

the widow's **MIGHT**



*A Synod-wide Stewardship Emphasis
to Deepen People's Journey with Christ*
2015



Metropolitan New York Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.



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Introduction

The Widow's Might!

⁴¹He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. ⁴²A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. ⁴³Then he called his disciples and said to them, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. ⁴⁴For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on."

–Mark 12:41-44

The theme of the Metropolitan New York Synod's Stewardship Emphasis for 2015 is "The Widow's Might!" from Mark's gospel. Jesus is people watching outside the treasury where the large horn-shaped containers were placed for freewill offerings. Jesus observes many great offerings put in the treasury, including two small brass coins given by a widow...all she had. Those who study giving trends consistently have found that those in the lower income brackets tend to be the most generous in charitable giving by percentage of income, a modern statistic that seems to be lived out for 2,000 years. The poor widow Jesus recognizes encourages us by her trust in God to provide and her life of mighty generosity.

The MNYS Stewardship and Mission Support Table has developed a stewardship commitment emphasis to train stewardship committees, mobilize spiritual formation groups for lay people, and involve pastors in a synod-wide pulpit exchange.

Our focus will be on the proportional giving and discipline of stewardship. Spiritual formation small groups will center themselves in the Word, in conversation, and in prayer for three sessions. The purpose is not a Bible study per se, but an opportunity to interact with God and others in spiritual conversation. Leading up to Stewardship Commitment Sunday on the 24th Sunday after Pentecost, November 8, lay people will deliver mission moments celebrating the congregation's ministries. A week or two before the event, congregational leaders of the partnered congregations meet. The pastors will thank leaders and offer biblical grounding about our interconnectedness within the Body of Christ in mission. The stewardship emphasis culminates in a celebration service where pastors minister to each other's congregations with a stewardship message and a time of commitment.

All parts of this booklet may be duplicated for use in congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and may be downloaded from www.mnys.org/giving/stewardship. God bless you!



Timeline

August–October	Training events: check www.mnys.org/events for dates of upcoming trainings or contact Pastor Lamont Anthony Wells at lwells@mnys.org to schedule a training for your area
Week of September 27th	Send first letter Organize and publicize spiritual formation groups Begin to develop narrative budget
Week of October 18th	Offer a mission moment at worship Spiritual formation groups begin to meet Coordinate with worship committees
Week of October 25th	Offer a mission moment at worship Send second letter with narrative budget
Week of November 1st	Offer a mission moment at worship Leadership of both congregations meet together at which pastors offer words of encouragement and prayer Pastors meet together for homiletic study
November 8th	Stewardship Commitment Sunday with pulpit exchange
Week of November 9th	Send thank you letter or follow-up letter



A Practice for Letting the Word Dwell in You Richly

The following straightforward method of devotionally engaging scriptural texts is intended to take you deeper into God's Word, carried on the winds of the Holy Spirit speaking through the Word, that we in the church may be further formed, informed, reformed and transformed for our mission in the world, and also that we might be still more faithful stewards of the gifts and ministries entrusted to us. Each of the following movements, taking place over the course of a sixty to ninety minute session, takes us into the very presence of God known in the gift of the living Word.

Movement One: Preparation

As the group gathers, engage in conversation (for about ten minutes) about what is on the hearts and minds of participants, ranging from personal to world events, especially that which we would have God address during this hour. Spend some time in prayer, silently and/or aloud, seeking the Spirit's guidance for giving a living Word to us at this time.

Movement Two: Reading

Have a volunteer read the appointed scriptural passage aloud slowly and deliberately. As it is read and during a period of five minute's silence following, pay close attention to what the passage actually says. What are the key words and ideas and points of the passage? After this silent consideration, members of the group, as they are moved, name aloud what they think are the most important points of the reading (for about five minutes).

Movement Three: Meditation

Read the biblical text a second time aloud. In the five minutes of silence following this reading, meditate on what the passage might mean for you, and for us now in our own day. While the first reading sought the text's objective meaning, now we turn to more subjective meanings based on and emerging from the insights of the first time of reading. After the silent meditation, have a conversation for about ten to twenty minutes during which you share reflections, especially attempting to discern what the Spirit may be saying to you, as the Spirit guides us into all truth through dwelling with God's Word. Please note that specific reflection questions pertaining to stewardship are also provided for each appointed passage.

Movement Four: Prayer

Read the passage a third time aloud. In the five minute silent period following this reading, pray the prayers that well up in you, especially the ones that emerge from the previous silent periods and conversations. After time for silent prayer, members of the group may pray petitions and thanksgivings aloud as they are moved.

Movement Five: Contemplation

Read the passage a fourth and final time aloud. During this last five minute silent time, simply dwell with each other in God's presence in the power of the Spirit as that presence has been made known in the Word. This is a time to claim the leisure to really let the living Word soak in you for your ongoing formation, reformation, and transformation in Christ.

Movement Six: Mission

After the period of silent contemplation, have a conversation for about ten to fifteen minutes about what our insights in this whole experience may mean for our mission in the world. Particularly, what living Word will we take with us into the world that will make us better stewards in our ministry in daily life for the sake of the church's mission in the world?



Week One

Spiritual Formation Group

1 Kings 17:8-16

⁸Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying,⁹“Go now to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and live there; for I have commanded a widow there to feed you.”¹⁰So he set out and went to Zarephath. When he came to the gate of the town, a widow was there gathering sticks; he called to her and said, “Bring me a little water in a vessel, so that I may drink.”¹¹As she was going to bring it, he called to her and said, “Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand.”¹²But she said, “As the Lord your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of meal in a jar, and a little oil in a jug; I am now gathering a couple of sticks, so that I may go home and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die.”¹³Elijah said to her, “Do not be afraid; go and do as you have said; but first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterwards make something for yourself and your son.”¹⁴For thus says the Lord the God of Israel: The jar of meal will not be emptied and the jug of oil will not fail until the day that the Lord sends rain on the earth.”¹⁵She went and did as Elijah said, so that she as well as he and her household ate for many days.¹⁶The jar of meal was not emptied, neither did the jug of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord that he spoke by Elijah.

1) Preparation

Ranging from personal to world events, what is on your heart and mind, especially that which you would have God address in the Word during this hour? Discuss, and pray silently and aloud for 10 minutes.

2) Reading

What are the key words and ideas and points of the passage? Consider this silently for 5 minutes, then discuss for 5 minutes.

3) Meditation

Reflect on personal meanings of this passage for you and your congregation. Especially consider the following questions silently for 5 minutes, then discuss for 10 to 20 minutes:

- In your present circumstances and that of your congregation, with whom do you most identify? The widow of Zarephath in her perceived scarcity and fear? Elijah with his bold vision of God's abundance?
- In this season of worries about scarcity, what would it take for you to trust more fully and consistently in God's promise of abundance?

4) Prayer

What are the prayers that you are moved to pray in response to this passage? Pray silently for 5 minutes and then aloud as you are moved for a few more minutes.

5) Contemplation

Now for 5 minutes simply dwell silently with each other in the presence of the living God made known in the Word.

6) Mission

What living Word will we take with us into the world that will change our “to do” lists and make us better stewards in our ministry in daily life for the sake of the church's mission in the world? Discuss for 10 to 15 minutes.



Week Two Spiritual Formation Group

Hebrews 9:24-28

²⁴For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made by human hands, a mere copy of the true one, but he entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.²⁵Nor was it to offer himself again and again, as the high priest enters the Holy Place year after year with blood that is not his own;²⁶for then he would have had to suffer again and again since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the age to remove sin by the sacrifice of himself.²⁷And just as it is appointed for mortals to die once, and after that the judgment,²⁸so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

1) Preparation

Ranging from personal to world events, what is on your heart and mind, especially that which you would have God address in the Word during this hour? Discuss, and pray silently and aloud for 10 minutes.

2) Reading

What are the key words and ideas and points of the passage? Consider this silently for 5 minutes, then discuss for 5 minutes.

3) Meditation

Reflect on personal meanings of this passage for you and your congregation. Especially consider the following questions silently for 5 minutes, then discuss for 10 to 20 minutes:

- In what ways does Christ's self-offering inspire your self-offering?
- In what ways does Christ's promise to come again inform your stewardship of life?

4) Prayer

What are the prayers emerging from our dwelling with the Word that the Holy Spirit is moving you to pray? Pray silently for 5 minutes and then aloud as you are moved for a few more minutes.

5) Contemplation

Now for 5 minutes simply dwell silently with each other in the presence of the living God made known in the Word.

6) Mission

What living Word will we take with us into the world that will change our "to do" lists and make us better stewards in our ministry in daily life for the sake of the church's mission in the world? Discuss for 10 to 15 minutes.



Week Three Spiritual Formation Group

Mark 12:38-44

³⁸As he taught, he said, “Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces,³⁹and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets!⁴⁰They devour widows’ houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.” ⁴¹He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums.⁴²A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny.⁴³Then he called his disciples and said to them, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury.⁴⁴For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.”

1) Preparation

Ranging from personal to world events, what is on your heart and mind, especially that which you would have God address in the Word during this hour? Discuss, and pray silently and aloud for 10 minutes.

2) Reading

What are the key words and ideas and points of the passage? Consider this silently for 5 minutes, then discuss for 5 minutes.

3) Meditation

Reflect on personal meanings of this passage for you and your congregation. Especially consider the following questions silently for 5 minutes, then discuss for 10 to 20 minutes:

- What do you think inspired the widow’s generosity in this story?
- Who are those in our day who exploit religious authority for personal gain?

4) Prayer

What are the prayers that you are moved to pray in response to this passage? Pray silently for 5 minutes and then aloud as you are moved for a few more minutes.

5) Contemplation

Now for 5 minutes simply dwell silently with each other in the presence of the living God made known in the Word.

6) Mission

What living Word will we take with us into the world that will change our “to do” lists and make us better stewards in our ministry in daily life for the sake of the church’s mission in the world? Discuss for 10 to 15 minutes



Tips for Leaders of Spiritual Formation Groups

- In leading spiritual formation groups, “less is more.” That is, your job is not to “run the show,” but to allow the freedom for rich and meaningful reflection, conversation and prayer.
- Leaders of spiritual formation groups do well to set a prayerful tone for the whole group.
- The true leader of spiritual formation groups is the Holy Spirit. Our job is to get out of the way of ourselves to let the Spirit take the lead.
- It is an important aspect of the job of spiritual formation group leader to be “time keeper,” that is to say, to create enough time, space and a spirit of leisure to really allow participants to dwell with the passages and each other, slowing down the pace of discourse to really savor what the Spirit is up to in forming us.
- If certain participants dominate conversation, gently call forth responses from others in the group who may not have had occasion to speak.
- Spiritual formation groups are not debate societies about right and wrong interpretations of scripture. Rather, such groups give people the freedom to offer reflections without fear of judgment or argument or “setting others straight” in the group.
- Spiritual formation groups are not the occasion for a kind of group psychotherapy, that is to say, people are not there to attempt to fix each other’s problems.
- It is important for the leader to remind participants that confidences of the group are strictly kept. What is said during spiritual formation time stays there and is not repeated anywhere else.
- Leaders of spiritual formation groups do well to model the kind of thoughtful reflection and prayer that this spiritual discipline calls for. This modeling will help other participants respond in kind.
- Each movement of this exercise represents different ways of being present to the biblical passages and each other. It is important for the leader to model and to remind people of the distinctiveness of each movement. That is to say, the prayer time is not meant for sharing new exegetical insights. The time for contemplation is the time for silence and not additional spoken reflections. The time following the first reading is meant for listing main points and not yet for sharing personal reflections.



Mission Moment Guidelines

As part of The Widow's Might, congregations are encouraged to schedule three mission moments during the stewardship commitment emphasis. Mission moments can be given during worship, and work particularly well preceding the offering.

Why do we give mission moments?

We give mission moments to help people understand where their offerings are going. Sometimes people don't realize how integral their offerings are to the life of the church. It is your giving that makes the ministries of your congregation possible. Mission interpretation is all about telling stories of what God is doing through our giving.

We give mission moments to connect people to the wider church. Did you know that when you give an offering, your congregation gives a portion of that offering to the synod? In addition, our synod sends 49% of all mission support to our churchwide organization, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Through your offering, you are making mission possible locally, regionally, and nationally!

Finally, we give mission moments to thank people. We are so grateful for their generosity and we want them to know it.

What should a mission moment include?

Though mission moments are flexible, try to keep it between three to five minutes so that you don't lose members' attention. Short and sweet is best!

Even if you have lots of facts and figures, the most effective mission moment tells a story. Choose one story (the time the soup kitchen patron brought in his own donation; the meaningful lesson a teacher learned from a Sunday School student) and focus on that. Make sure that you include *why* this story made an impression on you. It's your personal testimony that makes the story compelling. Your enthusiasm is more inspiring than statistics.

Lastly and most importantly, mission moments should always thank everyone for their generosity. Help people understand that these ministries would not be possible without generous gifts of time and service as well as financial support. (It's important to note that mission moments are not fundraising opportunities. This is *not* a time to ask the congregation for anything.)

What makes an effective mission moment?

Choose stories or topics that are most interesting to the speakers. If your congregation would like to lift up the story of its food pantry, ask a food pantry volunteer to share a story. You can reinforce the message of your mission moment in several ways: include the same story in the Sunday bulletin; expand upon the presentations in the church newsletter; display pictures, story summaries, quotes and graphics on a bulletin board; and use mission interpretation stories on your congregation's website or Facebook page. You can even vary your presentations to show how our offerings support ministries at congregational, synodical, and churchwide levels.

Public speaking has always made me nervous. Do you have any tips?

Yes! Practice beforehand—rehearsing will help you sound more prepared and help you identify any trouble areas. Know your time limit and stick to it. And lastly, be positive and upbeat.



Mission Moment Outline

Here's a brief outline of a mission moment. Make it your own!

- 1) Give an introduction: "One way that Your Lutheran Church enters into the joy is through our afterschool program."
- 2) Provide a little bit of background: "We started Bible Explorers three years ago and since then, 20 kids join us every Wednesday afternoon for Bible stories and snacks."
- 3) Tell one story and include your personal reaction to it: "I wanted to share a story about the difference this is making in the community. Two months ago, Megan brought her neighbor along...[tell story]...I was really touched by how gracious the kids were to the new student. They really imitated Jesus and welcomed the stranger."
- 4) Thank everyone: "The witness of Bible Explorers wouldn't be possible without your generous offerings! Thank you so much for your giving."



Worship Resources

Hymn & Song Suggestions

Awesome God	W&P 13
Lord, I lift your name on high	ELW 857
Praise and thanksgiving	ELW 409/LBW 689
For the fruit of all creation	ELW 679/WOV 760
We are an offering	ELW 692
Take my life (<i>Patmos</i>)	ELW 685/LBW 406
Take my life (<i>Toma mi voluntad</i>)	ELW 583

Confession and Forgiveness

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Christ is our high priest,
who offered himself as the perfect sacrifice for our sins.
All are invited to freely offer themselves to his healing and release.

Mighty God,

**We come to your holy temple
to give you all that we are.**

**Forgive us our sins, make us whole,
and restore our lives, so that we might worship you
and serve our neighbor.**

Amen.

Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will save those who eagerly wait for him.
Almighty God, Father, +Son, and Holy Spirit grant you forgiveness of all your sins.

Amen.

Prayer of the Day (ELW)

O God, you show forth your almighty power
chiefly by reaching out to us in mercy.

Grant us the fullness of your grace,
strengthen our trust in your promises,

and bring all the world to share in the treasures that come through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior
and Lord. **Amen.**

Post Communion Prayer

Creator God, who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them;

You keep your promises forever, give justice to those who are oppressed, and food to those who
hunger. Thank you for your abundance and give us what we need to be your faithful servants. In
Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

Benediction (from Psalm 46)

Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help,
whose hope is in the LORD their God.

May Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
bless you with the knowledge of his abundant love for you. **Amen.**



Sermon Notes by Bishop Rimbo

Sermon Notes for Lectionary 32, 24th Sunday after Pentecost St. Mark 12:41-44 The Widows' Might

The Gospel today is deceptively simple. We are confronted with a pious Jewish widow, dreadfully poor, yet giving all she has to a godly cause. The Bible stories of my youth referred to this section of Mark as the story of the Widow's Mite. I think it is more aptly called the Mighty Widow. She puts her last two copper coins – a mite, in those days - in the temple collection and is praised by our Lord. The point? Give generously to your church, keep your pastor in the style to which she would really like to become accustomed, load the offering plate with silent offerings (no coins, please) so that the synod's work is well-supported, and you can expect a miracle – or at least a pat on the back? I don't think so.

That's the surface. Beneath the surface all sorts of things are going on, including some basic Christian reality.

You can simply read the verses from Mark in isolation. But they are part of a larger drama. Around this portion of Mark you find some startling contrasts: on the one hand, impressive appearances with little substance; on the other, stark simplicity with hidden depths. There is a fig tree in leaf, attractive to look at from a distance; but when Jesus went to see if he could find any fruit on it, he found nothing but leaves; and he cursed it (Mark 12:13, 21). There is the temple, striking the disciples with wonder, to which Jesus replies, "Do you see these great buildings? There will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down (Mark 13:1-2). And in this passage, note the contrast: on the one hand, the scribes in their trendy outfits, with their reserved seating in the temple, on the platform at the big dinners, praying endlessly. It's all fake, Jesus says. These are the same people who "eat up widows' houses" (Mark 12:38-40). How different from the poor widow: no pomp or parade, no show or display, just a small gift to God. No big deal.

Surface show versus inner substance. But there is more: the gift itself. "Many rich people put in large sums;" the poor widow put in "two copper coins." You would need 128 of these copper coins to make up the daily wage of the time. And still Jesus can tell his disciples that out of her poverty she has put in "more than all the rest" because they were tossing into the treasury out of their abundance and she was putting in everything she had (verses 43-44).

But be careful here. Jesus is not putting down the wealthy givers. He is not even accusing them of outward show. He is praising the widow and his praise tells us something about human living, about the risk in giving. The widow's gift was greater than all because in giving the coins she gave up her security; she "put in her whole living." The others gave, and it was good; but they could leave the temple without anxiety, without indigestion. They had given a good deal, but there was more where that came from. For the widow, nothing was left but to rely on God.

Jesus enters into the story of the widow not as a commentator or observer or judge. This section of Mark is leading us into Jesus' passion and death. So the reading from Hebrews is pertinent: Christ came "once for all...to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Hebrews 9:26). What made the widow's gift superbly human was that she gave all that she had. What made it splendidly sacred was that it resembled what Jesus himself would offer on the cross: Everything.



In Jesus' offering there was a terrible risk. Jesus was afraid to die. So afraid that he sweated blood; so afraid that he begged his Father to let him live; so terrified that his Father had forsaken him and none of his friends stuck by him. All human security was gone. No one could help. He was alone, face to face with the darkness of death.

It's a bloody time on the cross when this Jesus gives literally everything to the Father for us; when a naked Jesus, with no security against death prays "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Like the widow, Jesus gave all he had. More obviously than the widow, Jesus gave all he was. He gave himself. "This is my body...this is my blood." He put in the treasury of the Father everything he had, his whole living, his whole dying. No security. Total risk. Trust in God alone. To redeem us.

So, the widow is a symbol of our life in Christ, where the key words are "gift" and "risk." Our lives are Christian in the measure that they are shaped to his risk-laden self-giving.

Let me make a confession. When I look at myself, I find that in my giving I am very American. We have a long tradition of giving...giving out of our surplus. Surplus cheese for the hungry, surplus money for the church, surplus clothes for Goodwill, surplus time for friends. It's a good thing we do. I'm not talking it down. Without it, life would be survival of the fittest, dog eat dog.

But it raises a problem for me. I think Jesus could easily applaud this giving from my surplus and yet say, "don't the pagans do as much" (See Matthew 5:46-47)? When I give from my surplus, where is my Christ-like-ness? Is it giving in the name of Christ? Is it giving like Christ gave himself?

The story of the mighty widow – and even more, the life of our Lord – suggest strongly that the new thing he brought into the world is summed up in his phrase "out of her poverty" (Mark 12:44). I mean, we are most Christian, most Christ-like, when our giving affects our life, when our giving threatens our security, when our giving is, ultimately, a matter of giving ourselves away. How could it be otherwise? Like it or not, it is the crucified Christ who is the supreme pattern, the paradigm, the model for Christian living and Christian giving. The crucified Christ gives himself.

I can't tell how or where or when this fact touches any of you. I am writing this sermon to be shared with anyone and everyone in our synod which means it can be as easily ignored as used. Christ probably speaks to you not in an emailed sermon from the bishop. Christ speaks to you where you are at – and he knows who you are, where your gifts lie, what restrains you from risking. Why you keep giving out of your surplus. Christ alone can tell you at what point, and in what way, you have to surrender what lends you security, and you go out to your brothers and sisters with trust only in the power of God.

Christ alone. I pray that wherever you are, you are listening for Christ's leadership, Christ's voice, who is prompting you, like the mighty widow, to give out of your own poverty just as Jesus did and continues to do for you.

Bishop Robert Alan Rimbo

The Mighty Mite!

Tell the story of the widow's mighty mite in a new way. Explain to the kids what mighty means and what a mite is using pictures to help illustrate. Then retell the story below holding up the appropriate picture for the kids to fill in the appropriate word.



Power or ability to accomplish something



A coin of small value in Jesus' time
(2 coins equaled less than a penny today)

So listen closely my friends while I tell you the story of the *mighty mite*!

There were these two big men—they were rich and thought they were pretty *mighty*! They put a lot of money into the offering of their church. Even though they gave a lot, they still had a lot left over. It was just a drop in the bucket. They thought they were *mighty*—but really their generosity was pretty puny.

But then a tiny widow shuffled forward. Widows didn't have a lot of power and people didn't pay much attention to them in Jesus' time. It was hard to be a widow and have money. When people saw a widow they thought she was pretty puny. She walked up the offering plate and took out not one *mite*, but two *mites*. It was all she had! Even though her two *mites* seemed puny they were in fact *mighty*!! And she was *mighty* in faith!!! She gave what she had. And guess who saw—Jesus.

What did Jesus say, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on." And that is the story of the *mighty mite*!

Sometimes we might feel pretty puny. Like we don't have nearly as much or as important stuff to give to God because we're small. Sometimes adults don't listen to us and we don't feel very special or like we have a lot to give. But does God tell us we are less important because we are small? No! And does God ignore our gifts and talents just because they're mites? No! God thinks you're *mighty*! It's not the size of the gift, but the size of the faith with which it's given. And that makes for a *mighty mite*!

Let us pray,
Mighty God, even when I feel little, you believe I'm mighty! Help me to remember that so that I can give joyfully with out fear, knowing that small or big this world matters to you. In Jesus name. Amen.



Young Disciples Activity

The Widow's Mite or What's My Mite?

God has blessed us all and we all have something to give to God. Never doubt that you have something amazing to give! So what do you have to give to God? Take time to draw a picture or write your gifts.

What can I give from my heart?	What can I give from my time?
What can I give from my things?	What can I give from my relationships?



Commitment Card & Handout



In praise and thanksgiving to our mighty God, I/we pledge _____ % or \$ _____

per week / month / year (*circle one*)

of my/our entrusted financial resources to God's mission in 2016.

Name _____

Please return this pledge to the church office, via mail or the offering plate by _____.

Annual Income	Weekly Income	15%	12%	Tithe 10%	8%	7%	5%	3%	1%
5,200	100.00	15.00	12.00	10.00	8.00	7.00	5.00	3.00	1.00
6,500	125.00	18.75	15.00	12.50	10.00	8.75	6.25	3.75	1.25
7,800	150.00	22.50	18.00	15.00	12.00	10.50	7.50	4.50	1.50
9,100	175.00	26.25	21.00	17.50	14.00	12.25	8.75	5.25	1.75
10,400	200.00	30.00	24.00	20.00	16.00	14.00	10.00	6.00	2.00
11,700	225.00	33.75	27.00	22.50	18.00	15.75	11.25	6.75	2.25
13,000	250.00	37.50	30.00	25.00	20.00	17.50	12.50	7.50	2.50
14,300	275.00	41.25	33.00	27.50	22.00	19.25	13.75	8.25	2.75
15,600	300.00	45.00	36.00	30.00	24.00	21.00	15.00	9.00	3.00
18,200	350.00	52.50	42.00	35.00	28.00	24.50	17.50	10.50	3.50
20,800	400.00	60.00	48.00	40.00	32.00	28.00	20.00	12.00	4.00
23,400	450.00	67.50	54.00	45.00	36.00	31.50	22.50	13.50	4.50
26,000	500.00	75.00	60.00	50.00	40.00	35.00	25.00	15.00	5.00
28,600	550.00	82.50	66.00	55.00	44.00	38.50	27.50	16.50	5.50
31,200	600.00	90.00	72.00	60.00	48.00	42.00	30.00	18.00	6.00
36,400	700.00	105.00	84.00	70.00	56.00	49.00	35.00	21.00	7.00
41,600	800.00	120.00	96.00	80.00	64.00	56.00	40.00	24.00	8.00
46,800	900.00	135.00	108.00	90.00	72.00	63.00	45.00	27.00	9.00
52,000	1000.00	150.00	120.00	100.00	80.00	70.00	50.00	30.00	10.00
65,000	1250.00	187.50	150.00	125.00	100.00	87.50	62.50	37.50	12.50
78,000	1500.00	225.00	180.00	150.00	120.00	105.00	75.00	45.00	15.00
91,000	1750.00	262.50	210.00	175.00	140.00	122.50	87.50	52.50	17.50
104,000	2000.00	300.00	240.00	200.00	160.00	140.00	100.00	60.00	20.00

What is your percentage of giving right now? Challenge yourself to increase your giving by 1% of your weekly income, and to consider similar growth at least annually, moving toward and beyond a tithe (10%).



Sample Narrative Budget

In addition to a line-item budget, many congregations use a narrative budget. These financial documents use distinctly different ways of describing the mission and ministries of the congregation. The line-item budget is important for bookkeeping and analysis of specific cost items. A narrative budget can vividly show the priorities in ministry and indicates the relative significance of each ministry area. It provides a snapshot of how staff members spend their time and shows how people make a difference through their giving.

Here is a basic example of a narrative budget. It includes several staff people with responsibilities in specific areas. From year to year, percentages may shift as priorities, facilities, and staffing change. However, in every case, the total is 100% of the line-item budget.

Generous Lutheran Church, Anytown, NY

Total Proposed Budget, Goals and Activities for the Year: \$300,000

Proclamation **\$90,000** **30% of budget**

Goal: To increase average worship attendance by 15% per week.

Activities: Add a worship service? Add a children's choir? Provide transportation? To be determined.

Costs covered: Materials, music director, 5% of other staff, 25% of pastor's total compensation

Discipleship **\$30,000** **10% of budget**

Goal: To increase average Sunday school, Bible class and small group attendance by 25% per week.

Activities: Add a Thursday morning Bible study? Evening Bible study? Another more small groups?

Costs: Materials, 15% of a staff person, 15% of pastor's total compensation

Invitation **\$15,000** **5% of budget**

Goal: To plan five community and faith fellowship experiences to grow attendance and membership

Activities: Expand visitation program? Revitalize door knocking? Special community events?

Costs: Hospitality materials, 5% of a staff person, 5% of pastor's total compensation

Service **\$45,000** **15% of budget**

Goal: To serve every person in need in the broader community, visitation.

Activities: Support homeless shelter? Blood drive? Develop elderly care program?

Costs: Materials, 45% of stewardship staff person, 35% of pastor's total compensation

Support **\$60,000** **20% of budget**

Goal: To manage our affairs, land and buildings wisely, administration.

Activities: Organize weekly small groups? Develop year-round, whole life stewardship education?

Costs: Materials, church secretary, custodian, 10% of a staff person, 10% of pastor's compensation

Beyond Our Walls **\$60,000** **20% of budget**

Goal: To grow our giving to mission support by 1% each year, plus 5% to the community/world.

Activities: Teach the value of mission support? Give a mission moment every week?

Costs: Materials, guest speakers, mission trips, 20% of staff person, 10% of pastor's total compensation

the widow's MIGHT



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

A lot of life is about noticing the little things. Those seemingly insignificant events and people in our lives that—when we take the time to pay attention—cause us to realize the great influence they had and the powerful example they showed.

This fall I want to invite you to take notice. Notice how God has gifted you and those around you. See the abundance of God's grace in the midst of scarcity. Observe the examples of faithful service and generosity that inspire us to greater action and giving. Just notice.

Jesus was in the temple watching people when he noticed a poor widow slowly walk toward the large receptacle for the people's monetary offerings. He watched as she put in two small coins, all that she had, and walked away. The whole episode could have easily gone unnoticed. But Jesus saw her, and she became an example of thankfulness and generosity for generations to come. Jesus noticed and saw she was mighty!

To help us grow in our faith and commitment to Jesus, we are participating with other congregations in a stewardship emphasis during the month of November. Each week, for three weeks, we invite you to gather with others around God's word and conversation in a spiritual formation group for one hour. Sign up at the church or e-mail _____. Each Sunday, a member of our congregation will share a "mission moment" as to what God is doing in their life through the ministry of our congregation. On November 8th at our worship services Pastor _____ will be our preacher and worship leader in a pulpit exchange with _____ Church. Together we hope to share a message of the "might" of giving generously.

I hope you will be a part of this opportunity to pray, talk, worship, and give.

Yours in Christ,

the
widow's
MIGHT



Reformation Day
October 31, 2015

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

November 8th is our Stewardship Commitment Sunday. This year we are participating in a synod-wide stewardship emphasis and working with _____ Church. On that Sunday, we will have Pastor _____ as our worship leader and preacher while I lead worship and preach at *his/her* congregation. Together we hope to share a message of the “might” of giving generously.

To prepare us for that Sunday, I have included information to help you in your discernment leading up to November 8th. The first is a narrative budget that gives you a sense of what we do with the money that is given each and every Sunday and the impact that it has on lives. The second is the tool for reflecting on your own level of giving and an invitation to grow as we seek to serve Christ in mission.

Please be sure to welcome Pastor _____ and thank *him/her* for *his/her* partnership in the gospel with us.

Yours in Christ,

Enc: Narrative Budget
Giving Worksheet

the widow's **MIGHT**



November 12, 2015

Dear _____,

Thank you very much for your participation in our Stewardship Commitment Sunday Service. Thank you for your commitment to the ministry and mission of _____ Church. We hope to accomplish a lot this year and we are blessed by dedicated followers of Jesus like you.

If at any time you need to change your commitment during the year just let me know.

Again, thank you so much.

Yours in Christ,

Financial Secretary

Commitment for 2016:

_____ % \$ _____ per week / per month / yearly

the
widow's

WIGGERS



**Join us on November 8th for
Stewardship Commitment Sunday!**