

6 WORDS

TO
BUILD ON
& LIVE BY



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Moravian Church | Northern Province

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AN INTRODUCTION FROM GARY MARSH

Building on what we shared at the 2012 Stewardship Summit, I offer an outline of a stewardship series to consider...*Six Words to Build On and Live By*. As you know, I strongly encourage each congregation to offer an educationally based stewardship series each year, an intentional way to teach concepts of biblical stewardship that will bless individuals who practice these concepts. The six characteristics of a disciple outlined below, when built upon and lived with intention, will lead to increased personal and congregational health, vitality and ministry success.

In past stewardship series I wrote (*The Moravian Covenant Series* and *Percentage Living*), I developed a “soup to nuts” manual that covers the detail to organize and present the series. Although I can offer the same as may be needed to help in your setting, what follows is an outline offering specifics, but also allowing much room to develop what will work best for you. As I have worked with congregations in recent years, I have been amazed at the creative approaches taken to craft and develop what will help the Church, those who truly want to live a more disciplined and meaningful life of faith.

FIRST...DEVELOP THE LEADERSHIP TEAM FOR *SIX WORDS TO BUILD ON & LIVE BY*

Vital to the success of any program or educational process is a leadership team that will pray, plan and organize the materials and information that will be used for presentation. These may be members of an already established Stewardship Ministry Team, perhaps representatives from the Board of Elders and Trustees as well as selected members of the congregation at large. The point is that it is very important to secure a group to oversee this specific short-term process.



Members of this *Six Words to Build On and Live By* Leadership Team must be those who understand the importance of faith formation, those who have shown their desire to grow as disciples, and those committed to the values, goals and mission of the Church. The Leadership Team is people who model what will be invited of all members.

It is the task of the Pastor, as the primary individual who will preach and teach, to offer both theological and methodological leadership to what will be taught and presented to the congregation throughout this series. I suggest the Pastor be an active member of this Leadership Team as biblical stewardship is among the most important ministries of the church.

Four to six weeks before the first Sunday of this series, the Leadership Team should have fully planned the details of the series to be presented. It will be important for the Leadership Team to decide how best to communicate and invite all members of the church to this series. As I have said often, such a series will be embraced well if it is done well. We begin with a core belief that people of faith want to more fully live their faith. (A stewardship series must never be a disguised way to get money.) People will attend gladly if they know that what they learn will be of value and applicable to their lives. The goal of this and any series is far beyond a pledge of time, talent and financial support. It is what will help people more fully live the lives they truly want to live.

NEXT...FOLLOW THE GENERAL OUTLINE FOR EACH WEEK OF *SIX WORDS TO BUILD ON & LIVE BY*

1. A lay person will offer a 3-5 minute personal witness about the theme for that Sunday. This is not a time to preach. This is a time to share a personal story, to touch hearts, and to share what is meaningful to the one giving the testimony. Those listening will be inspired to consider the same for themselves and grow in their understanding and practice of that aspect of *Six Words to Build On and Live By*.
2. The Pastor will present a sermon on the theme for the day. This will not be a personal testimony, although the Pastor may share a personal story about what that “Word” means to him or her. This will be a time to focus on the key biblical text and related passages so that the teaching theme for that day may come alive with new meaning; a time to help listeners consider how to apply this to their lives.
3. Near the end of the service, a member of the Leadership Team will invite all in attendance to consider the theme for the day of *Six Words to Build On and Live By* throughout the week, offer a word of encouragement, an invitation to allow God to bless each person with a deeper understanding and living of this faith principle. In addition, the member of the Leadership Team should invite all to return the following week for the next “word” in the series.
4. A brief letter or email will be sent to all households early the following week, offering a brief review of the theme for the previous week and an invitation to attend worship next week.

SIX WORDS TO BUILD ON AND LIVE BY

The content of this series was developed using core values of Elmbrook Community Church, Brookfield, WI. These characteristics of a disciple are part of their statement of "What We Believe".

All biblical passages are from the New Revised Standard Version.

WEEK 1 LIVE

THEME STATEMENT:

We can live a life transformed, renewed and blessed by God.

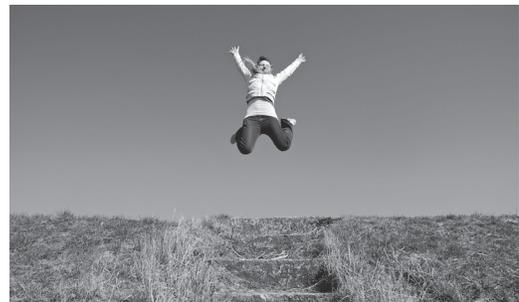
KEY BIBLICAL TEXT:

2 Corinthians 5:16 – 17:

“From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new.”

THEME DEVELOPMENT:

One thing is certain about the vast majority of people who live in any place, in any time, and within any culture. Each person wants to live. Each person wants to live in a manner that is teeming with joy, purpose and meaning. People seek such in many ways. Sometimes it is through recreation; sometimes it is through education; often it is through the rewards of work. Even more so, it is through relationship. In some way, people want to receive and secure what will help them live with joy, purpose and meaning.



Jesus taught and modeled that the best way to live is being at peace with God and other people. It is through God that we truly find what we look for, a meaning that cannot be duplicated through the various ways we seek an abundant life. As members of the family of God, we follow Jesus by learning to live and love like Jesus did. Such is what most people want and seek; a life of great meaning that will be of benefit to themselves, their family, their friends, and their community. It is beyond the temptation to gather stuff. It is beyond the temptation to be wealthy. It is beyond the temptation to be successful. It is beyond the temptation to be popular. It is beyond the realization of the (North) American dream. It is about a deeper and more real sense of what it means to live, one that all people search for and is found most meaningfully through a relationship with Christ and the Church. This happens as we are in Christ, a life delightful and new.

WEEK 2 GATHER

THEME STATEMENT:

We gather each week with the Church for worship, teaching and fellowship.

KEY BIBLICAL TEXT:

Hebrews 10:24-25:

“And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day approaching.”

THEME DEVELOPMENT:

The Sabbath has taken some hard hits lately. For years, many years, it has become just one more day of the week. The Sabbath is still a vital day, but for many busy people of faith it has become a chance to do what needs to be done or to do what can't happen as easily on any other day of the week. Many feel trapped, and the essence of Sabbath is more hoped for than real.

Weekly participation in corporate worship and teaching reminds us that we are part of something bigger than ourselves. Gathering together on the Sabbath for worship and learning grounds us in the Word of God. Gathering helps us stay focused on the values of remaining active participants in this Body of Christ. This is vitally important as each day is a blessing and a challenge. As we gather we can learn to live how we truly want to live.



WEEK 3 CONNECT

THEME STATEMENT:

We connect with one another to grow in our faith and more fully live what we believe.

KEY BIBLICAL TEXT:

Hebrews 10:24 – 25:

“And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day approaching.”

THEME DEVELOPMENT:

How often do you preach and teach from the same text two weeks in a row? Probably not often, but we all know that most passages of scripture are filled with content that can take much more time to develop than we often give it. Today we have a chance to do just that, to build more solidly on Hebrews 10:24-25, to help people dig a bit deeper into what this may mean for the life they want to live.

Connecting happens best in smaller groups where we can develop deep relationships. Connecting happens best as we develop a rhythm of meeting regularly. It allows us to get to know one another, encourage one another, support one another, hold one another accountable, and form lasting relationships with Christ and others of faith. Connecting includes opportunities to regularly study the Bible together and to join in fellowship and faith-based activity. Connecting includes opportunities for service and opportunities for prayer. Connecting helps all people learn and live the lives we all truly desire to live.



WEEK 4 SERVE

THEME STATEMENT:

We serve others with purpose and meaning using the gifts we have each been given.

KEY BIBLICAL TEXTS:

1 Peter 4:10:

“Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.”

Ephesians 2:10:

“For we are what God has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.”

THEME DEVELOPMENT:

As mentioned last week, connecting can also include service. Many churches do not know the community around them. Many members no longer live in the community where the church is located. A disconnect exists between church and community. Many churches do not know what needs exist in the surrounding community, so they do not know how to serve. The heart of missional service is helping the church know and meet the needs of the community, both where you live and also where your church is located.

Jesus left the comfort of heaven to struggle as a human, serve humanity, and ultimately die for all people. Jesus did this because he loved us. Jesus invites us to love. Jesus invites us to live out love in service. Jesus invites us to serve well and successfully, touching lives as He did and still does through us. Jesus asks us to be aware of and use our unique abilities and gifts in ways that will touch and bless lives. Once we truly experience God’s love in Jesus, we too begin to love others enough to serve them. A point of service will help all live the lives they truly desire to live.



WEEK 5 GIVE

THEME STATEMENT:

We support God's work financially. God has blessed us to be a blessing to others.

KEY BIBLICAL TEXT:

2 Corinthians 9:7 – 8:

“Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work.”

THEME DEVELOPMENT:

We all know that every stewardship series must include a focus on giving. We all know the church needs money. We all know the mission and vision we want to fulfill together demands financing. Yes indeed, those who want to live, gather, connect and serve also need to belly up, commit to the pledge and write the check. Well, kind of, but there is certainly far more.



We worship and serve God who gave. Made in God's image, we have the same innate desire to give and sustain and provide. It is part of our spiritual DNA. Giving reminds us that we need to live in balance. Giving reminds us that we are more than consumers. Giving allows us to participate in the work God is doing in the world through us and through the Church. Giving is personal...my decision to make for me and your decision to make for you. It is based upon an understanding of what I have received and what I am led to give. I make up my mind after learning the biblical material, after conversation with God, after conversation with others of faith, and after conversation with those in my household. Giving is wonderful and joyful, especially once you get into the healthy habit of giving a percentage of what is earned. It is a wonderful and joyful part of how to manage money in a God-honoring way. My giving helps accomplish what needs to be done. There is enough. I have enough. Enough...if we all give as we are able and as we are led. Giving with generosity will help all live the lives they truly desire to live.

WEEK 6

MULTIPLY

THEME STATEMENT:

We multiply and grow the Church by inviting and making other disciples.

KEY BIBLICAL TEXT:

Matthew 28:19-20:

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

THEME DEVELOPMENT:

Let me be perfectly honest as we come to the final week of this series. I really do not have an evangelical bone in my body. I do not have the gift of bringing people to a saving relationship with Christ. What I do well is teach, nurture, encourage and invite. I can help people on the road of faith take some strides, to move along that path of faith. You know, especially for those of us who cringe when we think of what it truly means to “multiply”, that may be enough.

There is no doubt that growth is a vital part of the work of the church. We, as believers, are to gather, connect, serve, and give that we may live. We get that.

The next step is to offer that same opportunity to others. It does not need to be uncomfortable. It needs to be intentional, a part of our ministry plan. It needs to be done successfully. It works. How do I know? I look at myself every day in the mirror. I was a part of that multiplication as I was offered the opportunity to live, gather, connect, serve and give. The harvest is plentiful. Laborers do not need to be few.

To multiply asks that we somehow share with others what faith in Christ and participation in the church is all about. It happens best as we do what we, as Moravians, do very well. We extend invitations and we extend hospitality. We invite people to experience what we love. We work with God to help people know God's grace and love, to experience or discover or recover their relationship with Him. To multiply will help all live the lives they truly desire to live.



TO
BUILD ON
& LIVE BY

6 WORDS

MY PERSONAL COMMITMENT

I, (print name) _____ commit to these words to live by in each area checked below. I realize this church and congregation will support me in these efforts through modeling, teaching and offering regular opportunities to help me grow in each faith discipline.

____ **Live** a life transformed, renewed, and blessed by God.

____ **Gather** with the Church for worship.

____ **Connect** with others to grow in faith.

____ **Serve** others, using the gifts I have been given.

____ **Give** financially to God's work.

I estimate to contribute _____ each month to support the financial needs of our ministries.

____ **Multiply** by helping make disciples.

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