

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **STEWARDSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES OF CONGREGATIONAL LEADERS**

Both individual and congregation stewardship growth contribute to effective congregational ministries. Leaders must recognize that congregational change will always be preceded by individual change. Where stewardship growth is desired, someone must lead the effort and that leadership responsibility must be both clear and acknowledged. Conversely, where leadership responsibility is fuzzy, growth is unlikely.

Where understanding and practice of stewardship is growing, it is common to find strong leaders who are intentionally promoting it. These intentional growth efforts are most directly affected by four specific leadership roles; the pastor, the stewardship chair, the Christian Education chair and the congregational officers.

Leadership of the stewardship growth process is facilitated by narrowing the focus to specific areas. Both the individual chapters of this handbook and the Stewardship Health Check questions found in the front of this handbook can serve as useful tools for pinpointing areas where improvement actions are to be taken.

Four fundamental types of leadership activities are important to promoting Stewardship growth: (1) Planning and Goal setting, (2) Education, (3) Response and Review, and (4) Follow-up.

Because stewardship affects every member and so much of the congregation's mission, effective stewardship leadership promotes frequent communication among the membership pointing out connections between Christian stewardship with overall mission and programs.

#### **SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES PASTOR**

The pastor is the chief steward of the congregation. In congregations with effective stewardship, the pastor gives leadership in three ways:

The pastor's life sets an example: If stewardship is a way of life in the congregation, the pastor will lead the way.

The pastor's words set an example: Pastors should be willing to share their personal stewardship stories.

The pastor's stewardship education sets an example: The pastor is the chief Bible teacher and theologian of the church; this includes a biblical understanding of stewardship. The pastor's education emphasis should balance information with inspiration. It contributes much to making clear the Biblical stewardship connection with the congregation's mission and programs. This should also include promotion of year-round stewardship education.

Depending upon the specific congregation, one of the most important responsibilities may be to recruit a stewardship chair who will lead the growth program and then to assist that person in identifying other key leaders.

## **STEWARDSHIP CHAIR**

The program chair responsibilities include:

1. Identifying and recruiting other stewardship leaders and forming a stewardship committee.
2. Developing and implementing a year-round stewardship education program in conjunction with the Christian Ed. Chair.
3. Planning, leading and evaluation an annual campaign.
4. Keeping the council informed and encouraging their involvement in stewardship activities.
5. Developing an appropriate collection of reference resources; i.e. books, videos, annual program descriptions.

## **CONGREGATION COUNCIL**

The Council members are stewards of the entire congregational life and mission; they are accountable to God and the congregation for the manner in which all aspects of the congregation's ministry are conducted. The ELCA model constitution contains the following more specific words which are appropriate to the council's stewardship responsibilities: "The Congregation Council shall have general oversight of the life and activities of the congregation, and....." The duties of the Council shall include the following:

- a) To lead this congregation in stating its mission, to do long-range planning, to set goals and priorities, and to evaluate its activities in light of its mission and goals.
- b) To seek to involve all members of this congregation in worship, learning, witness, service and support.
- c) To oversee and provide for the administration of this congregation to enable it to fulfill its functions and perform its mission.
- d) To maintain supportive relationships with the pastor/s and staff and help them in the fulfillment of their calling.
- e) To be examples, individually and corporately, of the style of life and ministry expected of all baptized persons.

There are other responsibilities including that of financial oversight and management.

## **CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

Stewardship education is an important part of Christian Education. The CE Committee, therefore has a key role in promoting stewardship growth among the membership. In general the CE committee is responsible for all aspects of the Christian Education ministry and program of the congregation. In conjunction with the Stewardship Committee, the CE committee can ensure availability of stewardship curriculum materials and appropriate classroom time to present these materials. The CE committee members are, in effect, stewards of the entire Christian Education program.

