
From the Pastor's Desk

Pastor Gerald (Jerry) Morris

October 2016

Stewardship of People

In October and November, as we put together our budget for 2017 and solicit pledges from our members, you need to accustom yourself to the fact that you're going to hear the word "stewardship" a lot. After all, stewardship means taking care of what God has given us and using it appropriately, and that definitely includes the financial blessings we've received. As we plan how we're going to fund our ministry next year, it is completely appropriate to ask people to consider their stewardship of money. Are we using this gift well and appropriately?

This is a familiar question for the final quarter of the year in a United Methodist Church. But here's a question that is maybe a little less familiar: How is the church doing with its stewardship? After all, the church has gifts and assets and talents and treasures as well, and if we're going to ask our members if they are using their gifts wisely and generously, it seems to me fair to ask whether we're doing as well as we can by ours.

So in this article let me talk about our most important asset: our people. As a church, our primary goal is to make disciples of Jesus Christ. We are a training ground for believers, and should be guiding people into areas of ministry that are right for them. As it happens, our Lay Leadership Team is involved in this process now, recruiting church leaders and committee members for the coming year. If we are going to be good stewards of our people, then we will find them roles that will challenge them and enable them to grow in wisdom and knowledge and compassion.

I have to admit, though, that the United Methodist Book of Discipline does not make that easy. It is vague about how to involve people in ministry, but it spells out in precise terms how many people we should have on every administrative committee. If we enlist as many people for each administrative team as the BOD requires, we'd have more than 40 people working on administrative teams and hardly anybody left for . . . you know, ministry.

My beloved brothers and sisters, that would be bad stewardship of you. If we want you to learn, we should recruit you as teachers or confirmation mentors. If we want you to grow in love, then we want you in visitation or working in the Personal Needs Closet or Memory Café. If we want to open your hearts to people outside our community, we need you as greeters and follow-up visitors and welcome event coordinators (i.e. the Welcome and Communications Team). If we want you to know and share the joy of experiencing God, we should enlist you to be a part of our worship planning and leadership team. While it is not impossible that people might grow in faith by being administrators, in my experience, it's way less likely.

Now, yes, we do need people to help administer the church, and so we will recruit people to serve on those committees, too. If you have a particular gift or special training in finances or building maintenance or personnel management or administration in general, we have a place for you. But first, we want you in ministry. And we need your help. Below is a list of our current teams that, with a brief description, and the best way for us to know what is right for you is for you to tell us. One thing is certain, though. Doing nothing at all is not a good way to grow. And that would be awful stewardship.

- Teaching (preschool, children, teens, or adults)
- Messy Church (monthly intergenerational worship and learning)
- Worship Design (planning)
- Worship participation (lay reader, music, ushering, etc.)
- Missions (oversees our involvement in community, state, national, and international ministries)
- Welcome and Communications (just what it says: welcoming guests and reaching out to invite more)
- Visitation (caring for our own people in need, especially our homebound)
- Finance Committee (oversees our budget revenues and expenses)
- Staff-Parish Relations (personnel)
- Trustees (caring for our fixed assets, in particular our building and grounds)
- Wills and Memorials (overseeing special accounts established in honor of loved ones)
- Lay Leadership (nominating leaders)
- Ministries Council (planning the direction of the church on a long term basis)

Do you see an area here in which you would like to grow? If so, let us know. Tell Pastor Jerry or call Arlene in the church office: (715) 842-2201.