**Instructions for “Because of God’s Great Mercy”**

“Because of God’s Great Mercy” allows you to customize the materials with your congregation’s name and specific information about your congregation’s mission and ministry and your various ways of giving. Customizing will take a bit more effort, but the extra effort will yield a better result.

To begin planning “Because of God’s Great Mercy” open the **timeline**. The first step in using this timeline is to determine the date of Commitment Sunday. When you have done that, enter that date on the timeline at “Sunday, Week #4”, which is Commitment Sunday. Once this is done, calculate and enter the other dates on the timeline, calculating back from Commitment Sunday for the dates before it, and calculating forward for the dates after Commitment Sunday. When you have the timeline completed, you have the appeal plan for your congregation.

**Newsletter Article** announces the appeal to the congregation. The only personalizing that needs to be done to the Newsletter Article is to replace <congname> with the name of your congregation. Obviously, the replace function in your word processing program can do this for you.

The Newsletter article should be prominently placed in the newsletter sent out prior to Week #1. If your congregation uses an email to members of the congregation rather than a printed newsletter, include this article in the last email prior to Week #1. If possible, you might also feature this article on your congregation’s web site.

**Bulletin Insert #1** should be prepared and inserted in the bulletin on Sunday, Week #1. There is no personalizing to be done on this insert. Bulletin Insert #1 is designed to be printed on 8½ by 14 paper and cut into two inserts.

**Talk in Worship #1** is a short announcement introducing “Because of God’s Great Mercy” to those in worship. Talk in Worship #1 should be printed and given to the person who will be making this announcement. Prior to printing, it should be personalized in two ways. First, <congname> should be replaced by the name of the congregation. Second, in item 2, the actual date for Commitment Sunday should replace [give date].

**Letter or Email #1** is to be distributed on the Tuesday of Week #1. Many congregations have email addresses for most members and many friends of the congregation. If you do, then email is the preferred method for distributing this communication. If you do not, then you should mail the letter.

Prior to distribution, this letter/email needs to be personalized by replacing <congname> with the congregation’s name. Also, the date of mailing should replace DATE at the top of the letter/email.

**Bulletin Insert #2** should be prepared and inserted in the bulletin on Sunday, Week #2. There is no personalizing needed on Bulletin Insert #2. Bulletin Insert #2 is designed to be printed on 8½ by 14 paper and cut into two inserts.

**Talk in Worship #2** should be given on Sunday, Week #2 by someone who is very familiar with the congregation’s ministry. Perhaps the congregation’s president would be a good person for this task. This talk will highlight specific ministries of the congregation that occur in three settings – within the congregation’s walls, within the community, and across the country or around the world. The person giving this talk will need to have plenty of time to prepare for the talk, so this sheet should be given to them at least two weeks prior to when the talk will be given. Prior to giving this sheet to the speaker, <congname> should be replaced by the name of the congregation.

**Letter or Email #2** is to be distributed on Tuesday of Week #2. This letter/email requires considerable personalization. First, <congname> needs to be replaced by the congregation’s name. Second, in paragraph 2, examples need to be provided for the congregation’s ministry in the community and across the country and around the world. These examples might be the same ones used in Talk in Worship #2, or they could be different examples.

This letter/email could be distributed either via mail or email, depending on the completeness of your congregation’s knowledge of member email addresses.

**Bulletin Insert #3** should be prepared and inserted in the bulletin on Sunday, Week #3. There is no personalizing needed on Bulletin Insert #3. Bulletin Insert #3 is designed to be printed on 8½ by 14 paper and cut into two inserts. This bulletin insert will be used by the speaker during Talk in Worship #3.

**Talk in Worship #3** should be given on Sunday, Week #3 by someone who is very organized, and is comfortable speaking in front of the congregation. This is a very important talk that invites people to use a chart to calculate a ½ of 1% of household income increase in their giving. The person giving this talk can use the bulletin insert and, if the congregation has projection capabilities, a slide could be prepared containing the information on the bulletin insert. Again, the person giving this talk will need to have plenty of time to prepare for the talk, so this sheet should be given to them at least two weeks prior to when the talk will be given. There is no personalization needed on Talk in Worship #3.

**Letter #3** should be mailed to all members and friends of the congregation on Monday of Week #3. If possible, this mailing should be sent first class. Email should not be used for Letter #3. There are several enclosures with Letter #3. These are an electronic giving form (if you use one), commitment card, and an envelope return addressed to the congregation.

Letter #3 may require considerable personalization. DATE should be replaced by the actual date of mailing. <congname> should be replaced by the congregation’s name. Also, this letter assumes that your congregation uses electronic giving, and that members and friends can sign up for electronic giving by completing a paper form. If this is not the case for your congregation, or if members and friends can sign up for electronic giving online, then the letter will need to be personalized to accurately describe your congregation’s practice.

**Commitment Card** is included in the mailing with Letter #3. Commitment Card is designed to be printed on 8½ by 11 paper and cut into two commitment cards. You should consider printing Commitment Card on heavier weight paper or light card stock. The only personalization needed on Commitment Card is replacing <congname> with the congregation’s name.

**Bulletin Insert #4** should be prepared and inserted in the bulletin on Sunday, Week #4. There is no personalization needed on Bulletin Insert #4 unless you wish for people to return their cards in some way other than by placing them in the offering plates. If, for instance, you wish to use a processional offering, instructions should be included on this bulletin insert.

**Commitment Cards** should be printed and available for services on Commitment Sunday. These could be in pew racks, available from the ushers, or both. The only personalization needed on Commitment Card is replacing <congname> with the congregation’s name.

**Talk in Worship #4** is more of an announcement than a full talk. The pastor or someone else doing the announcements could include this announcement. There is no personalization required for Talk in Worship #4.

**Sunday, Week 5** an announcement should be given in worship that announces the number of Commitment Cards returned to date and the total amount committed to date. If possible, this could be compared to the first week results in the previous year. The person making this announcement might also say how many households indicated on their Commitment Card that their commitment reflects an increase of ½ of 1% of household income or more. This announcement should include a thank you to those who have returned Commitment Cards and an invitation for others who have not returned their cards yet to do so as quickly as possible.

**Follow-Up Letter** should be mailed to all previous givers to the congregation who have not yet returned a Commitment Card. This letter should be personalized by typing the name of the addressee(s). DATE needs to be replaced by the actual date of mailing. <congname> needs to be replaced by the congregation’s name.

This letter contains several enclosures, including an electronic giving sign-up form, if you use one, a Commitment Card, and an envelope return addressed to the congregation.

**Pledge Thank You** letter should be mailed to all those who have returned a Commitment Card during the appeal. This should be done as quickly as is practical following the conclusion of the appeal. This letter needs to be personalized by replacing <congname> with the name of the congregation. Also, each giver’s name needs to be included. In paragraph one, the amount the giver has committed and the contact information of the person to contact to correct an error should be included. In paragraph two several examples of upcoming ministry should be described.