Planned Giving Reprintables

*WELS Ministry of Christian Giving has edited and approved the following resources for your church to customize (when necessary) and use as needed. They are meant to encourage members about good stewardship practices and inform them about ways to make planned gifts to benefit your church and the synod. Consider using them at your Web site, in bulletins or newsletters, etc. To use, modify as you’d like. Then highlight the text and copy and paste it (Ctrl-C, Ctrl-V) where you want it to go.*

*The first article is from Stewardship Advisors. To learn more, visit* [*www.stewardshipadvisors.org*](http://www.stewardshipadvisors.org) *or call Ron Chewning at 888-783-2790. WELS Ministry of Christian Giving obtained permission to share this.*

Showing our Gratitude

God gives us his love, goodness, and mercy daily. He has given us victory over sin and death through his Son. Christ has given us the blessings of forgiveness, justification, a new life, and an eternal hope. Because of his bountiful blessings, we should be compelled to show our gratitude. Do we? Could we, at times, be taking all that we receive for granted?

If Christ were to come into our homes in physical form, certainly we would express our thanks in tangible ways. We would make him comfortable, run errands for him, offer our best food, and give him our time and attention. However, we don’t have that opportunity, so we show our gratitude in different ways.

One way that we express our gratitude is to give thanks throughout the day in our prayers and thoughts. When we see life and its blessings as gifts, we are prepared to offer our thanks. Our thanksgiving is expressed when we, in faith, live in obedience to his Word. God hears and sees our gratitude through the lives we live. When we generously share our time and money with others in Christian love, we show our thanksgiving for our gifts. Our giving reflects Christ’s love to us. We extend our thanks to our heavenly Father when we give him praise and glory in weekly worship and privately throughout each day.

In response to God’s love and grace we, as stewards, give ourselves and our resources. We acknowledge God as the creator and owner of all as we serve him faithfully out of gratitude for all of his gifts to us. God enables us to give thanks even during bad times, because God promises to comfort and sustain us in all things.

An Appeal to Plan Ahead

When a military deployment takes place, service personnel rush to get their estate plans completed or updated. Attorneys are brought in to speed up the process and to make sure no one goes off to war without first setting his or her house in order. Having a valid will in place becomes mighty important in the face of such danger.

Some people are “awakened” to the importance of estate planning when they prepare to vacation in a foreign land. Others may be prodded by a closer-to-home vacation that entails risk, such as a river trip down the Grand Canyon. Still others may be goaded to visit their estate planning professional prior to their first flying lesson or other newly acquired hobby. Attorneys will tell you that “will motivators” also include a death in the family, serious injury or illness, or some other sobering crisis.

If you were to quiz every person you know over age 50 about the importance of having a valid will in place, you would likely find 100 percent of them in favor of such prudent planning. Everyone, it seems, agrees with the wisdom of having a current will, yet many people die without a will, and many others depart with a will that is out-of-date or invalid. Unless we are faced with a compelling reason to act, it is simply easier to wait until a more convenient day. For many, that day never comes.

However, the benefits are too compelling to not initiate the estate planning process. Besides assisting loved ones with the orderly disposition of your estate, a will allows you to avoid taxes as you support family and possibly make a special gift to the Lord.

Don’t wait to brush against danger to “do the right thing.” Do it now by getting your estate planning affairs in order. Contact your local WELS Christian giving counselor by calling 800-827-5482 (local: 414-256-3209). He can send you a helpful booklet, assist with the process, and direct you to an estate planning attorney in your area.