

STEWARDSHIP AND FUND RAISING

Selections from the Book of Order

Self-Offering

The Christian life is an offering of one's self to God. In worship the people are presented with the costly self-offering of Jesus Christ, are claimed and set free by him, and are led to respond by offering to him their lives, their particular gifts and abilities, and their material goods.

Worship should always offer opportunities to respond to Christ's call to become disciples by professing faith, by uniting with the church, and by taking up the mission of the people of God, as well as opportunities for disciples to renew the commitment of their lives to Jesus Christ and his mission in the world. As the Holy Spirit has graced each member with particular gifts for strengthening the body of Christ for mission, so worship should provide opportunities to recognize these gifts and to offer them to serve Christ in the church and in the world.

a. The offering of material goods in worship is a corporate act of self-dedication in response to God. It expresses thanksgiving to God, the giver of life and all goods, the redeemer from sin and evil. It is an affirmation by Christ's disciples of

- (1) their commitment to be stewards in all creation;
- (2) their responsibility to share the Word with and to care for all people;
- (3) their desire to share God's gifts with those to whom believers are bound in the Church universal;
- (4) their common bond in the body of Christ.

b. In the Old Testament the people of Israel were commanded to bring a tenth of their income to support the work of the house of God and those who served God in it. In the New Testament the apostles recognized that the work of the Church required disciplined support. Both in Israel and in the early Church the people were encouraged to give generously to meet the needs of the poor. God calls believers today to be disciplined and generous in giving support to the ministries of the church. (W-5.5004)

c. During public worship, at an appropriate time, and as an act of thanksgiving, the tithes and offerings of the people are gathered and received.

Directory for Worship W-2.5000

Giving has always been a mark of Christian commitment and discipleship. The ways in which a believer uses God's gifts of material goods, personal abilities, and time should reflect a faithful response to God's self-giving in Jesus Christ and Christ's call to minister to and share with others in the world. Tithing is a primary expression of the Christian discipline of stewardship. (W-1.2020; W-2.5000)

Directory for Worship W-5.004

Those who follow the discipline of Christian stewardship will find themselves called to lives of

simplicity, generosity, honesty, hospitality, compassion, receptivity, and concern for the earth and God's creatures. (W-7.5000)

Directory for Worship W-5.5005

Caring for Creation and Life

God calls the Church in the power of the Holy Spirit to participate in God's work of creation and preservation. God has given humankind awesome power and perilous responsibility to rule and tame the earth, to sustain and reshape it, to replenish and renew it.

In worship Christians rejoice and give thanks to God, who gives and sustains the created universe, the earth, all life, and all goods. They acknowledge God's command to be stewards. They confess their own failures in caring for creation and life. They rejoice in the promise of the redemption and renewal of the creation in Jesus Christ, proclaimed in the Word and sealed in the Sacraments. They commit themselves to life as God's stewards until the day when God will make all things new. (W-1.0000)

As stewards of God's creation who hold the earth in trust, the people of God are called to

- a. Use the earth's resources responsibly without plundering, polluting, or destroying,
- b. Develop technological methods and processes that work together with the earth's environment to preserve and enhance life,
- c. Produce and consume in ways that make available to all people what is sufficient for life,
- d. Work for responsible attitudes and practices in procreation and reproduction,
- e. Use and shape earth's goods to create beauty, order, health, and peace in ways that reflect God's love for all creatures.

In gratitude for the gifts of creation, the faithful bring material goods to God in worship as a means of expressing praise, as a symbol of their self-offering, and as a token of their commitment to share earth's goods. (W-2.5000; W-3.3507; W-5.5005-.5006; W-5.6000)

Directory for Worship W-7.5000