TENS

Year of Living Generously Tip of the Month: The Stewardship of Preparation

Summer is a season of rest, travel, and slower rhythms, but it can also be a season of quiet preparation. Fall annual giving campaigns often arrive quickly once September begins, and congregations that take a few small steps in July can enter the season with more confidence, clarity, and joy. Preparation is a form of stewardship: it honors the time, energy, and gifts of the people who will lead, participate, and respond.

1. Gather the stories.

Invite vestry members, ministry leaders, or longtime parishioners to name where they have seen generosity at work in the congregation this past year. These do not need to be polished testimonials yet — just short notes, examples, or moments of gratitude. A simple shared document or email thread can become the beginning of fall campaign storytelling.

2. Review the calendar gently.

Before everyone returns from summer schedules, identify the likely dates for campaign launch, ingathering, testimony Sundays, vestry conversations, and follow-up. This does not require a full committee meeting; even a clergy, warden, and chair conversation can prevent September scramble. A clear calendar is a gift to volunteers.

3. Pray for the campaign before planning it.

Set aside one Sunday in July to include a prayer for the congregation's generosity, leadership, and shared ministry. Vestries or stewardship teams might also begin each summer meeting with a prayer of gratitude for the gifts already present in the community. Before a campaign is a task list, it is a spiritual invitation.

4. Make one thing easier.

Choose one practical item that can be prepared now: update the giving link, review pledge/promise card language, check mailing lists, refresh online donation instructions, or identify who will write campaign letters. Small administrative acts can be holy acts of preparation when they remove barriers and make generosity easier for the whole congregation.

The stewardship of preparation is not about rushing the fall. It is about tending what can be tended now, with gentleness and intention, so that when campaign season arrives, the congregation is ready to speak clearly, invite faithfully, and give thanks for all that God is already doing.