Tip of the Month

# JULY – Handling The Summer Slump

Here we are in July – the fullness of lower worship attendance, members vacationing and enjoying their weekends at the shore or the mountains – and with it, lower offerings! How do you handle the summer slump?

As always, let’s begin by looking at the principal values that build strong stewardship and motivate generosity all year long:

* Accentuate the positive –
  + Use your bulletin, newsletter, website to **tell people** (and photos to **show people**) the great ministry still happening in the summer: kids happy and excited at VBS; a special retreat, musical program, worship emphasis or other ministry that demonstrates your on-going ministry.
  + **Thank people** for their faithful giving, even when they are away. Consider a personal note to members who are using electronic giving and automatic offering donations.
  + Report the total amount received from members who use **electronic giving** or **automatic contributions**. “We have “X” households who have given $X this month, using *Simply Giving* (electronic donations) to continue their offerings even when they are away. Thank you.”
  + Send a **positive** letter about your members’ conscientious support of ministry and desire to be faithful even when they are vacationing or away on weekends and include a return-addressed envelope “for Sunday’s we’ve missed”.
  + Lift up the **evidence of God’s generosity and abundance** all around us and our gratitude for the blessings God provides.
* Eliminate the negative –
  + **DON’T report your deficit** for last week, this month or year to date! The church is always behind at this time of the year, it’s part of the normal financial cycle. *Reporting deficits discourages your most faithful givers and does not motivate others.*
  + **DON’T announce or report negative messages** about congregational finances or giving. These are issues for finance leaders and council to work on – which they do every year. *And, have those leaders convey positive messages of our ability to generously support our vital ministry.*

Begin planning for your annual stewardship response, building on the positive. Waiting until September will make it difficult to plan effectively and could result in a program that is ineffective (therefore discouraging) or no program at all (which means next summer could be worse).