

## **\$1.10 is how I learned stewardship**

August 26, 2015 by Katie Owen Aumann

Shortly after my husband and I got married, with some knowledge of what he'd gotten himself into marrying a pastor, he joined a local Presbyterian church. Upon joining, I remarked, "You know, now that you're a member, we need to sort out our pledge to the church." Despite the fact that we never actually turned in our pledge card for this year (I'm sorry... but hey – bonus money for that church's annual budget!), we now give monthly not only to the campus ministry where I serve but to the church where we worship.

Our parents instilled in us a spirit of generosity early in life. Even before we were married, we both gave generously to organizations we care about deeply. In lieu of wedding favors (a scheme dreamt up by the wedding industry to make weddings cost more — who eats Jordan almonds anyway?), we made donations to two charitable organizations that matter to us on behalf of our friends and family.

But there is something about a church pledge that is different to me than a gift to charity. A tithe to the church, even if it's not 10 percent, is a responsive act of gratitude to God. It sets the tone for what it means to be a steward of all of your resources — not just your income, but your talents and time as well. A financial gift to the church each month is a reminder to me that all of what I have is a gift and what I do with it matters.

My great grandfather, a frugal German man who ran the town's general store in Skaitook, Oklahoma, his whole life, believed that every month you pay yourself in savings, you give to the church, and whatever's left is what you have to live. It might have had something to do with the fact that he was the church treasurer for about 40 years, but he gave to the church faithfully in years of feast and in years of famine. My grandfather and my father learned stewardship at home, by example. It didn't take a flashy stewardship campaign, this was just what you do

And so my strong feelings about stewardship to the church are not just because I'm a pastor. Like my grandfather and father before me, I learned stewardship as a child.

Growing up, my siblings and I received a small allowance each week from my parents for doing our chores and being a contributing part of the family. As an elementary school kid, I received \$1.10 a week, which was like winning the lottery for an 8-year-old. On Sunday mornings when we came downstairs for breakfast, my dad had set out on the counter a one-dollar bill, a dime and the weekly church donation envelope. It was understood and non-negotiable that we got to keep the dollar but the dime went in the envelope and in the church offering plate that morning. When my siblings and I got a raise in our allowance, the church contribution increased as well. If my allowance was \$2.25, the quarter went to the church. That practice continued until we graduated and, even then, my mom would ship my mail to me in college and remind me that my pledge card to the church was due. By that time, giving was in my bones.

It is no secret that churches today are concerned about annual giving. National statistics suggest that church [donations continue to decline](#) as a percentage of annual giving. The number of flashy stewardship campaigns and [multi-pronged appeal strategies](#) clearly points to a church concerned about consistent giving. I heard about a pastor whose church pledges were \$10,000 under budget and one Advent Sunday, the pastor turned off the heat, stood up in the pulpit and said, "Well, if we

don't make our pledges this year, I guess we won't be able to pay the heating bill, because we won't cut our mission budget and we're \$10K short." It was so cold that they made up the difference in the church budget that Sunday. (I hope that actually happened and isn't just urban legend.)

I absolutely believe that churches need to do a better job of helping church members understand how their gifts are being used to serve God and witness to Jesus Christ in their communities. People want to know that their giving matters and their gifts are being used wisely. But flashy stewardship campaigns aren't convincing young people these days. And ATMs in the church narthex and credit card swipe machines on the offering plate are not the solution either.

The solution starts with an 8-year-old and a dime each week until it's muscle memory that giving is part of giving thanks to God.



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## PORT ORANGE FAMILY DAYS

Be sure to stop by our WBTS booth at Family Days. This is the first time we've signed up to show the rest of the community how special our church is. We'll be giving away magnets, balloons, and brochures. Our booth will be near the Port Orange gym. Many thanks to all of you who volunteered to staff the booth on October 3 (9 am - 5 pm) and October 4 (11 am - 4 pm).



### **Outside Groups Meeting at WBTS**

#### **Sunday**

##### **Arabic Evangelical Ministries**

6:00 pm in the Chapel

#### **Tuesday**

##### **Gamblers Anonymous**

7:30 pm in the Garden Room

#### **Wednesday**

##### **Arabic Evangelical Ministries**

6:00 pm in the Chapel

#### **Thursday**

##### **Embroidery Guild**

First Thursday at 10:00 am (Sept - May)

in Fellowship Hall

##### **Al-Anon Gentle Journey**

12:00 pm in Room 12A

##### **Gamblers Anonymous**

7:30 pm in the Garden Room

##### **AA Men's Group**

8:00 pm in Room 12A

#### **Saturday**

##### **Al-Anon**

10:00 am in Room 12A