

INITIAL THOUGHTS

Basic Concept

10 for 10 is a significant stewardship emphasis that encourages God's people to excel in the grace of giving. *10 for 10* teaches and encourages God's people to practice tithing—within the realm of Christian freedom. Specifically, members will be encouraged to consider offering a tithe of their income for a period of ten weeks. (10% for 10 weeks = *10 for 10*.) Members who are not in a position to offer a tithe of their income will be encouraged to consider increasing their offerings by 10% for a period of ten weeks.

Basic Calendar

10 for 10 would typically be used in the Fall. That is a traditional time for congregations to talk about stewardship. It also places *10 for 10* near the end of the Sundays after Pentecost, a time in the Church Year where it is not overly disruptive to use “free text,” i.e. texts not called for by the pericope. Thus, this planning document will assume a September date for *10 for 10*. (The first Sunday after Labor Day is often a good time to kick off a congregational initiative. The late September weeks are some of the mostly highly attended in the year.)

The *10 for 10* emphasis has three distinct phases:

1. **Planning & Preparation** — There are three months of planning, preparation, and printing that will need to take place. Assuming the stewardship emphasis takes place in the fall, this phase would take place during the summer months, June through August.
2. **Preaching & Teaching** — The *10 for 10* emphasis includes a three-week worship series and Bible study. Worship services run 40 to 45 minutes. Through Word and Sacrament, members are given the gospel motivation for giving. After the Prayer of the Church, the congregation engages in a 12 to 15 minute Bible study, applying Scriptural stewardship principles to their personal lives. At home, members prayerfully put together a ten-week giving plan. They produce a commitment card which they will turn in on the first of the ten weeks of “enhanced giving.”
3. **Encouragement and “Enhanced Giving”** — On the first of these ten weeks, members turn in their commitment cards, which remain unopened. For ten weeks, they give according to their plan. They also receive ongoing spiritual encouragement in their sanctified effort.

PLANNING & PREPARATION (Three Months / Summer)

Initial Encouragement

10 for 10 is a comprehensive emphasis. Everything you need is provided. A parish pastor and Stewardship Team simply need to make the materials their own. Begin by printing everything that has been provided. Put it in a binder. Look through everything.

When you look at the materials, it may appear to be overkill. Remember, however, that the materials and content of *10 for 10* will be delivered over the course of almost five months and via several different channels: print, e-mail, video, etc.

Make several copies of this timeline. It will keep the pastors and stewardship teams on track. *10 for 10* goes step-by-step. It is important to take each step in turn and in a timely manner.

Finally, understand *10 for 10* is a *significant* stewardship emphasis. It asks for people to seriously consider their attitudes and actions in the area of giving. It does so unapologetically, yet evangelically.

Summer Newsletter (June, July, or early August)

Your summer newsletter will serve as the introduction of the *10 for 10* emphasis. Note: that is the word the promotional materials will use most often—*emphasis*. The biblical practice of tithing will be emphasized in preaching, teaching, and personal practice. Members will come to appreciate *10 for 10*'s emphasis on the heart... on faith... *not* on the goal of “raising funds.”

A template for the newsletter article has been provided in the *10 for 10* resources.

Review All Worship/Bible Study Materials (June)

Service folders, sermons, and in-service Bible studies are available for the three weeks of preaching/teaching that takes place in September. Pastors, worship leaders, and Stewardship Team members will want to become familiar with all of these ready-made resources. There are ready to print PDFs that have no copyright issues. There are also editable files. If worship folders are edited, the congregation is responsible to make certain they comply with copyright laws.

The liturgies are abbreviated to allow for the mini-Bible study as part of the service. Why in-service? Because a regular Bible study will reach 10–15% of members. An in-service Bible study will reach 100% of members in attendance. (It also serves as a nice “appetizer” of what Bible studies are like for members who are not in the practice of attending Bible studies.) The combined service and Bible study should take between 55 and 70 minutes, depending on whether Holy Communion is celebrated.

Again, it may seem like this is a lot—especially if your congregation has not been in the practice of having a regular stewardship emphasis. *10 for 10* has been used in multiple congregations. (This specific iteration was tested at Trinity Lutheran in Waukesha, WI. Members greatly appreciated both the content and delivery of *10 for 10*.)

The point: Pastors and leaders should resist the temptation to “soft sell” the message of the *10 for 10* emphasis or strip it down. Preach it. Teach it. Lead it. Then let the Spirit go to work as it pleases him.

Confirm Budget (June)

10 for 10 will require some budgetary support. (One congregation had a member who, seeing the potential spiritual benefits of *10 for 10*, stepped forward to underwrite the cost.) This should be seen as your Stewardship Team's #1 budgetary priority for the year. What will you need to budget for?

- Three mailings to your *10 for 10* emphasis mailing list.
- The printing of the *Ten Reasons Why Tithing Is Relevant* bi-fold.
- The printing of the emphasis planning card (one for each address; extra copies made available at the back of church).
- The printing of the envelope to submit the planning cards.

It is possible some of these can be printed in-house. Others may require you to use a commercial printer.

Plan Your Mailing List (July)

Produce a mailing list for the emphasis. Consider if every member should be included. It may be wise to *not* include homebound members if they are suffering from advanced memory or end-of-life issues. It may be wise to *not* include members your Board of Elders is working with ("delinquents"). However, everyone else could benefit from receiving the *10 for 10* mailings.

Recruit Helping Hands (July/early August)

At a time of year when parish life is becoming hectic (school starting back up), various mailings and the *10 for 10* giving pack will need to be assembled. These weeks would be a good time to go through your congregation's time/talents surveys to identify people who would be willing to help with those things, so that they do not all fall on the church secretary.

Printing of Items for the Giving Plan Packet (July/early August)

This is a significant issue! There are several items that will be included in your Giving Plan Packets, which will be mailed out in early September. What all is included?

- The Giving Plan packet letter
- The Giving Plan card
- Envelope for the Giving Plan card
- The planning document
- The giving percentage chart

Some of these items will need to be personalized. Some (the planning cards and planning card envelopes) are ideally going to be printed in color. There's a lot to do! Early August is the time to start. If time permits, don't just print the above. Start putting one of each in an appropriately sized envelope.

NOTE regarding the Giving Plan Packet letter: Congregations may want the Stewardship Team members to sign the Giving Plan letter. That makes it clear the pastor isn't the only one driving the *10 for 10* emphasis. A template has been provided, but carefully make this letter your own.

NOTE regarding the Giving Plan card: Congregations are encouraged to keep the card simple. *10 for 10* is an emphasis in the giving of *treasure*. Therefore, it is wise to avoid asking people to list

commitments to attend church more regularly, to attend Bible study, or to pray more often, etc. Those are certainly worthy goals, but should be the focus of a separate emphasis. For now, simply focus the card on *this* emphasis: a sincere effort to prayerfully examine and, if possible, increase one's giving.

Print Bi-Fold (July/early August)

A color bifold brochure titled *Ten Reasons Why Tithing Matters* is provided in the *10 for 10* resources. For smaller congregations, it could be printed and trimmed locally. For larger congregations, the format is something most commercial printers work with regularly.

Produce the Pastor Introduction Letter (July/early August)

A pastoral letter should be mailed out the week before the three weeks of preaching/teaching begins. An example has been provided. However, pastors will want to assemble and articulate their thoughts for their specific ministry context.

Set Up an E-mail List (July/August)

If your congregation does not have a list of congregational e-mails, now is a good time to collect them. The *10 for 10* emphasis will include ongoing encouragement via e-mail.

Arrange for Visual Projection (July/August)

As mentioned, three in-service Bible studies are a key component of *10 for 10*. Slides (in MS PowerPoint) have been provided for those who desire to use them. Many congregations already have an audio/visual system in place. If your parish does not, consider if a screen and projector may be useful for the three weeks where *10 for 10* is preached and taught. However, a visual projection system is NOT essential for *10 for 10*'s implementation. The Bible studies can be conducted without the slides.

Also, the *10 for 10* program provides ten encouragement videos for the congregation to share with its members during the ten weeks of enhanced giving. The hope is that congregations show them to their members during/after the offering, just before the Prayer of the Church. However, they could also be shared via the congregation's social media platforms. (Ideal: do both.)

Send Out the First Mailing (one to two weeks before the first preaching/teaching Sunday)

10 for 10's first mailing will contain two items:

- The initial pastor letter that was prepared in July or early August.
- The bifold brochure *Ten Reasons Why Tithing Matters*

You will want to send this mailing by first class mail. Why first class? Because timing is very important. In a bulk mailing, a letter is allowed to sit in every processing location for three days. You do not want this mailing hitting mailboxes several days *after* the first week of preaching/teaching!

THREE WEEKS OF PREACHING & TEACHING (September)

Prepare for Week One: Firstfruits Giving (week prior to Sunday #1)

Print the worship folder / Bible study for week one. A sample sermon illustrates how another pastor handled the suggested sermon text. There is a PowerPoint for the Bible study and a leader's guide.

Brotherly advice to the Bible study leader: Keep it moving! This cannot be an exhaustive presentation on the topic. These brief Bible studies are meant to provide reinforcement and application of the service theme. Also, be prepared to explain that *10 for 10* is NOT meant to be an endorsement of a "Bible study in every service" concept. Doing it for these three short weeks is simply a pastoral way of encouraging a large number of members to confront the sin of materialism and, with the power the Spirit gives, excel in the grace of giving.

Important: The announcements at the end of each in-service Bible study are important. It lays out a call to action for your members for the upcoming week. Do your best to emphasize them.

Second Mailing: the Giving Plan Packet (the Monday after Sunday #1)

The Giving Plan packet contains five items that were printed in July or early August.

- The Giving Plan packet letter
- The Giving Plan card
- The envelope for the Giving Plan card
- The planning document
- The giving percentage chart

Hopefully, in July or early August, those items were also placed in an envelope. If not, those packets should be assembled this Monday. Because they are time sensitive, they should go out via first class mail. If these are in the mail Monday afternoon or early Tuesday, they will reach member mailboxes by the end of the week. You want your members to see this Giving Plan packet before the second Sunday in the three weeks of preaching/teaching.

Plan and Prepare for the Ten Weeks of Enhanced Giving (the week after Sunday #1)

On the Sunday after the three weeks of preaching/teaching, members turn in their Giving Plan card in a sealed envelope. That is the first of ten weeks of encouragement and "enhanced giving," i.e. members, if possible, are at a higher level than previously.

The ten weeks of encouragement can happen in multiple ways. The *10 for 10* resources we have provided include ten motivational videos for download. The videos have a similar structure. The first 60 to 90 seconds Pastor Aaron Christie, the author of this iteration of *10 for 10*, offers spiritual encouragement to individuals. Then another 40 to 60 seconds demonstrate how the offerings of WELS members have a broad, worldwide impact. Most WELS congregations send a portion of their offerings to the synod as a congregational mission offering (CMO). The video demonstrates some ways these offerings are used: to take the gospel to foreign lands, to start new congregations in our country, to serve people with special needs (e.g. the deaf and hard of hearing) with God's Word, and more. The hope is that people understand the offerings they give to their local congregation *don't only* serve that location. They have an impact worldwide.

Ideally, these videos would be shown for ten weeks in the worship service, after (or during) the offering and before the Prayer of the Church. However, they could also be shared via your congregation's social media platforms. Links to the videos could be e-mailed to members. The point is, there are multiple ways to utilize these videos. This first week of the three weeks of teaching/preaching is the time to nail down exactly how your congregation will utilize them.

In addition to the videos, the *10 for 10* resources contain ten motivational flyers—PDF documents that can be printed front and back on a regular sized sheet of paper. They are designed to be printed by your congregation on any printer/copy machine. They have been provided in color. However, the colors were chosen to look good if you opt to print them in greyscale. They can be distributed as a worship folder or bulletin insert.

The flyers match the theme of the videos, without replicating them. It would be ideal if a congregation would use both the videos *and* the flyers. Now is the time to plan that out.

E-mail Midweek Devotion #1 (by Wednesday after Sunday #1)

Another resource is a MS Word document titled *10 for 10—Three Midweek E-Devotions*. In the middle of the week after Sunday #1, cut and paste the Week One devotion into an e-mail. This week it is titled *Considering Tithing as Part of Your Firstfruits Giving*. Send it to everyone on the e-mail list that you produced in July or August.

Prepare for Week Two: Proportional Giving (week prior to Sunday #2)

Print the worship folder / Bible study for week two. There is a sample sermon, illustrating how another pastor handled the suggested sermon text. There is also a PowerPoint for the Bible study with a leader's guide.

E-mail Midweek Devotion #2 (by Wednesday after Sunday #2)

Using the MS Word document titled *10 for 10—Three Midweek E-Devotions*, cut and paste the Week Two devotion into an e-mail. This week it is titled *What Should I Give? On What Should I Live?* Send it to everyone on the e-mail list that you produced in July or August.

Prepare for Week Three: Sacrificial Giving (week prior to Sunday #3)

Print the worship folder / Bible study for week three. There is also a sample sermon, illustrating how another pastor handled the suggested sermon text, a PowerPoint for the Bible study, and a leader's guide.

E-mail Midweek Devotion #3 (by Wednesday after Sunday #3)

Use the MS Word document titled *10 for 10—Three Midweek E-Devotions* to cut and paste the Week Three devotion into an e-mail. This week it is titled *In Christ, There Is No "Giving Till It Hurts."* Send it to everyone on the e-mail list that you produced in July or August.

TEN WEEKS OF ENCOURAGEMENT & ENHANCED GIVING (late September, October, November, early December)

Collect the Giving Plan Cards (the first Sunday after the three Sundays of preaching/teaching)

The three weeks of preaching/teaching are over. Your congregation is now back to a “normal” service (i.e.: it is *not* abbreviated with a mini-Bible study at the end). In the previous weeks your members hopefully have worked through the information in the Giving Plan packet, filled out a Giving Plan card, and put it in the Giving Plan envelope. It has been stressed repeatedly that those envelopes will not be opened. They will be returned, unopened, at the end of the ten weeks.

Those Giving Plan envelopes can be collected in any manner you prefer. It is perfectly fine to have people put them in the offering basket, along with their regular offering envelope.

Distribute the Weekly Encouragement Flyer and Video (every Sunday in the ten weeks of enhanced giving)

In the first week of the three weeks of preaching/teaching, you planned out how your congregation would distribute the ten motivational flyers and videos. Now is the time to share them. Again, the ideal is to use *both* resources. They could not only be shared on Sunday, but a link to the video and a PDF could be sent later that week, so that those who were absent on Sunday might receive them. They could be part of the Midweek e-mail mentioned next.

Produce the Midweek Encouragement/Update E-mail (by Wednesday of each of the ten weeks of enhanced giving)

This is the *one* aspect of *10 for 10* for which we have not provided templates. Why not? It is beneficial for the local pastor(s) to craft this encouragement to fit the specific response in his context. The first week’s e-mail in the congregation where 25% of the members returned a Giving Plan card might be different than the e-mail in the congregation where 80% returned a card. After five-weeks, in one congregation, offerings may be up 25%. (That is not uncommon.) In another congregation, offerings might not be up at all. Again, those e-mails might have a different message.

Some general guidelines for these ten weeks worth of midweek encouragement e-mails:

- For each week, include a message from God’s Word. A good exercise: Find stewardship applications in the text from the previous Sunday. They are frequently there. If nothing else, we see how God is a steward too, managing all things for our eternal benefit.
- In the early weeks, thank people for their participation in *10 for 10*. Assure people if they didn’t turn in their Giving Plan card on the designated Sunday, they still can. They can put it in the offering plate at any time. Update people about total congregational participation. For example: “We had 52 Giving Plan envelopes turned in this week. That represents 50% of our total membership, but about 80% of our households in worship.”
- Three or four weeks in, share how offerings have changed. They almost always do. When this latest iteration of *10 for 10* was tested, during the ten weeks of enhanced giving, offerings at Trinity Lutheran in Waukesha rose from \$18,000 per week to \$22,000 per week. Typically, they

will rise between 10% and 30% in those weeks as God's people joyfully respond to the gospel motivation with which they have been provided. Let them know! E.g.: "Through the first four weeks, our offerings have averaged \$800 more than before 10 for 10, a 14 percent increase." It is possible, of course, offerings do not increase. Address that with proper pastoral wisdom and care.

- Near the end of the ten weeks of enhanced giving, provide simple encouragement to finish strong. This is also the time to remind the members that in their Giving Plan, while they calculated an increased gift based on annual income, their Giving Plan was for just ten weeks. When the ten weeks are up, members should be invited to prayerfully consider how they want to give moving forward. You will find some continue to give at the levels they gave during the ten weeks of enhanced giving. Others may not give as much as during the ten weeks, though they may still be at a higher level than they were before the 10 for 10 emphasis. Still others, after prayerful consideration, believe it wisest to revert back to their previous giving levels.
- The final e-mail will remind the members that with the wrap up of the 10 for 10 emphasis, they can expect to receive their Giving Plan envelope, unopened, in the mail soon.

Wrap Up / Sending the Final Mailing (the week after the tenth Sunday of enhanced giving)

10 for 10 comes to a conclusion after the weekend services of the 10th week. If the three weeks of preaching/teaching concluded in late September, this wrap up would take place in early December.

At this time, the unopened Giving Plan envelopes are returned to members in the final *10 for 10* mailing. That mailing will go to every member and include one of two letters. One letter goes to families who submitted a Giving Plan. It thanks them for their participation in this congregational emphasis. The other letter is sent to families who chose not to submit a Giving Plan. That letter provides encouragement. Both letters provide news, a summary of some of the results of the *10 for 10* effort. You can find templates for both letters in the *10 for 10* resources.

Because it typically takes a larger envelope to fit both the Giving Plan envelope and the letter, this mailing is a good time to include another congregational newsletter. Or, if your congregation produces a ministry plan based on the calendar year, that might be shared in this mailing.