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# From the Pastor's Desk

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## *Stewardship of Financial Blessings*

Last month I wrote about stewardship – but not about money. I talked about the stewardship of the far more important asset of the church: our people. Briefly, what I said was that as a church, it is our responsibility to take seriously the gifts and passions of our members. This means two things: (1) we must not permit our members to do nothing and (2) we must make sure people are led to serve in areas where they will grow and find joy. Either mistake amounts to wasting this tremendous asset. The former is comparable to burying all our money in a hole in the ground and the latter is like spending all our money on Precious Moments® figurines or Bears Superbowl tickets. So this past month, our Lay Leadership team has been at work calling you and trying to connect you to your most appropriate ministry. That process is ongoing, but see p. 10 for a report on our progress now.

We can make the same argument about another of our great assets, our building. We could waste this asset in the same two ways: (1) we can hide it away and try to keep it safe by not letting anyone touch it or (2) we can use it badly or inappropriately. But this asset is in good hands under the care of our mission-minded Board of Trustees. This month, in addition to our usual Sunday morning and Wednesday evening programming, our building has hosted our Personal Needs Closet twice, AA four times, the Aging and Disability Resource Center class “Stepping On” four times, a men’s morning book club four times (they pay us by contributing each week to the PNC), the Community-Wide Make a Difference Day event, a community support group for young mothers (who also contribute to the PNC), and the joint Church Conferences of the Wausau United Methodist Churches. We are not just a church; we are a community center, and that’s good stewardship.

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So now, let's talk about the stewardship of money. This month you will receive a pledge letter with a card to fill out, inviting you to step up your giving in some way to support the work of your church. Because we take seriously this notion that stewardship applies to the church as well as its members, that mailing will include a brochure outlining how we spend the money that you give. We want to show that we use that money well for ministry supporting the Four Core Purposes of the church. But now it's not just about us but about you. God has also granted you great gifts, both in terms of your talents and passions for service but also in terms of the financial blessings. Most of us have been given more than we need, and far more than most of the rest of the world has. So how's our stewardship of that blessing? There are two ways that we can waste our financial assets: (1) we can squirrel them away and hide them so that they can never be used at all or (2) we can waste them on things that add nothing of significance to our (or anyone else's) lives.

Of course I'm not suggesting we should not save money for an emergency fund or for retirement or for our children's college. No, the danger comes when we start saving money for the sake of saving money. Nor am I suggesting that we must never spend money on anything but absolute necessities. No, the danger comes when we spend money without thought. But I am suggesting that a part of any stewardship is returning some of the money that we have to serve God through the church. This month I ask you to consider your own financial stewardship, so that the church can continue its own stewardship.