of stewardship, for example, do you personally turn to the Bible for guidance when you fill out your financial pledge card? When you decide whether or not you will help with The Treehouse or sing in the choir or teach Sunday School or serve as a youth sponsor or help in some other way? How has the Bible shaped the level of your current giving?



NOVEMBER 4 **MARK 15:1-39**
The heart and soul of stewardship is a response of gratitude for all God has done for us in Jesus Christ: sins forgiven and a future of hope promised. Is your personal

stewardship characterized by gratitude, by thanksgiving? As Christians, we believe that Jesus died on the cross that we might live. What is our response?

NOVEMBER 5 **MATTHEW 28:1-10**
The power of the resurrection is, in large measure, the power of God to change our lives. Admittedly, our discipleship to Jesus Christ is not all God has wanted it to be. For example, sometimes our stewardship has betrayed our verbal commitment to follow Jesus. But because Jesus rose from the grave on Easter morning, we do not have to be prisoners of our past mistakes and failures. We are set free. We can change. Do you have the courage to pray for God to change you in all the ways in which you need to be changed?

NOVEMBER 6 **PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11**
Christians follow a Servant Lord. Let us pray that God will empower us to be a servant people. What if our stewardship were service-centered? What would this mean for your service to the church? For your service where you work every day? For your service at home? For your service in the public arena? Maybe this needs to be our priority during this season of stewardship emphasis as pledge cards are filled out and hopes for the future are born.

*What shall I return to the Lord for
all God's bounty to me? Psalm 116:12*

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