

Miracle Sunday

What do you need?

1. A cause or need everyone believes in -
 - A. Or at least no one opposes.
 - B. Several causes where everyone can find a place.
1. Analyze your congregation.
2. Faith that it can happen -
 - A. You must be an invincible optimist.
 - B. people will react negatively at first, but they will come around.
3. A willingness to ask people for money.
4. A pastor who enthusiastically supports the concept.
5. A few large pacesetting gifts -
 - A. 80% of the gifts will come from 20% of the contributors.
6. A well established stewardship education program that has already done its work.
7. Time -
 - A. 10 to 16 weeks between the time of council approval and Miracle Sunday.
 - B. People need time to think about their participation.
 1. time to get information out.
 2. time for enthusiasm and excitement to build.
8. A date in May is best -
 - A. February, March, April, or May are better than November.
 - B. If weather cooperates, the Sundays before or after Christmas are good.
- C. A major congregational anniversary is excellent.

Rationale:

How and why these appeals work? They work when certain basic principles are followed and because the financial and social structure of our society has changed in the last thirty years.

1. Most people in the congregation have a better sense of stewardship and good business than we give them credit for, and so will respond to a well reasoned and thoroughly explained program.

2. The goal of the appeal must be one that is shared by most members of the congregation. It must fall within the range of 1/3 to 3 times the annual budget. Less than that amount does not capture people's imagination and more seem impossible. The goal must be specific, attainable, measurable, visible, unifying, satisfying, have a terminal date, and provide an opportunity for celebration. It is best if the appeal is associated with a specific day or anniversary.

3. Over half the population now holds substantial wealth and most of the gifts to such an appeal come from savings rather than current income. The Federal Reserve reports that personal savings for 1983 were over \$200 billion ---- more than double the 1977 figure. Our society and congregations have a higher percentage of older members and they have the highest rise in real income and accumulated wealth in

the last thirty years. Between 1981 and 1983 the amount of money Americans deposited in retirement accounts tripled, from \$25.7 billion in 1981 to \$80 billion in 1983. These are the people most likely to be at worship on Sunday morning, these are the people with the greatest degree of denominational and congregational loyalty, and these are the people most likely to support this kind of program.

Redeemer Lutheran Church

TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY MIRACLE SUNDAY

Theme: "A Miracle is Coming" "Don't Let The Miracle Pass You By"

Purpose: To expand the opportunity for mission at redeemer through debt retirement.

1. Redeemer Lutheran Church has been in debt for virtually its entire twenty year life. This has been necessary in order to build facilities to carry out our local mission. We have been paying on our current debt for a decade. But, we are now at the point where our indebtedness and debt service payments in our annual budget are hindering our congregational mission locally, nationally, and internationally. Debt can easily become an excuse for not fully carrying out our mission. This is not a problem unique to Redeemer.

2. The problem of our indebtedness emerged a few years ago when action was taken to restructure our debt. That restructuring sped up our debt service payments to save interest expenses and retire the debt sooner. Unfortunately the result was to place such a heavy burden on our annual budget that monies have not been available to carry out our mission.

3. Completely retiring our debt this year would save \$74,450.00 in interest payments over the life of our current debt retirement schedule. In addition it would free up approximately \$28,000.00 per year in our annual budget. Over the next six years that would be a grand total of over \$242,750.00. In other words almost a QUARTER OF A MILLION dollars for the mission of Jesus Christ and His Church. These dollars could feed the hungry, build new churches, work for peace and justice, expand our ministry to youth, and make possible opportunities for Christian education we have never dreamed of before.

4. It is sometimes felt that it is necessary to keep a congregation in debt to maintain levels of stewardship. But this is an overly cynical view of our members who have always responded to to challenge and mission in the past. There comes a time to set aside worldly ways of manipulating people and trust the Holy Spirit to do his work in their hearts. An undue debt ultimately discourages faithful stewardship. This is not say that our goal should be to keep Redeemer always out of debt. Undoubtedly there will be times in the future when the congregation will and should incur debt. The point is that proper reason for incurring debt is to carry out the mission of the Church not as a way of forcing its members into responsible stewardship.

5. By clearing our congregational debt at this time we can free our energies and resources to focus on our congregational mission for the next few years. Hopefully this will be a period of enthusiasm, growth, and expansion of our program and services. (Potential members are frequently discouraged by a congregation's debt. "Their only interest in me is to help pay off their debt.") At a point three to five years from now the congregation will be in a stronger position to decide its future direction. The improvements in the fellowship hall will ease the immediate pressure for additional facilities.

The program: A dinner and series of letters to members explaining the program and need. Six to eight weeks are necessary to provide information and build enthusiasm.

April 22

Letter: From the president of the congregation and the chair of the stewardship explaining the concept, describing the need, and inviting members to a congregational dinner, May 5 or 9

May 1

Letter: From a prominent member of the congregation, as a reminder of the dinner and as further explanation of the concept.

May 5 and May 9

Congregation Dinner: An inspirational and informal meeting where the needs and concept are thoroughly explained.

May 13 and May 20

Letter: From a prominent member of the congregation with further description of the needs and endorsement of the concept.

May 24

Letter: From congregational president and chair of stewardship explaining the need for advanced major gifts.

May 27 - June 5

Calls on potential advance major contributors. (Approximately 20% of the contributors give 80% of the funds raised.)

June 1 and 6

Letter: From a prominent member of the congregation assuring success with everyone's cooperation and preliminary report of advanced gifts.

June 18

Letter: From the pastor with celebration thanks and preliminary report.

June 23

Miracle Sunday (gifts received in cash or equivalent)

June 17 - June 28

Calls on members who did not have a chance to contribute on Miracle Sunday.

July 1

Letter: From congregational president and chair of stewardship with thanks and final report.

Follow up Suggestions

1. Do not repeat this event annually -
 - A. It should not be repeated until at least half the congregation were not members during the last event.
2. If you fall short of your goal -
 - A. Don't close the books too soon There will be late comers.
 - B. Celebrate no matter what - you're better off than you were last week.
3. This program works best with an older, well established congregation served by a pastor who has been there at least seven years.
4. Be sure to thank your members and God.

Miracle Sunday Issues

1. How do we maintain momentum?
2. Can youth interest / participation be stimulated?
 - A. U.S.A. for Africa and discussion at PEP or other forum?
 - B. Other
3. When should we present slide show again?
4. When should we repeat our entire program?
5. Can Worship & Music locate appropriate basket / receptacle for 6/23 offerings?
6. When will we advise congregation of giving format / approach?
7. Who, what, when on Temple talk?
8. Bulletin inserts answering questions?
9. Community viewing of presentation?
10. Miracle Sunday T-shirts?
11. How do we make know our availability to groups or others? Necessary / desirable?
12. Rummage sale ideas? Other means of congregational involvement?
13. Advanced gifts schedule?
 - A. Special dinner/
 - B. Individual meetings?

"Miracle Sunday" Gift Ideas

Cash

- *Checking /Savings Accounts
- *Certificates of Deposit
- * Money Market Funds

- *Tax Refunds
- *Borrow the Money - Credit Card, Bank, Insurance Policy, etc.
- *Thrift Plans or Lump Sum Raises

Securities

- *Stocks - Those that have greatly appreciated have special advantages
- *Bonds - Government or Corporate
- *Mutual Fund Shares
- *Member Building Notes

Real Property

- * Land
- * House
- * Car
- ☒ Other Tangible Property

Other Ideas

- * Give up a habit and contribute its cost. (Smoking, Fudge Sundae, etc.)
- * Hold a rummage Sale - use of Proceeds
- * Memorials

Life insurance

- * Cash Value
- * Cash Dividends
- * Use it to replace a gift of money or property which you might give which you planned on leaving to you heirs.

Miracle Sunday Issues

1. Change date?
2. How do we handle May 5 dinner?
 - A. Schedule more than one?
 - B. Use reservations?
 - C. Form - Potluck - cater (externally or Internally)
 - D. Agenda
 - E. Handouts
 - F. Speakers
3. How do we avoid "GUILT" of those desiring but unable to fully participate.
4. Compile listing of funding alternatives for individuals to consider the best means for their participation.
5. Who are "Prominent" members who will sign letters?
6. Who will compile / edit letters to congregation?
7. Who are the people to contact regarding advanced gifts? Amount expected?
 - A. How do we contact?
 - B. When?
 - C. Should we establish a target?

8. How can we educate members on their giving?
 - A. Match Pledge
 - B. 20/80 example
 - C. Amount / member to reach goal
9. Do we need an estimate on dividers for Fellowship Hall?
10. We need to identify "specific" use of funds in budget that are freed up.
 - A. 50 / 50 Local / External mission
 - B. Specific causes
 - C. Use of monies from this year's budget - approximately \$13,000 - \$14,000
11. Should we establish account for Advanced Gifts and receive as soon as possible. Interest earnings could add value. Other means to aid in goal?
12. How will gifts be received?
 - A. Advance
 - B. Miracle Sunday
13. How do we handle costs of campaign? Are some budget areas available?
14. How can we inspire members?

More Miracle Sunday Issues

1. Agenda for Dinner Meetings?
2. Speakers for Dinner Meetings?
3. Handouts / Inserts?
 - A. Dinners
 - B. Bulletin Inserts?
 - C. Parish Visitor Inserts
 - D. Who will prepare?
4. Revise letter schedule?
5. Should we include Temple talks?
 - A. Frequency
 - B. content
 - C. Who will deliver?
6. Advanced Gifts issues:
 - A. Who do we contact?
 - B. How/when do we contact?
 - C. Who will contact?
 - D. ow do we advise on "expected " gift?
 - E. Should we have target amount?
 - F. Church Council role?
7. What can we do to aid members in giving?
 - A. Match pledge.
 - B. 20/80 example - what group do you want to be in?
 - C. Amount / member or family
 - D. % of income - 3%, 5%, etc.
8. Should we involve youth? How/
 - A. Banks for contributions?
 - B. Presentation to PEP students?

C. Other?

9. How do we help council members Council Committees assist us?

A. Attend their meetings

B. Meet with chair people regularly

10. How to get help on slide presentation

11. Should we schedule presentations or meetings with church groups such as ALCW, Golden Agers, others?

12. Mission and outreach is willing to create banners / posters and buttons for us.

A. What do we want from them?

B. When?

13. How will gifts be received?

A. Advance

B. Miracle Sunday - use altar?

14. Do we communicate that Church Council considers this a major 1985 goal?