



**Wilkesboro United Methodist Church
Administrative Council June 11, 2017**

1. Redefining Stewardship

- a. Stewardship isn't:
 - i. Hitting people up for more money
 - ii. Raising the money needed for the budget
 - iii. About what God wants *from* us; it **is** about what God wants *for* us
- b. Stewardship is:
 - i. Rooted in
 - 1. Gratitude
 - 2. Growing closer to God (where your treasure is, there your heart will be)
 - 3. Investing in God's work of transforming lives through your church
 - ii. Ordering our priorities so we can participate in the abundant life Jesus promises
 - iii. A faith response of **joyful obedience** to God's goodness and faithfulness

2. Should We Tithe?

- a. Tithing, as an expression of joyful obedience, is the standard of Biblical generosity, which we may consider a goal for all Christians to strive toward achieving.
 - i. Even so, "should" is a word we would do well to avoid when it comes to tithing.
 - ii. *Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver (2 Corinthians 9:6-7)*
 - 1. We give not because we "should," but because we want to
 - 2. Giving/sowing a little blesses us a little. Giving more blesses us more
- b. *Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "& see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it (Malachi 3:10)*
 - i. the whole tithe – a full 10% of our income
 - ii. the storehouse – our local worshiping community/church
 - iii. food in my house – so the ministry of our church can be fully carried out
 - iv. Test me in this – the only place in Scripture we are told *to* put God to the test
 - v. Pour out blessing – When we tithe, God blesses us more than we can hold
- c. Tithing is an Old Testament concept which Jesus embraced and took further. Jesus taught that it is good for us to give "all that we can," and to give our best to God.
 - i. For some of us, "all we can give" is actually far beyond a tithe
 - ii. We tithe, not because we should, but because of what it does for us

3. God blesses every step we take in growing in our generosity

- a. Non- or sporadic giver? Give an amount you feel good about each week or month
- b. Giving less than a tithe (10%)? Give 1% more for the next 90 days. See how you are blessed AND how your personal finances change
- c. Tithing off your net income? Tithe off your gross income for 90 days.
- d. Tithing off your gross income? Give a fraction of a percent more for 90 days.
- e. Faithful giver? Consider leaving a bequest of at least 10% of your estate to your church.
 - i. 78% of all charitable giving in the US is identified as religious
 - ii. Yet, only 5% of bequest gifts in the US are given to religious causes

4. General vs. Designated Giving

- a. *All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. From time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need (Acts 4:32-35).*
 - i. One heart and mind – working together, on the same team, unified
 - ii. No personal claim – no prioritization of personal pet projects, no strings attached
 - iii. Put at the apostles' feet – brought to the church leadership
 - iv. Distributed to those who had need – released for various ministries
- b. Diverting gifts from general budget to designated funds is financial "Jenga"
 - i. Think of building a house, deck, pier, or fence – some of the resources go below ground, where they'll never be seen, in order for the structure to be strong & last
 - ii. Giving to the General Budget strengthens that unseen foundation
 - iii. The broader the base, the taller the tower
- c. Requires trust and coordination at all levels – donors, staff, and project leaders
- d. Giving to the General Budget is giving without strings attached or the desire to control. This is the true nature of gift-giving!

5. What if everyone took the next step and made a 1% increase in their giving?

- a. The per capita (average per person) income in ZIP 28697 is \$23,199 annually
 - i. 1% of this is \$231.99
 - ii. This would be an increase of \$4.46/week, per person in your household
- b. If every member (532) gave an additional \$4.46 per week, the weekly offering would increase by \$2,372.72; annual offering by \$123,381.44
- c. If everyone attending weekly worship (169) gave an additional \$4.46 per week, the weekly offering would increase by \$753.74; annual offering would increase by \$39,194.48

What more could God do in & through your church with that increase in funds available?

Could your household afford to give an additional \$4.46 per week per person?