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 intended to encourage members about good stewardship practices and to inform them about ways to make planned gifts to benefit your church and other WELS ministry. Consider using them at your website, 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.*

The Importance of Giving

It is not uncommon for church members to perceive in a negative way the encouragement from their church to give generously. The perception of some people is that the church is only interested in their money. Certainly, a generous giving congregation does provide the money needed by the church for its budget, so the church should work hard to help people grow in their giving. However, Scripture indicates that giving is as much for the sake of the giver as it is to support the needs of the church. Pastors and church leaders understand that giving is an activity that God directs us to do. Jesus said, “Freely you have received, freely give” (Matthew 10:8). Paul wrote to the church in Corinth about the collection for God’s people, “On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income” (1 Corinthians 16:2).

Giving blesses both the giver and the recipient of the giving. The blessings to the recipients are obvious. Not as obvious but as important to understand is that giving enriches the life of the giver. Giving strengthens the relationship that we have with our Lord. Through our giving, we are reminded of God’s ownership and how dependent we are on him. Giving demonstrates our faith and trust in our Savior who loved us and gave himself for us. We give as part of our worship. Giving allows us to be used by God in partnership with him.

In his Word, God promises that those who give faithfully and generously will graciously receive even more of God’s blessings. “Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing” (Proverbs 3:9-10). While we don’t “give to get,” we can confidently honor the Lord with our gifts, trusting that the generosity he prompts in us won’t impoverish us or leave us lacking what we need.

In the future, let us thank Jesus for church leaders who encourage us to grow in our giving. Through our giving, we are expressing thanks to God for his love and goodness to us. We are also helping to extend God’s kingdom through our church, providing for the needy, and enriching our own lives. As we grow spiritually and receive more of God’s blessings, we will better understand and respond to the encouragement to increase our giving.

Avoid the Rush of Year-End Giving

The final month of each year is a time for celebrating the gift of our Savior Jesus by giving gifts to family and friends as well as to churches and other charities. In fact, more charitable gifts are made during this month than at any other time of year.

All of this gift activity means that charitable organizations are extra busy during December processing cash gifts and helping donors complete planned gifts involving documents and appreciated assets. It’s a joyous time of year, but it can also be hectic as charities try to honor every donor request.

If you hope to make a planned gift (e.g. real estate or the transfer of securities) before the end of the year, consider getting an early start on the process. If you want to create a charitable gift annuity or other life-income arrangements, consider a start date well before December.

Waiting too long to accomplish something that involves meetings with professional advisors, document preparation, and such things as appraisals and real estate environmental reviews can make it impossible to complete a gift by December 31.

One thing that may help you in your planning is to contact our congregation’s local WELS Christian giving counselor, who can provide you with step-by-step guidance on when each step needs to happen, from the preparation and signing of the papers to the transfer of the assets.

Planned Christian gifts should be pleasant and fulfilling. You don’t want to rush through something just to meet a deadline and later discover that it was not what you really wanted to do. And of course, avoidable mistakes can happen when the pressure is on.

To contact a WELS Christian giving counselor to assist you with year-end giving, call WELS Ministry of Christian Giving at 800-827-5482 (local: 414-256-3209). There is no cost or obligation for working with a giving counselor.