

**One Hour A Week!**

***Worship, Wages, Wonder, Wejoice!***



***A Four Week Congregational Stewardship Program***

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## ***Introduction***

I have been reading about stewardship, leading stewardship programs and participating in wider church discussions about stewardship for over 15 years.

This program is the result and I am sure that there are some cases where I have not given proper attribution, please forgive me. When I started reading etc. I had no idea that one day I might be putting together a program.

I have relied greatly on the methodology of Judith and Warren Johnston in their UCC publication *Celebrate Stewardship*, which grew out of Herb Miller's 'Consecration Sunday' program.

## ***Theological Rationale***

God created and loves the world and invites us to participate in God's vision for the world.

- a. Giving is a means of
  - expressing generosity in gratitude for all of God's gifts
  - fulfilling the great commandment of loving God and neighbour
  - living out our call to be the church:
    - to celebrate God's presence
    - to live with respect in Creation
    - to love and serve others
    - to seek justice and resist evil
    - to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen
- b. Generosity is a demonstrable dimension of faith formation, related to a biblically grounded stewardship understanding that is reflected in every life decision.
  - Giving increases correlate with spiritual growth.
  - Stewardship involves getting values and money going in the same direction.

*(Barbara Fullerton – Year Round Congregational Stewardship Program)*

## ***Overview***

***Week 1 – Worship***

***Week 2 – Wonder***

***Week 3 – Wages***

***Week 4 – Wejoice!***

## ***Preparation***

- **Ensure that the Official Board/Council/Minister of the congregation will be supportive of the program.**
- **Gather people together to work with you on this 4 week program. This can take a variety of formats: Stewards, Stewardship Committee, interested persons, those with particular skills. Two people who will have to be involved in some way are the treasurer and the envelope secretary.**
- **Develop and decide on a logo etc.**
- **Be in contact with Nominating Committee to find out vacancies for the coming year.**
- **Begin thinking about people who you will ask to share their story with the congregation. Think about people who are generous, well spoken and who are in leadership, also think about those generous individuals who may be less visible, but generous, faith-filled people. Try to have a balance of older and new members, as well as both genders, a young person speaking can be very effective as well.**

# **One Hour A Week**

## **Week 1 – Worship**

**Theme: Why Do We Worship?**

- **Central act of the Christian Community.**
- **Lectionary texts or chosen ones.**
- **Testimony from member of the congregation about why they financially support the congregation/pastoral charge.**
  - **This is one of the most powerful things you can do when you undertake a stewardship program, be sure that you choose people who are generous in spirit and giving.**

### **Week 1 Checklist:**

- 1. Distribute Spirit Given Gifts Inventory packages and encourage people to complete it on-line at [www.spiritgivengifts.com](http://www.spiritgivengifts.com) and ask for people to bring their results to the combined worship/workshop in Week 2.**
- 2. Arrange for testimonial for Week 2 from parishioner.**
- 3. Start working with your treasurer on Narrative Budget Summary.**

# ***One Hour A Week***

## ***Week 2 – Wonder***

**Theme: What is God Calling Me/Us To Do?**

- **Hold a combined worship/worship service around the theme of discipleship.**
- **Have on hand Spirit Given Gifts questionnaires for those who didn't complete them.**
- **Use the results from the Spirit Given Gifts inventories to link people to one another.**
- **Link gifts, including financial gifts, to the mission and ministry of the congregation.**
- **Post areas of ministry/openings in committees/boards on flip chart paper.**
- **Encourage new ministries.**
- **Have post it notes on hand for people to 'self sort' into preferred areas of ministry.**

### **Week 2 Checklist**

- **Arrange for testimonial for Week 3, ideally this is a person who has a leadership role in the congregation as well as someone who is generous in spirit and giving.**
- **Prepare all Week 3 materials**

## ***One Hour A Week***

### ***Week 3 – Wages***

**Theme: Encouraging people to be generous.**

- **How do we encourage folks to be better stewards?**
- **For many folks, 10% tithing is so far away from where they are that it may just overwhelm them.**
- **One hour of weekly salary is easily understood and calculated, it translates into a 2.5% tithe.**
- **Distribute Letters to regular contributors as well as occasional ones, Mini Narrative Budget and Covenant Forms.**

#### **Week 3 Checklist**

- **Arrange for cake for ‘Wejoicing.’**

## ***One Hour a Week***

### ***Week 4 – Wejoice!***

**Theme: Celebration!**

- **Dedicate the ‘Covenant with God’ form.**
- **Have a party!**
- **Thank people!**
- **Thank people!**
- **Thank people!**

# **Week 1 Materials**

## **Sermon**

### **One Hour a Week – Worship**

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Exodus 20:1-11

Luke 4:14-30

Will you join me in a moment of prayer?

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of all our hearts and minds be acceptable in your sight O God, our strength and our redeemer, amen.

You've heard of 4H?

Today starts 4W: a four part preaching series on One Hour a Week.

Today we are going to be focusing on worship, the next two weeks we will focus on wonder and then wages.

I went searching in the Bible for references to worship.

There are 256 verses which contain the word temple...41 contain synagogue... 144 worship...119 pray... and 164 sacrifice.

And these verses are contained within the stories of creation, slavery, exodus, exile and return and the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

In short, worship forms a backdrop to our relationship with God and each other.

The first scripture reading highlights part of the 10 commandments.

The Hebrew people, with Moses as their leader, have left Egypt.

They have left behind their life of slavery and the rules that have governed their lives from birth to death.

Without a set of laws that have been imposed on them by their Egyptian masters, they must find new ways of being in relationship with one another and with God.

And so Moses goes up the mountain... and comes down with these instructions from God.

And of course, it does not say: **YOU MUST GO TO CHURCH ON SUNDAY.**

However, it does say, *“Remember the Sabbath, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work. But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work, you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and consecrated it.”*



Now, whether you believe that Moses literally went up the mountain and brought these words down on stone tablets, or you believe that this account was included in our scripture because it was the story of an ancient people who were struggling to find how to live with each other and with God.

It doesn't matter... I think the important thing to remember is that it was included in the Bible.

Like the story of creation, it probably didn't happen exactly the way it is written, but like the story of creation, there is a deeper truth in the scriptures than fact.

But let's get back to my focus... remembering the Sabbath.

Remembering the Sabbath is much more than attendance at worship, although it includes that.

It's a way of honouring our humanity, honouring our role in the world, honouring our bodies, which are in need of rest and re-creation.

Let me ask you... would you expect any machine to work 24/7?

Without routine maintenance and down time, a machine will quickly wear out and break... in effect, become useless.

Are you not more valuable than any machine?

I read a book once entitled Sabbath time... one of the things that I remember from it is that Sabbath is letting go of our need to be busy, to be doing something...

It is letting go of the idea that things will fall apart if we stop...

It is simply being... being the child of God that you are...

Part of Sabbath practice is to attend worship...

Both the old and new testaments emphasize that...

There are many references to Jesus attending worship or praying in the gospels.

Aside from being presented in the temple as a baby, I think the earliest reference is when he was a boy of about 13 and is teaching the elders of the synagogue.

I chose that passage from Luke because of verse 16, which reads: "When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom."

Hear those words again, "He went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom."

As was his custom.

If Jesus, the man who had the most intimate relationship with God of anyone before or since, attended worship on a regular basis, why do any of us think we can do without it.

Before any of you think I am coming down on you about not attending every week, I am not.

I know that things interfere...

But, I also know, from personal experience, that when I don't find opportunities for me to worship on a regular basis, to reconnect with God, life becomes much harder to handle. I asked if some of you would share why you come to worship.

A few people replied via email, and have given me permission to share with their thoughts with the rest of you.

***I had emailed the congregation and asked who would be willing to share stories about why they come to worship. Some of them got up and spoke, some emailed me and allowed me to share it with the congregation.***

Relationships... grounding... time set aside... connecting with God and through God... finding meaning in our daily lives....

And all that can happen in just one hour a week.

Thanks be to God for Sabbath. Amen.

## ***Week 2 Materials***

## **Week 3 Materials**

### **Letter to Regular Supporters**

#### **One Hour A Week!**

***Worship, Wages, Wonder, Wejoice!***

#### **Anywhere United Church**

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Dear

The Stewardship theme for this year is: **One Hour A Week: Worship, Wages, Wonder.** We are all being challenged to spend an hour each week in worship, in wages and in wondering what God is calling us to do, individually and collectively as a faith community.

I am so thankful for your continued financial support of God's work through our congregation! Your contributions enable ministry of all sorts. This year, you are invited to make a financial commitment to contribute one hour a week, every week, of your income, whether that is pension, salary, or hourly wages. When we all do that, we will have the financial resources to continue and expand our ministry and mission. Our mission has been defined as:

#### **Insert Mission Statement Here**

We continue to live out our Mission Statement in a variety of ways: regular Sunday worship, faith exploration, music club and camp, weddings, baptisms, special services, community involvement and funerals. We support the work of the wider church through our offering to the Mission & Service Fund as well as support to local initiatives such as our ongoing commitment to a Food Bank, the women and children's shelter, Herizon House, Gate 3:16, the Christmas Basket program, and our children continue their support of the 'Magic Pennies' program which will enable them to undertake a project through World Vision to allow a family to become self sufficient. Ministry is also played out in a multitude of ways by individuals and groups.

Enclosed is a 'Covenant With God' form, please give prayerful consideration to it as you come to a decision. When you have filled it out, place it in the enclosed envelope and bring it back to church to be placed in the offering plate. If you are unable to be in church in the next couple of week, please mail it to us.

If you have any questions about this program, or if I can be of any assistance in any way, please do not hesitate to call me at \_\_\_\_\_. With your continued support we are able to keep our doors open to serve God, our community and the world.

In Christ's service,  
Rev. Someone

# Letter to Occasional Supporters

## One Hour A Week!

*Worship, Wages, Wonder, Wejoice!*

### Anywhere United Church

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Dear Friends of Anywhere United Church:

I am so thankful for your continued financial support of God's work through our congregation! My prayers to God include all of you together and many of you individually, because I know that your giving comes from a generosity that goes deeper than supporting us to pay our bills. You understand what we all believe: When we challenge each other to give, and to respond to Christ's invitation for mission in the world, we respond generously.

Our Mission Statement says:

#### **Insert Mission Statement here:**

We continue to live out our Mission Statement in a variety of ways: regular Sunday worship, faith exploration, music club and camp, weddings, baptisms, special services, community involvement and funerals. We support the work of the wider church through our offering to the Mission & Service Fund as well as support to local initiatives such as our ongoing commitment to a Food Bank, the women and children's shelter, Herizon House, Gate 3:16, the Christmas Basket program, and our children continue their support of the 'Magic Pennies' program which will enable them to undertake a project through World Vision to allow a family to become self sufficient. Ministry is also played out in a multitude of ways by individuals and groups.

Check out our website at [www. anywherechurch.org](http://www.anywherechurch.org) for worship themes and events throughout the Advent and Christmas Season.

If I can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to call me at xxx-xxx-xxxx. With your continued support we are able to keep our doors open to serve God, our community and the world.

In Christ's service,

Rev. Someone

## **Sample Narrative Budget**

To develop the narrative budgets in the congregations which I have served, we have determined four broad areas of ministry: Worship, Christian Development, Pastoral Care & Community Presence, and Mission & Service and Community Outreach. Then we have simply taken the total budget and allocated percentages based on how much time the ministry staff spent on each area. In the following example, the percentage breakdowns were: Worship 35%, Christian Development 20%, Pastoral Care 25% and Outreach 20%. All the expenses were thus spread out over the agreed upon areas of ministry.

This is very effective as a Power Point Presentation if you include pictures from your congregation in the various areas.

### **Ministry and Programming – Anywhere United Church 2010**



Together, we financially support the ministries and programs of our church. How much money is spent? How is it spent? This narrative budget offers financial snapshots of our program ministries, including their administrative costs.

- Worship
- Christian Development
- Pastoral Care and Community Presence
- Mission and Service and Community Outreach

The narrative describes how we distribute **\$200,000** so all areas of our church's ministry and programming have the financial resources to support them. All Ministry Team salaries, administrative, committee, and building expenses are part of the costs of the ministry areas highlighted in this pamphlet.

**Our givings make it possible for us to offer faithful ministry! Please read this story and prayerfully consider how you can respond on Celebration Sunday, 29 November 2009 when you offer your Covenant With God for the year 2010.**

## **Worship**

**\$70,000**

Our church celebrates the vibrancy of its worship. In worship we gather as a community of faith where we celebrate God's presence and respond to God's call to service in our world.

Our Ministry Team, Music Director and Worship Committee prepare the weekly worship services. We have a strong tradition of involving lay members in leadership in our worship. We offer worship each week at 10:30 a.m. and special worship services at other times.

This area of ministry includes

- Ministry Team leadership in worship/preaching
- Worship resources
- Instruments, choir, music & music licences
- Funerals, weddings, baptisms, and other special services
- Sound system
- Scripture readers
- Special speakers
- Greeters, and counters
- Supplies: bulletins, offering envelopes, etc.
- Space for worship and preparation
- Banners and decorations



## **All God's People Worship**

### **Christian Development**

**\$60,000**

Through Christian nurture, each of us grows in our knowledge of what it means to be the people of God in our world. We provide education for children and youth, preschool to Grade 8, at church school each Sunday during the church service. A nursery is available for babies and toddlers up to age 2.

Adult study and reflection happen throughout the year in various ways, devotions at meetings, the programs the UCW offers, study groups and men's breakfasts. In our adult gatherings, we seek to keep present the mystery of God's presence in our lives as we explore, question, and talk together. Our ministry personnel meet with parents wanting to have their children baptized, or persons wanting to become members. Opportunities for Spirit Given Gifts assessments are available.

This area of ministry includes

- Church school curriculum and children and youth programs
- Adult Faith Formation groups
- Baptism and Confirmation sessions
- Ministry Team time, space, and supplies

**Pastoral Care and Community Presence**

**\$50,000**

We offer ongoing care and support to all members and friends of our congregation. We respond to individuals in times of crisis, such as illness or bereavement. We keep in touch with members who are housebound or who live in seniors' residences and can no longer come to church. Our Ministry Team, Elders and Pastoral Care Team want to make this church a caring community where each person is able to feel the love of God being shared with one another.

This area of ministry includes

- Visits to home, hospitals and seniors' residences
- Premarital & marital counselling
- Grief counselling
- Visitor follow-up
- Prayer Shawl Ministry
- Space for community concerts
- Brochure distribution to the surrounding community
- Community time after worship
- Sponsorship of Brownies & Sparks

**Mission and Service and Community Outreach**

**\$40,000**

As people of God, we are called to work in the world around us. We provide time and money for God's work beyond our church walls. This work takes place in our city, in our country, and in countries all around the world. We also support the work of the United Church through presbytery/district and Conference assessments.

Our congregation supports outreach both locally and through the Mission and Service Fund of the United Church. We are called to seek justice and equality for others.

Throughout the year, we reach out beyond this budget and provide additional support and funding to special projects as needs are identified. These projects may be in our local community or farther afield.

This area of ministry includes

- Mission and Service Fund support
- Support for presbytery and Conference work
- Support for local ministries including Brunswick Street Mission, Feed Nova Scotia, Ward 5, Dalhousie Campus Ministry, L'Arche, St. Andrew's United Church in support of ARK Youth Ministries, the Angola Memorial Scholarship Fund, Phoenix House, Stepping Stone, Coverdale and Dalhousie Campus Ministry
- Ministry Team time, supplies, and space



## We Covenant with God

**We covenant with God** as a theological, spiritual and biblical reminder of how we respond to the covenant that God has made with each of us. Our covenant with God reflects our core values as spiritual and Christian beings. Please prayerfully consider your responses to the following covenants (*promises to God*). These covenants are personal, between you and God, and you are invited to keep your promises in a safe place (*perhaps your bible*) where you can refer to them throughout the year.

**I, \_\_\_\_\_, covenant with God to:**

- attend worship at least \_\_\_\_\_ times this year
  
- participate in a learning and/or growth experience through
  - \_\_\_ monthly spirituality group
  - \_\_\_ weekly book or bible study
  - \_\_\_ serving the church through committee or team ministry
  - \_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_
  
- to share my spirit given gifts with others through: \_\_\_\_\_
  
- to serve others through my ministry/mission of: \_\_\_\_\_
  
- to reconcile a broken relationship with \_\_\_\_\_
  
- to be a faithful steward of God's creation, I covenant to care for the earth by:
  - \_\_\_ recycling paper, glass, metal, and plastic
  - \_\_\_ reducing my energy consumption
  - \_\_\_ driving less, walk, bicycle or car pool more often
  - \_\_\_ using my purchasing power to make consumer changes (*i.e. less packaging, local products, fair trade products, organic products, ethical investment portfolios, etc*)
  - \_\_\_ other things I can do are:
  
- to be a faithful steward of material gifts, I pledge the following to the church this year:
  - \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Local Fund
  - \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Building Fund
  - \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Mission and Service Fund
  - \$ \_\_\_\_\_ other \_\_\_\_\_

***A part being faithful Christian stewards is our covenant to the ministry of the church. Please copy the pledge amounts here, and remove this portion of the covenant card, then place this in the envelope provided. Pledges are kept confidential.***

**I/we, \_\_\_\_\_ covenant with God to be generous with our financial resources and pledge the following amounts to the Ministry and Mission of our church this year:**

**\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Local Fund**  
**\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Building Fund**  
**\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Mission and Service fund**  
**\$ \_\_\_\_\_ other \_\_\_\_\_**

*There is no great risk in giving God 10% (or whatever your percentage might be).*

*The biggest risk is what we do with our remaining time, talent and treasure.*

*Adapted from a Resource developed by Paula Ashby.*

Will you join me in a moment of prayer?

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of all of our hearts and minds be acceptable in your sight O God, our strength and our redeemer. Amen.

Would you believe that there is just one more Sunday after this one and then we are into Advent?

And I was in a shopping centre a couple of weeks ago and the Christmas decorations and music were in full force.

And the season of shopping is upon us...

The season where those of us who have more than enough struggle to find something to buy for those who already have everything they need or want... and the season when we struggle to find space for the things we receive...

And the season, where those who do not have enough, is fraught with anxiety, anger and the helpless sense that they are short-changing their love ones.

The season in which many, many people feel as if they cannot participate in the joy of the season because they simply do not have the financial resources to do so.

This is not a sermon against gift giving and receiving.

For it part of our very nature to give and receive...

Who would want to take away the joy and excitement of watching a loved one open a gift which you know is just perfect for them?

Or take away your joy and excitement upon receiving a gift that is perfect for you?

Not me!

I enjoy giving and receiving gifts as much as the next person...

And we have received the greatest gift of all... Emmanuel, God with us.

This is a sermon about giving... giving not only to our immediate family and friends... but to our neighbour...

Our neighbours both near and far...

Did you hear those words from the passage from Acts? "Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common."

This was the church community that grew up after Jesus' death and resurrection.

Everything they had was held in common. “There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold.”

They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

### **There was not a needy person among them!**

Wow! What a vision of the world!

Those of you who have heard me preach for the last 3 years know how I am conscious that Jesus' ministry and teachings were based in what we call the Old Testament.

They were his Bible... there was no other...

And those scriptures emphasis that giving, and giving generously with a joyful heart, is part of the Hebrew tradition, which continued on into the Christian churches.

Last week I preached about our need for worship... as was commanded... and I used a passage from Exodus 20 to illustrate this...

The book of Exodus continues in chapter 34 reiterating the commandment for Sabbath and adds something new....

Six days you shall work, but on the seventh day you shall rest; even in plowing time and in harvest time you shall rest.

You shall observe the festival of weeks, the first fruits of wheat harvest, and the festival of ingathering at the turn of the year.

The best of the first fruits of your ground you shall bring to the house of the Lord your God.

The Lord said to Moses: Write these words; in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel.

A covenant to bring to God the best of the first fruits... A tithe... a tenth of all they had... to be brought to the house of God...

For the work of ministry... to support the temple and to tend to the needy.

Jesus' disciples took that one step, or maybe a few steps further when they shared all they had in common... Before your eyes glaze over and you think that I am asking us to pool all we own...

Or even before you think I am asking for us all to give a tenth of our income for the work of ministry... I am not...

I am not convinced or sure that we are commanded to give a tenth of what we have for God's work.

For in the days that these commandments came to us there was no health care system or social assistance programming... and so on...

And while these systems may not be perfect, we share that burden with the rest of the people of this country... that burden does not fall about the churches and other religious institutions.

What I am suggesting however, is that in the same way as we give an hour each week to worship, we commit an hour of our income each week for the work of ministry.

One hour a week... not all you own... or all your income... not even a tenth of your income... or a tenth of what you own, but 1/40<sup>th</sup>...

Not for my sake... not for the church's sake... but for your sake... to be part of the ministry that we are about... to be part of God's healing work in the world.

I know you are generous people... with both your time and your financial resources.

I have seen that demonstrated over and over again... when need arises in this community and in places where disasters have devastated far flung communities.

Once again this year, you are being asked to be more intentional in your generosity...

There are letters for each of you today... letters which recap some of the wonderful things that this faith community is about and how we live out our Mission Statement.

Also included is an Invitation to Commitment for 2008.

And in the bulletin is an insert which highlights how the money we invest in ministry, both in Claremont and around the world is spent.

I know that each of you... that each of us... is in different financial circumstances.

There was certainly a time in my life that giving up one hour of my income each week would have involved making a choice between that and buying food... God does not call us to go hungry or naked or without shelter.

God does call those of us who are richly blessed with financial resources to be generous with them.

Some of us can and do contribute more than one hour each week... Some of us cannot...

But you are all invited to ponder, discuss and pray about your financial offering and bring the commitment page back next week, to be placed in the offering plate as an act of worship.

If you have children involve them... they sometimes see right to the heart of the matter in a way that adults can't... they are sometimes willing to forgo something in order to help someone else.

And with those commitments, that vision, from both Old and New Testaments will be lived out:

There was not a needy person among them!

Thanks be to God for the opportunity to be generous.

Thanks be to God for your generosity. Amen.

## ***Week 4 Materials***

- **Follow up with reports!**
  - **Report how many people turned in commitment, how many dollars for ministry committed.**
  - **Send quarterly statements, thanking people for their generosity, letting them know how their givings make a difference in people's lives.**

***Say Thank You!***  
***Say Thank You!***  
***Say Thank You!***

## ***Follow Up Materials***

### ***Sample Quarterly Letter to Participants***

Dear:

Thank you for your participation in our Stewardship Program. As people of Anywhere United Church we continually seek opportunities to express our thankfulness to God and to support one another on our faith journey. We want to acknowledge and express appreciation for your commitments through this congregation.

It is an exciting time to be a part of this congregation. The Tom Bandy report is back and we are being challenged to find our direction. At any time of the week people are meeting with one another to share their faith stories, whether it is with an organized study group meeting at the CD Centre or informally in our homes over coffee.

The realization of our hopes, dreams and plans for this congregation depend on the willingness and ability for each of us to honour the participation and financial commitments that each of us made.

According to our records, your financial commitment for 2010 God's work through our church is \$\_\_\_\_\_. During the period January 1, 1997 to March 31, 1997 your support has been \$\_\_\_\_\_.

Please let me know if our records are incorrect or if your circumstances dictate a change in your commitment. You can reach me at xxx-xxx-xxxx.

Thank you.

We look forward to seeing you in church.

Sincerely,

Stewardship Program Co-ordinator