STEWRDSHIP SUNDAY PLANNING GUIDE

Now that you've completed planning for your ministries, it is important to tie this together with Stewardship Sunday. As noted, Ministry Sunday and Stewardship Sunday can be on the same day but it is important to identify a special day for Stewardship and reasons why it is important.

The Priest, Parish Council and Stewardship Committee should meet in August to define a plan. This includes:

* Selecting a date and notifying the parish - this can be combined with Ministry Sunday as well as the first day of Church School (parishes are well attended typically on this day) - the key is 1) selecting the date and 2) deciding what the focus will be. The Serbian Orthodox Church has recognized Sunday, September 17, 2017 as Stewardship Sunday for recognizing the 2018 Stewardship year.
* Stewardship sermon given by the Priest - resources are available at www.serborth.org as a starting point. This year's theme focuses on Realizing Christ and our faith in all that we do! Our hope is that the Stewards will practice Stewardship in daily life through all activities.
* Special collection of commitments - several parishes include a Commitment Card with the mailing or announcement for Stewardship Sunday. The purpose is to pass an additional collection tray during the service where the Commitment Cards for 2018 can be placed in the tray followed by a prayer by the entire congregation.
* Testimonial by a Steward - consider having a Steward present his or her experience at the end of the Liturgy or during the social hour. The message can be very powerful when it comes from the laity. There has also been a very positive reaction when the youth or young adults discuss their Stewardship experiences. Please watch this video with young adults describing one of their Stewardship experiences.
* Offertory Prayer - the Priest may also include a special prayer at the end of the service to bless the Stewards and ask God to enlighten us when giving of our Time, Talents and Treasures.
* Reception, luncheon, or other special fellowship activities - you may honor the Stewards with a complimentary luncheon, provide a coffee hour, host an outdoor picnic - many choices are available but the goal is bringing everyone together for fellowship.
* Going forward, you may want to consider a month-long Stewardship educational program culminating with Stewardship Sunday - many parishes have included month long sermons on Stewardship with a continuation of the discussion during coffee hour.

Stewardship Sunday Invitation Mailing

The Stewardship Committee, with oversight from the parish Priest, prepares the Stewardship Sunday invitation mailing. The mailing deadline should be at least one month before Stewardship Commitment Sunday. The invitation mailing should contain the following items:

* Invitation letter
* Stewardship Commitment Card
* A number 9 return envelope addressed to the Stewardship Committee at your parish
* A number 10 envelope in which to mail the above items, printed with the Steward's name and address (unless the Church Office uses window envelopes)

The parish Priest prepares the Stewardship Sunday invitation letter addressed to the Stewards of the parish. The letter requests that Stewards bring their Commitment Cards on Stewardship Sunday or mail them to the church office.

In advance of the invitation mailing deadline, the invitation letter template should be prepared for merging with the Steward's name and address, thus producing a personalized letter for each Steward.

Stewardship Commitment Card

The Stewardship Commitment Card/Family Information Form should include the Steward's name, address, and a place for the amount to be offered. The name and address may be mail merged onto the card or labels may be prepared and placed in the designated area.

Prepare additional blank Commitment Cards to be placed in the pews or distributed on Stewardship Sunday. Those who do not bring their completed Stewardship Commitment Cards to Church will have the opportunity to use this blank card to make their commitment.

Stewardship Sunday Summary

The purpose of Stewardship Sunday focuses on everyone's participation as a Steward of the parish. This isn't a one-day event but the beginning of experiencing Stewardship as transformation in our relationship with God.

Our daily lives can be busy and challenging but everything we do can be completed from the perspective of Stewardship.

It is how we conduct ourselves daily, living to honor God with the hope of Salvation in His Kingdom.

 *14 What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? 15 Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. 16 If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? 17 In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. 18 But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. 19 You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that-and shudder.*

James 2: 14-19

Key areas we can focus on are:

* Seeking the honor of God
* Taking up your cross and following Jesus
* Looking at everything from God's point of view and not public opinion
* Making decisions based on the Heavenly and not the earthly
* Living, praying and worshipping as a member of the Body of Christ