

Background information

- ◆ *Consecrated Stewards* is a process/program adapted from an excellent resource created by Herb Miller called “*New Consecration Sunday*.”
- ◆ This stewardship process ties the financial commitment process in a congregation to the Sunday morning act of worship. It refrains from making stewardship all about the congregation “making budget,” which tends to distract the Christian from appreciating the tithe and offerings as an act of worship.
- ◆ *Consecrated Stewards* reaches the maximum number of people in a congregation by including this process in the Divine Service and Sunday morning education hour.
- ◆ Requires five weeks of organization time by the congregation’s *Consecrated Steward Team* and then requires five weeks of time to execute the process on Sunday mornings with the congregation.
- ◆ Requires a working team of nine: Pastor; General Chairperson; one person for each of the following areas – Events, Spiritual Growth, Publicity, Financial Secretary, Reservations, Children’s Ministry; and your Guest Leader (from outside the congregation).
- ◆ Normally the *Consecrated Stewards* process requires only four Team Meetings, plus attention to ongoing stewardship.
- ◆ *Consecrated Stewards* does not have members asking other members “one-on-one” for financial commitments.
- ◆ Can be used just about any time of the year. Keep in mind that the materials reinforce several times the concept that stewardship is not tied to the budget. There will be no talk about the budget throughout this concentrated process.

Consecrated Stewards provides the following items (that Herb Miller’s New Consecration Sunday does not)

- ◆ Lutheran Bible Study materials
- ◆ Sermon Outlines for the pastor’s use
- ◆ Guidance for stewardship witness talks
- ◆ A process to celebrate the congregation’s ministries
- ◆ Publicity and communication aids
- ◆ An LCEF trained and certified Guest Leader

Consider the following statistics, deciphered through research and study (and take them for what their worth)

- ◆ In general, congregations that do nothing more than receive offerings on Sunday morning and spend little or no time in specific Stewardship Education usually find that their members “offer up to the Lord” in weekly offerings about 1.5% of their annual income.
- ◆ In general, congregations who invite their members to participate in a “pledging process” of some kind usually find that their members “offer up to the Lord” in weekly offerings about 2.9% of their annual income.
- ◆ In general, congregations who somewhat consistently preach and teach a Biblical understanding of Christian Stewardship and encourage that their members “offer up to the Lord” in weekly offerings a percentage amount of annual income typically find that their members offer up to the Lord about 4.6% of their annual income.
- ◆ In general, congregations using *Consecrated Stewards* have received increases in estimated envelope giving of 15% to 35% over the previous year (and some congregation even greater percentages).
 - Therefore ask yourself this question: **What percentage of my financial blessing received annually do I believe the Lord is calling me to return to Him?** (a *first fruit* offering question) Notice that the question does not ask: What does my congregation need? That’s the wrong question in terms of stewardship.
 - Consider this: **Percentage offerings** make the stewardship process biblical and get at the “equal sacrifice” teaching as opposed to an “equal gift” situation that creates envy and hard feelings among members.

Costs involved with the Consecrated Stewards process

- ◆ \$500.00 is paid to LCEF – for training, congregational prepared materials, Children’s Sunday School Lessons, and Bible Study Materials for adults.
- ◆ \$_____ the cost of providing for the *Consecrated Stewards Team* Luncheon. (It is simply important.)
- ◆ \$_____ the cost of providing the Consecration Sunday Luncheon for the entire congregation. Normally this is catered in or held at a facility with food service. *This is meant to be a celebration dinner for the entire congregation – and not held at the expense of some members’ sacrifice.* (Don’t cut corners here.)
- ◆ \$300.00 recommended Honorarium to the Guest Leader – PLUS, expenses for travel.
 - *The total amount varies from congregation to congregation, based on size of the congregation and choice of catered foods.*
 - *It has been discovered through research in this program that congregations that try to cut costs and cut corners (and don’t follow the recommended procedures) tend to find that their commitment results are generally less than congregations that follow all the recommendations. Maybe the old adages are true: “You only get out what you put in!” or “There is being frugal...and then there is just being plain CHEAP.”*
 - *Finally, consider this: if your financial commitment percentage is going to increase by 15% to 35%, the cost of this program will be wiped out on the First Fruits Sunday (normally selected a few Sundays after Consecration Sunday).*
 - *That makes the cost of the process...a matter of faith.*

The Consecrated Steward Calendar of Events

The following schedule is generic fashioned. Your Guest Leader would help you determine a more exact schedule with potential real dates in preparation for the Voters’ Meeting. But this gives you a rough outline of the time needed to prepare and execute the process.

- ◆ Contact the LCEF representative and request information on Consecrated Stewards (obviously your reading this indicates that this has been done)
- ◆ Voters’ Assembly resolution that approves the use of Consecrated Stewards, approves the cost, and appoints the congregation’s *Consecrated Steward Team* (therefore, whatever time needed to get the information processed through the congregation’s normal communication channels)
- ◆ By _____ (date) LCEF representative is contacted to request an assigned Guest Leader.
- ◆ By _____ (date) and TEN WEEKS (at the minimum) prior to Consecration Sunday (commitment Sunday) the first *Consecrated Stewards Team* meeting is held with the Guest Leader.
- ◆ On _____ (date) the first five weeks begin – preparation time for the Team and publicity time for the congregation.
- ◆ On _____ (date) the second five weeks begin – time for working the process on Sunday mornings, which culminates in a Consecration Sunday with a Celebration Dinner (or brunch depending on needs) and followed up by a First Fruits Sunday a few Sundays after Consecration Sunday.
- ◆ Five weeks after First Fruits Sunday, Pastor Frith likes to meet with the *Consecrated Stewards Team* for evaluation and follow-up needs. Pastor Frith also suggests resources for ongoing Stewardship ministry. *This meeting is normally done via conference call.* (All Guest Leaders may not perform follow-ups in the same manner as Pastor Frith.)