

REPORT OF THE STEWARDSHIP DIRECTOR

STEWARDSHIP DEFINITIONS

CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

Christian stewardship is the free and joyous activity of the child of God and God's family, the Church, in managing all of life and life's resources for God's purposes.

PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

God is the owner of all things.

Christians are stewards (managers, caretakers) of God's things.

Love for Christ flowing from faith in the Gospel is the motivating power.

BIBLICAL GIVING

Proportionate (a percentage of annual income) - 1 Cor. 16:2

Regular (on a weekly basis) - 1 Cor. 16:2

First-fruit (funding God first) - Prov. 3:9

Cheerful (willingly, not reluctantly) - 2 Cor. 9:7

Lovingly Gracious (2 Cor. 7-8)

STEWARDSHIP EDUCATION AND PROMOTION

Stewardship educational resources containing Bible studies, worship services, devotional material, financial helps, church newsletter/bulletin articles and program suggestions were purchased annually for each congregation. The following programs were produced by Ron Chewing of Stewardship Advisors, Birmingham, MI.

2012 - Printed materials: "Living Each Day as a Steward"

2013 - Printed materials: "Empowered by Grace to Tithe"

"Financial Counsel from God's Word"

2014 - Materials on CD: "Year Round Stewardship Emphasis" (12 month program)

"Empowered by Grace for Faithful Stewardship" (5 week program)

Stewardship articles were written regularly for the "Beacon". Reports and information were provided for board of directors meetings and pastoral conferences.

Stewardship Programs Available

"Consecration Sunday", developed by Herb Miller, and "Consecrated Stewards", a Missouri Synod program, are available to congregations. Rev. Warren Huffines, Rev. Thomas Soltis and Rev. Joseph Weatherell serve as trained program leaders. Annual increases of member giving have averaged 15 to 20% from the six week programs.

Stewardship Web Page - www.selc.lcms.org (Stewardship)

Articles and fiscal information are available. Categories include: Staff & Resources, District & Synod Finances, Congregational Helps, Posters, Personal Stewardship and Pastoral Helps.

GOALS, BUDGETS & COMMUNICANTS

Congregational district budget goals are suggested every Fall to fund the SELC budget. Goals suggested are not calculated on the basis of communicant memberships. Increases are based on the accepted congregational goal of the previous year multiplied by a percentage increase decided by the finance committee. The procedure allows each congregation the privilege of establishing a reasonable goal suited to its financial circumstances. Congregations are strongly urged to remit on a monthly basis to enable a stable cash flow for district disbursements. The recent recession and slow economic recovery necessitated lower suggested goals than in past years.

Suggested Annual Increases

2012 - +2% 2013 - +2% 2014 - +3%

Budgets, Goals & Receipts

Year	Budget	Goals	Receipts	Performance
2012	706,600	534,758	524,887 (.00%)	98.15%
2013	588,150	525,222	512,492 (-2.36%)	97.58%
2014	566,090	510,090	494,575 (-3.5%)	96.96%

Budget deficits were met from the district treasury balance.

Average Budget Contribution per Communicant

2012 - \$41.45 2013 - \$40.94 2014 - \$39.41

Annual District Budgets

The finance committee, consisting of Dr. Carl Krueger, president, Mr. Robert Lange, treasurer, Mr. Larry Schultz, financial secretary and Rev. Thomas Soltis, stewardship director, met annually in January to prepare district budgets. Upon review, the board of directors approved the budgets below. In the past, budgets were established in excess of projected receipts to diminish reserve funds. In 2013, treasury reserves were diminished to a reasonable level of funds to be maintained for fiscal stability. This necessitated the elimination of deficit spending and maintaining a balanced budget. The 2013 budget was reduced by \$118,450 (-16.76%), dramatically impacting district spending for missions and ministries.

	2012	2013	2014
SELC District Missions	\$148,500	\$125,350	\$117,000
LCMS Synodical Missions	209,000	130,000	133,900
Two Seminaries	20,000	13,000	13,390
Lutheran Haven	63,000	48,000	49,400
SELC Mission Board	9,000	8,800	11,300
District Programs	44,900	77,500	88,200
Service Ministries	<u>212,200</u>	<u>185,500</u>	<u>152,900</u>
	\$706,600	\$588,150	\$566,090

SELC District Foundation Balance**Dec. 31, 2014 - \$29,100.07**

The SELC District Foundation, managed by the LCMS Foundation, is an excellent instrument for funding future district missions and ministries. The foundation is relatively new and needs to grow. Congregations and individuals are encouraged to contribute and enlarge its financial base.

Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Budgets

(Fiscal Year July 1 to June 30)

2012-13 \$64,626,022

2013-14 \$81,762,189

2014-15 \$75,485,597

SELC Congregations & Communicants

Year	Congregations	Communicants	Decrease
2012	51	12,663	34
2013	51	12,518	145
2014	52	12,452	66

3 year communicant decrease - 245 (-1.92%)

Walking Together

The word, "synod" comes from the Greek word, "synodos", which means, "walking together". Members of the Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (SELC) District, walking together in Christian love, are entrusted to corporately fund missions and ministries throughout the world beyond the scope of their local congregations. Jesus commanded, "Go and make disciples of all nations." (Matt.28:19) His love compels us to lovingly move forward to fulfill His will. In addition to providing stewardship education materials, soliciting congregational district budget goals and serving on the finance committee, I also wrote all the correspondence and attended all meetings connected with the duties of district stewardship director. Sincere thanks is extended to stewardship committee members Rev. Paul Biber, Western Circuit, Rev. Ronald Meyr, Southern Circuit and Rev. Gary Scharrer, Eastern Circuit, for their assistance in the promotion of Christian stewardship.

Rev. Thomas Soltis, EM
SELC District Stewardship Director

Addendum: Statistics regarding communicants & finances for the years 1973 to 2014 are found on the next two pages.