



Your Campaign is Complete ... but it's not over yet!

The last table has been cleared and put away from your InGathering Sunday luncheon, and you have a stack of pledge cards showing the results from your hard work over the past few weeks to communicate the mission and to raise necessary commitments for next year's budget. But before you slip off your shoes and fully relax, there are two important tasks that remain...

1. Hand-Written Thank You Notes

The first is to be sure that everyone who made a pledge is sent a heartfelt thank you letter, recognizing their generosity and participation in carrying out God's vision in your congregation. I suggest hand-written notes from the Rector/Vicar and a heartfelt letter from the Stewardship Ministry Team. Remember, we are a Eucharistic community—it is our collective call to *give thanks*.

2. Evaluate Your Campaign

The second vital component is to take the time to evaluate your campaign. You want to leverage all the time and energy you put into this year's campaign so that next year's campaign can be even more impactful. If you put this off, it is easy to forget the details and lessons learned. Gather your stewardship team in a celebratory way and discuss the following questions. Be sure to take notes to guide your planning for next year.

The first question you might ask yourselves is, "**What are the numbers?**" A few simple evaluative questions might be:

1. What is the total amount pledged for next year? Is this up or down? By what percentage?
2. How many commitment cards were returned? Is this up or down from last year?
3. How many commitment cards show an increase in giving compared to last year?
4. How many commitment cards show a decrease in giving compared to last year?
5. How many commitment cards stayed the same compared to last year?
6. If you use electronic giving, did the number using it increase?

A second set of questions could focus on, "**How did it feel?**" To get accurate answers to this set of questions, you should probably interview a few fellow parishioners who did not serve on the stewardship team:

1. Did you share enough information so people were both inspired and informed?
2. Did the program have the right tone for your congregation?
3. Did the program run for a good length of time? Too short? Too long?
4. Was the focus more on the bible or on the bills?
5. Was the focus more on mission or the budget?

A third task might be to **reflect on the above**, and then make some notes that you can pull out next year as you start planning the annual pledge campaign.

You could consider:

1. What did you learn from this year that you want to make sure you consider next year?
2. What do you want to make sure you do next year?
3. What do you want to make sure you don't do next year?
4. What quantitative and qualitative goals might you set for next year's program?

**Between now and the end of the year, thank, gather, discuss, celebrate...
and then you can breathe that sigh of relief.**

(Adapted from an article by Chick Lane, Director of the Center for Stewardship Leaders at Luther Seminary)