



# BULLETIN

CHURCH FUND RAISING CONSULTANTS

Campaign Readiness/  
Feasibility Studies

•  
Capital Stewardship  
Campaigns

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Success!

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## Stepping Up Rather Than Putting Off

Many churches have postponed fundraising because of the state of the economy. Despite needing money for new facilities, deferred maintenance, new or expanded ministries or to retire debt, they have determined that asking members for money at this time is ill-advised at best and crazy at worst.

### Oh, you of little faith!

1. The best time to raise money always is when genuine need exists. The rationale for fundraising doesn't change with economic ups and downs.
2. God's work doesn't stop because the economy is bad. In fact, need is greater in poor economic times. How can we respond to that need when we put off the steps that will enable us to do so?
3. The question isn't, "Can we raise money now?" The question is, "What is God calling us to do?" As faith-filled followers of Christ, we listen to his call, not economic barometers.
4. Without a vision, the people will perish. (Proverbs 29:18) Heeding God's call can lead only to a brighter future. People need and respond to a vision, and they embrace opportunities to work together knowing they can accomplish more as a community than they can on their own.
5. Especially in difficult times, people look for strong leadership. If the message they hear is one of hope, if they are given a clear vision, if they are challenged to step out in faith to do God's work, they will rally to the cause and respond with confidence and generosity.
6. The alternative to moving ahead is to acknowledge that the status quo is good enough. The focus is scarcity rather than abundance.
7. Fear paralyzes. Putting off raising money because of fear of failure freezes the church exactly where it is - without hope of change or growth. It assumes people won't give and gives them permission not to give.
8. If nothing else, these tough economic times have taught many of us to do with less. Sacrifice is at the heart of a capital stewardship campaign, when members are challenged to consider their blessings and then to share them as God calls them to do so. Such a faith journey opens the door to a deeper relationship with God. How members respond is between them and God. Not giving them the opportunity assumes they won't respond and denies them the chance to embrace stewardship more fully.
9. The time frame for capital stewardship campaigns generally is three years. Most people expect the economy to improve over the next year or so. With appropriate follow-up
10. during the pledge payment portion of a campaign, members will have opportunity to increase their campaign commitments as their personal situations improve.
11. A poor economy brings opportunities as well as challenges. Many companies are looking for work and are willing to deal on pricing. Construction, deferred maintenance, etc., may be done for significantly less money now than when the economy improves.
12. What's the worst that can happen when conducting a capital campaign in poor economic times? Is it that the campaign will fail or won't raise enough money? If a church doesn't raise every dollar needed, it still is ahead:
  - With the money it has raised for immediate needs.
  - With members' increased understanding of personal stewardship that frames the campaign.
  - With the number of members who actively participate by contributing their time, talent and treasure for the greater good.
  - With the enhanced sense of community that comes from working together doing God's work.

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## Churches: Guiding Light

Churches have a critical role to play in guiding people through the current economic climate. By helping people focus on the really important things in life, i.e., understanding and responding to God's plan for each of us, our faith communities support, encourage and sustain us. In particular, pastors and church leaders can make a difference by:

1. Being positive. Nearly 92% of us are employed!
2. Leading! Don't hold back, put off or make excuses. God's work is waiting to be done.
3. Inspiring people to think beyond themselves. How does how we live compare to someone in Haiti or the Sudan or China?
4. Challenging people to get involved. Positive action overcomes fear and doubt.
5. Praying – when you're walking, driving, waiting, cooking, watching the sun come up...

13. The only way a church can fail is not to try.
14. This country has been through other very difficult economic times. Nevertheless, according to Giving USA Spotlight (Issue 3, 2008), "Total giving has increased in current dollars in every year but one since recording began. The exception is 1987, when a tax law change in 1986 prompted some people to "give early" in order to maximize the value of tax deductions they could claim."
15. We are a people of faith. We look for solutions to problems. We have risen to challenges many times in our history by pulling together and taking care of each other – and the rest of the world. We are called to action rather than complacency. We are generous and we respond in faith to the needs around us. A poor economy will defeat us only if we allow it.

## Is Anyone Campaigning in This Economy?

### St. Margaret Church, Otsego

In February of this year, the parish dedicated its beautiful new church that seats 600. The same month the parish began its third capital campaign, this one to retire \$1 million in debt from the building project. In two previous campaigns, its 450 families contributed approximately \$2.3 million.

**Yes!**

### First Presbyterian Church of Saline

Members began a capital stewardship campaign in February to pay off their half-million dollar mortgage related to the purchase of property for ministry programs and activities. Two months into the campaign, approximately 80 of their 225 members are actively involved in the campaign.

### St. Stanislaus Church, Dorr

After conducting a campaign readiness study in the summer of 2008, parish leadership decided to phase the plan to renovate its parish center, build a new kitchen and offices and add a parking lot. In February parishioners launched the *Forward in Faith* campaign to raise \$830,000 to improve parish facilities that serve ministry, school, athletic and social activities.



*Bishop James Murray waits for parishioners to gather for the dedication of the new St. Margaret Church in Otsego.*