Do you celebrate those who give to your church?

By Margaret J. Marcuson
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I was struck recently by the power of resources to transform ministry. The church I attended as a small child received a large legacy that enabled them to build a new building, enabling them to develop a larger ministry for decades to come. On a recent visit for the first time in decades, I was delighted by the continued vibrancy of their ministry. On a commuter route in Seattle, they now have a café which offers drive-through coffee on weekdays.

New buildings don't guarantee a powerful ministry. Still, having generous givers, whether they give a lot or a little, during their lifetime or after their death, makes a difference in the life of a congregation. We often do little to acknowledge those who give. What can you do to thank givers and to celebrate what they contribute?

Here are ten ideas for celebrating those who give:

1. Write a thank-you note to each giver of record. My mother taught me to write notes by hand. In today's world, a hand-written note will make a powerful impression.
2. Celebrate in worship those who give, outside of stewardship season.
3. When you highlight a ministry in worship, in a publication or on your website, make a point about those who support it by giving their time and money.
4. Use social media to thank those who give. (If you don't know how, ask a young person. If you do know how, teach someone else how.)
5. Tell the story of someone who left a legacy to the church, recently or long ago.
6. Celebrate the founding members of your church. If any are still living, thank them in person.
7. For pastors, preach a sermon celebrating those who give, without asking people to give.
8. Celebrate and thank those who give sacrificially on a small income.
9. When you receive the final total in pledges, have a big celebration in worship and after worship.

10. Ask an artist in your congregation to create something beautiful to celebrate your givers.

Giving may increase – but even better, leaders can feel lighter about the stewardship enterprise. When pastors and church leaders put a positive focus all year long on all those who give, the whole church can benefit.

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