

**That
Christ might
come to have
first place
in everything.**

Colossians 1:18

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



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



Table of Contents

1	Introduction
2	Timeline
3	Spiritual Formation Introduction
4	Week One Spiritual Formation Group Worksheet
5	Week Two Spiritual Formation Group Worksheet
6	Week Three Spiritual Formation Group Worksheet
7	Mission Interpretation Guidelines
8	Mission Moment Outline
9	8 Steps for a Fruitful Stewardship Emphasis
10	Worship Resources
11	Sermon Notes for Christ the King
13	Commitment Card & Giving Handout
14	Sample Narrative Budget
17	Young Disciple Craft
18	Sample 1st Letter to Congregation
19	Sample 2nd Letter to Congregation
20	Sample Thank You Letter from Financial Secretary
21	Poster



Introduction

Making Christ #1

Who is Christ in your life? What place does he take in the many priorities we set before ourselves? How we answer that as followers of Jesus has a huge impact on how we will live out a life of commitment to our Lord. Paul addresses the same questions in his letter to the Colossians. He writes: *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything.* (Colossians 1:15-18)

The Metropolitan New York Synod Stewardship and Mission Support Table has developed a program of 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 spiritual 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 Christ the King Sunday, November 20, congregational leaders will deliver mission moments celebrating the congregation's ministries. A week or two before the event, leaders of the partnered congregations meet and the pastors will thank leaders and offer biblical grounding about our interconnectedness within the Body of Christ in mission. The stewardship emphasis culminates on a celebration service where pastors minister to each other's congregations with a stewardship message and lead a time of commitment.

Materials contained in this booklet may also be downloaded in electronic form at mnys.org/giving/stewardship.

All parts of this booklet may be duplicated for use in congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. God bless you!



Stewardship Emphasis Timeline

Week of October 16th	Send 1st letter Organize and communicate dates and times of spiritual formation groups Begin to develop narrative budget
Week of October 30th	Spiritual Formation Groups begin to meet, coordinate with worship committees
Week of November 6th	Send 2nd letter with narrative budget
Week of November 13th	Leadership of both congregations meet together at which pastors offer words of encouragement and prayer Pastors meet together for homiletic study
November 20th, Christ the King	Commitment Sunday with pulpit exchange
Week of November 20th	Send thank you letter



A Practice for Letting the Word Dwell in You Richly

by Rev. Dr. Jonathan Linman, Formation

The following straightforward method to devotionally engage scriptural texts is intended to take you deeper into God's Word, carried on the winds of the Holy Spirit speaking in the Word, that we in the church may be further formed, reformed and transformed for our mission in the world, and also that we might be still more faithful stewards of the ministries entrusted to us. Each of the following movements, taking place over the course of a sixty to ninety minute session, takes us ever more deeply 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 in which you share reflections, especially attempting to discern what the Spirit may be saying to you, as the Spirit leads 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 God's presence in the power of the Spirit as that presence has been made known in the Word. This is a time to take 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?



Formation Week One

Jeremiah 23:1-6

Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! Says the LORD. ²Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who shepherd my people: It is you who have scattered my flock, and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. So I will attend to you for your evil doings, says the LORD. ³Then I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the lands where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. ⁴I will raise up shepherds over them who will shepherd them, and they shall not fear any longer, or be dismayed, nor shall any be missing, says the LORD. ⁵The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. ⁶In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. And this is the name by which he will be called: "The LORD is our righteousness."

1) Preparation

- What is on your heart and mind, ranging from personal to world events, 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 name them for 5 minutes.

3) Meditation

- Consider the following questions silently for 5 minutes, then discuss for 10 to 20 minutes:
 - How is stewardship assisted when there is "justice and righteousness in the land?"
 - How is stewardship affected by good shepherds as leaders?
 - What is stewardship like when we "shall not fear any longer, or be dismayed" and when we "live in safety?"

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 insights and action items 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? Discuss for 10 to 15 minutes.



Formation Week Two

Colossians 1:11-20

May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully ¹²giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. ¹³He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. ¹⁵He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; ¹⁶for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. ¹⁹For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

1) Preparation

- What is on your heart and mind, ranging from personal to world events, 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 name them for 5 minutes.

3) Meditation

- Consider the following questions silently for 5 minutes, then discuss for 10 to 20 minutes:
 - How is our stewardship helped by God in Christ reconciling us and making peace?
 - “Joyfully giving thanks to the Father” is perhaps what stewardship is all about. Discuss what this means in our lives today.

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 insights and action items 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? Discuss for 10 to 15 minutes.



Formation Week Three

Luke 23:33-43

When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁴Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.” And they cast lots to divide his clothing. ³⁵And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, “He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!” ³⁶The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, ³⁷and saying, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!” ³⁸There was also an inscription over him, “This is the King of the Jews.” ³⁹One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, “Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!” ⁴⁰But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? ⁴¹And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.” ⁴²Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” ⁴³He replied, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”

1) Preparation

- What is on your heart and mind, ranging from personal to world events, 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 name them for 5 minutes.

3) Meditation

- Consider the following questions silently for 5 minutes, then discuss for 10 to 20 minutes:
 - Jesus said, “Father, forgive them.” What does a forgiving heart mean for the stewardship of our lives? In contrast, what does an unforgiving heart mean for our stewardship?
 - What is your vision of Paradise? And how does that affect how you steward your life now?

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 insights and action items 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? Discuss for 10 to 15 minutes.



Mission Interpretation Guidelines

As part of Making Christ #1, 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, the synod sends 50% (an increase over the past three years) 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! Download a poster showing where your offering goes at elca.org/en/Resources/Stewardship.

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. We encourage you to 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 makes Christ #1 is through our afterschool program."

- 2) Give 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."



8 Steps for a Fruitful Stewardship Emphasis

1) Ask.

Invite people to help. Pastors and stewardship leaders should not feel like they are doing this alone. Gather a group to help with the planning and get the Congregation Council buy-in and support.

2) Pray.

Changed hearts and minds only comes through spiritual transformation. Developing generosity must be a work of the Holy Spirit. Ask God to bless the work you are attempting. Pray for your pastor, leaders and congregational members to become the cheerful, generous givers that God intends.

3) Grow.

It all starts with you. The synod will be providing training events to help you grow in your own sense of God's abundance and love that he has for you and all creation.

4) Engage.

Work the program. This stewardship emphasis is not a quick fix to raise money for the budget. It is a relational, spiritual emphasis that seeks to raise up dedicated Christ followers who take seriously the formative power of God's word. Multiple invitations, mission moments, spiritual formation groups are the means to bring people together to learn and grow.

5) Listen.

It's so important step 5 is basically a repeat of step 2. Listening for the Holy Spirit's directives through the Word and mutual conversation is crucial. Don't assume you know the answer. God will speak...sometimes in the silence.

6) Share.

Christian life is relational: congregation to congregation, pastor to pastor, disciple to disciple. We grow by being together in faith and the word and sharing our lives.

7) Respond.

In worship we place before God our commitment to support Christ's ministry for the sake of the world.

8) Thank.

At the heart of any stewardship campaign is thanksgiving...a heartfelt sense of gratitude to God for his abundance to us and for those who give freely to do God's work in our communities, the synod, and the world.



Worship Resources

for Leaders

Confession

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

God of all abundance, forgiveness and love, bless your people gathered around your gifts of word and sacrament. Help us to trust you above all things and to follow where your Holy Spirit leads us. Open our hearts to receive you today. *(Silence is kept for reflection.)*

Gracious God,

Forgive us when we chase after false promises and other gods. Help us to keep you first in our lives. Forgive our lack of trust that you will provide us with all we need. Help us to see your grace and abundance. Forgive our misuse of your creation and lack of care for our neighbor. Help us to care for the earth and all that is in it. Help us, Lord, to be more generous in our lives with all that you have entrusted to us, through Jesus Christ our Lord and King. Amen.

The Lord our God is gracious and rich in mercy. He forgives the sins of those who call upon him. Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit forgive you and bring you into his kingdom.
Amen.

Prayer of the Day

O God, our true life, to serve you is freedom, and to know you is unending joy. We worship you, we glorify you, we give thanks to you for your great glory. Abide with us, reign in us, and make this world into a fit habitation for your divine majesty, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Petition for Prayers of Intercession

We thank you God for your church. Bless all bishops and pastors, especially our bishops Elizabeth and Robert, our pastor (*name*), Pastor (*name of visiting pastor*) and the congregation of (*name*). Together unite us for mission and help us all to lives trusting in your abundance and generosity.

Hear us O God, your mercy is great.

Prayer at time of Commitment *(May be done at the offering or after communion.)*

Gracious Christ, you are the head of the body, your Church; you are the beginning, the firstborn of the dead. Today we proclaim you king and give you first place in everything. Bless what we do now, the offering of promises for the support of your mission in the world. Through them unite us in commitment to your ministry and help us all grow through your Spirit. In your name we pray. Amen.

Benediction

May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from God's glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, joyfully giving thanks to God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.



Sermon Notes for Christ the King

by Bishop Rimbo

Year C, Colossians 1:11-20

That reading from Colossians is loaded with all sorts of things about Jesus Christ and how he is number one, first in all things. It could easily fill hours of preaching to speak of all the claims made in these selected verses from Colossians. It's an interesting, ecumenical, all-inclusive reading for a day that came to the church year's calendar in a rather anti-ecumenical way. In 1925, Pope Pius XI inaugurated this Sunday for the last Sunday in October in order to "compete" with Protestant celebrations of Reformation Day. With the adoption of the Revised Common Lectionary the celebration was moved to the final Sunday of the liturgical year (another reason to celebrate the progress in ecumenical dialog!).

Colossians reminds us that Christ is Sovereign above all other rulers (including presidents, for example), all other thrones.

As a Christian who grew up in middle America, having a personal relationship with Jesus was and is very important to me. I grew up a pretty good Lutheran. But when I went away to a Lutheran college, one of the first people I encountered was a guy named Paul who asked if I was saved and I wondered about that question a lot. So in a dorm room with several others one evening, I asked Jesus to come into my heart and be my personal Lord and Savior.

I don't know exactly why I did that. I can't say I was missing anything in my solid Lutheran upbringing but maybe I needed some kind of personal connection that would make it all real to me. I must admit that the next day things were pretty well back to same-old-same-old Bob. But at least I said the right prayer at the moment.

Back when I got saved, or whatever it was that happened in that dorm room - I'm reminded of Martin Marty's comment that he's been saved hundreds of times - there were tracts published by Campus Crusade for Christ about the Four Spiritual Laws. I've actually seen some of these tracts in our MNYS congregations, which is a bit troubling. Do you know what tracts I means? They explained how this saving stuff worked with "before" and "after" diagrams. There were drawings of a heart with a tiny chair in the middle of it. The "before" picture showed the chair empty, or worse, occupied by Self or maybe even the devil - it depended on which edition of the tract you used. But the "after" picture displayed Jesus sitting in the chair, ruling from the throne of your heart as your personal Lord and Savior.

It was nice to think about spirituality that way - there is a certain intimacy to such thinking that I have always found appealing. But there is a problem with it too. It makes Jesus very small and it locates his presence in me. It is the opposite of what Colossians is talking about. According to this model, I invite Jesus to come into my life. I ask him to be King of my life. He accepts my invitation and I then have a very tiny Jesus inside me sitting on that throne in my heart. He has, in essence, become part of me and I can take him with me wherever I go.

The Bible, however, offers us a different image: Jesus invites me to come into his life, he makes me part of his body - the church - and he takes me with him wherever he wants me to go. Nobody in the Bible ever invites Jesus to come into his or her heart to be his or her personal Lord and Savior. There is nothing like that in the Bible, in spite of what some Christians will tell you.

Christ is first in all things. That's where we start and end when talking about the stewardship of our lives as Christians. As the real estate agents say, it's all about location, location, location. Christ is big, I (yes, even I) am small. Christ cannot be found in me, on the throne of my heart, because Christ is too big to fit there; but I can be found in Christ, as one part of Christ's body.

What the Bible tells us, and what the church believes, is that Jesus Christ fills all things, holds all things together, and is first in all things. With that kind of perspective, living lives as good stewards is easy. God forms this community and empowers us to be a people with one voice who can glorify God and witness for Jesus in this world. We are called, gathered, enlightened, sanctified, and kept by the Holy Spirit because we cannot by our own reason or understanding come to Jesus Christ or believe in him, much less please him, or always discern his will, certainly not guarantee that he is always on the throne of our hearts or live our lives in ever-grateful response.

But we are a church defined by grace – a church that sins boldly but believes more boldly still. We are a church that understands its mission in corporate and Christological terms, first and foremost as people beloved by Christ, sustained by Christ, and indeed as people who embody Christ's very presence in this world as his body. We proclaim, confidently and boldly, by how we live and what we do – including our offerings – that Jesus Christ is first in all things and that we are held in his heart. “In him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible...all things have been created through him and for him. He is the head of the body, the church' he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything.”



Commitment Card & Giving Handout

That
Christ might
come to have
first place
in everything.

Colossians 1:18

So that Christ might be first in every area of my/our life, I/we pledge

_____ % or \$ _____

per week / month / year (circle one)

of my/our entrusted financial resources to God's mission in 2017.

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 Budgets of Ministries

A narrative budget of ministries is a great tool to explore the fruits of the stewardship of church disciples. While the church's budget is focused on the amount of money necessary to keep the ministry, a Narrative Budget of Ministry instead highlights the ministries the church provides.

The Narrative Budget of Ministries serves to lift up all the ministries of your church. This includes every ministry provided to the church family, the community, the nation and the world. Each ministry should include the number of people involved or being served.

The purpose is to help your church family understand how their support is translated into God's work. See the examples below:

1. God's Lutheran Church 2014 Budget of Ministries

Ministry of Pastoral Staff	Number of Events
Morning Worship Services	52
Average Attendance	80
Special Services	12
Hospital and Home Visits	50
Weddings/Funerals	10
Baptisms	15
Pastoral Counseling Sessions	60

Ministries for Young Disciples	Number of Participants
Vacation Bible School	20
Sunday School	35
Kid's Fellowship Group	20
Children's Bell Choir	10
Acting Out-Young Disciples Theater Group	12
Retreat Ministry (S'Mores and More)	10

Ministries for Teenage Disciples	Number of Participants
Confirmation Class	15
Youth Group Gatherings	25
Fellowship Ministry Events	30
Lock-In Retreats	20
Transition Ministry	7
LYO/National Youth Involvement	8
Young Women's Group	10
Mission and Service Trips	14
Adopt-A-Grandparent Visitation	15

Ministries for Adults	Number of Participants
Bible Study/Faith Exploration Groups	50
Women's Circle	20
Fellowship Ministry Events	100
Prayer Gatherings	25
Visitation Card Ministry	150
Hospitality Team	10
Retreat Ministry (Koinonia)	40

Ministries in Worship	Number of Participants
Church Choir	12
Worship Psalm Leaders	10
Ushers	25
Proclaimers of the Word	20
Assisting Ministers	18
Light Bearers	15
Altar Guild	8
Communion Bread Bakers	12 families
REJOICE Dance Ministry	10
Proclamation Theater Group	10

Ministries for Our Community	Number of Participants
Interfaith Nutritional Network	8 servants 200 lives touched
Collecting Food for Pantries	<1,300 lbs donated
Family Promise	10 servants 14 lives touched/week
Interfaith Council	300 lives touched
Hunger Education Ministries	100 lives touched
God's Garden	15 servants < 200 lbs veggies donated
Offering of Letters	80 letters sent
Prayer Shawls	15 lives touched
Community Meeting Space	200 lives touched
Koinonia	40 servants
Local Council of Churches Meal Program	\$1,000 collected + 5% tithe 5% tithe

Ministries to Our Nation and World	Annual Investment
Mission Support for wider church (ELCA and the Metropolitan New York Synod)	\$10,000 donated
Lutheran World Relief Team	51 quilts 32 layettes 18 sewing kits 20 health kits
World Hunger Fund	\$1,800 donated
Fair Trade Support	\$2,500 donated



Sample Narrative Budgets of Ministries

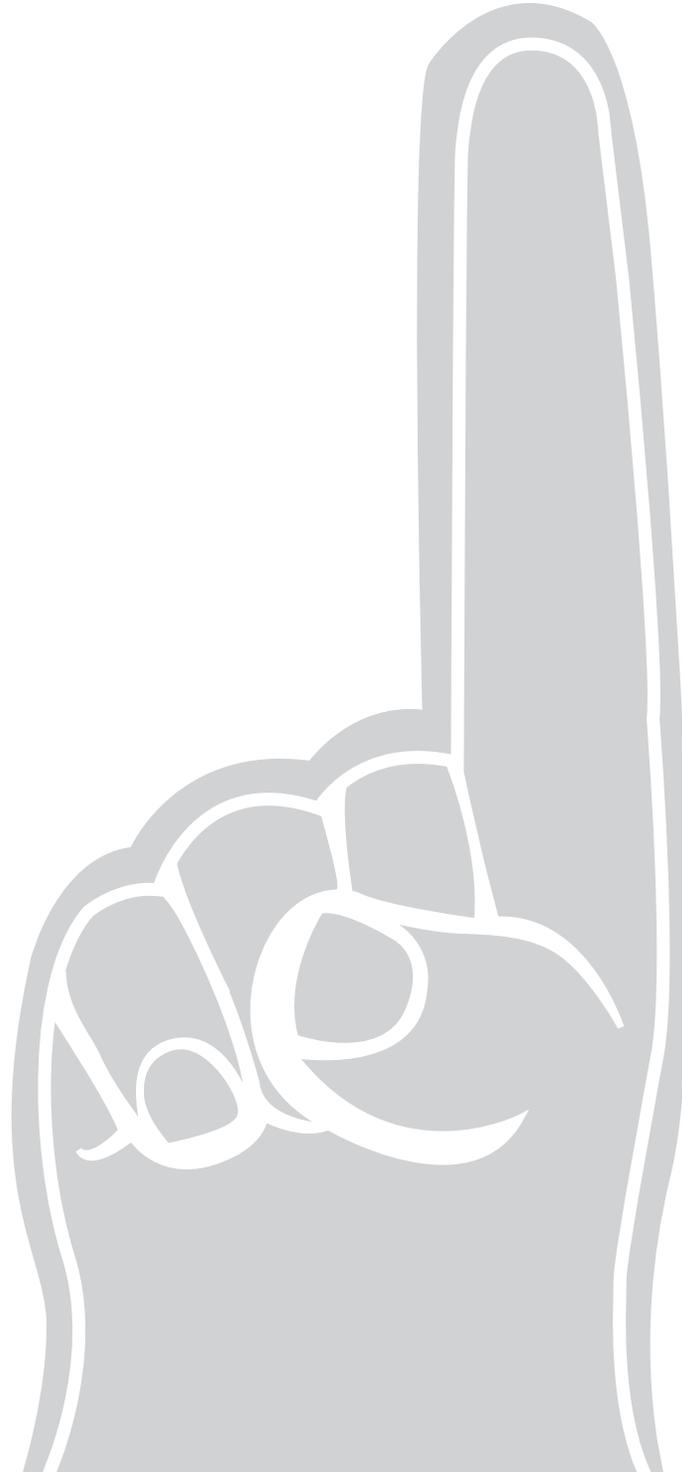
2. Generous Lutheran Church Total Proposed Budget, Goals and Activities for the Year: \$300,000

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		



Young Disciple Craft Project

1. Trace pattern below on two paper plates. Color the pattern.
2. Carefully cut out the traced shape.
3. Leaving the bottom slit open to later insert your hand, place the two newly cut plate pieces together so that the curve of each plate is sticking out.
4. Either glue, tape, or hole-punch and sew together with yarn. Insert hand. Have fun!





He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. (Colossians 1:15-18)

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Every day we are faced with numerous images and claims of authority over us. As Christians we must discern those claims and make choices. What's important to us? How will we live? What place does God take in the many priorities we set before ourselves? How we answer these questions has a huge impact on how we will live out a life of commitment to our Lord Jesus, who has given us everything.

One way Christians respond to Jesus' incredible love is through generous giving and living. Through our stewardship of what God is doing in our lives, we give thanks by offering monetary support, as well as our time and talents, to grow Christ's mission and ministry lived out in our congregation and wider church.

To help us grow in our faith and commitment to Christ we are participating with other congregations in a stewardship emphasis 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 by email _____. 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 and on Christ the King Sunday, November 20 at our worship services Pastor _____ from _____ Church will be our preacher and worship leader in a pulpit exchange with _____ Church. Together we hope to share a message of God's abundance and our commitment to greater service and generosity to Christ and his church.

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

Yours in Christ,



November 6, 2016

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

November 20th is Christ the King Sunday. This year we are participating in a synod-wide stewardship emphasis and working with _____ Church. On that Sunday we will have as our worship leader and preacher Pastor _____ as I lead worship and preach at _____ Church. Together we hope to share a message of God's abundance and our commitment to greater service and generosity to Christ and his church.

To prepare us for that Sunday I have included information to help you in your discernment leading up to Christ the King. 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,

Att: Narrative Budget
Giving Worksheet



November 20, 2016

Dear _____,

Thank you very much for your participation in the Christ the King Commitment 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 yourself.

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 2017:

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



**That
Christ might
come to have
first place
in everything.**

Colossians 1:18

**Join us on November 20, 2016
for Stewardship Commitment Sunday!**