

# “Abundant Love, Abundant Life”

## (3 Skits for Stewardship)

By

Margaret D. McGee

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### **Cast:**

EDYTHE, retiring Chair of the Stewardship Committee

ANGEL

HOWARD, new Stewardship Committee member

CAROL, new Stewardship Committee member

TED, new Stewardship Committee member

### **Set:**

First Skit: EDYTHE's bedroom, cot or rollaway bed

Second Skit: Meeting room at church, table with four chairs

Third Skit: Fellowship Hall, audience seated at tables with food

### **Props:**

First Skit: old-fashioned quilt; hair rollers.

Second Skit: Files & other stewardship material that Edythe brings to the meeting.

Third Skit: Boom box, CD with music for line dance, small bag of potato chips, basket of apples, votive candles.

### **Music:**

Third Skit: CD with music for line dance; Piano or other music for final song, “This Little Light of Mine.”

First Skit  
“What’s Enough?”

*(EDYTHE’s bedroom.)*

*(EDYTHE is in bed, moving restlessly, completely covered by an old-fashioned quilt.)*

EDYTHE

*(Muttering from under the covers.)* Not enough!

*(ANGEL enters, dressed like an angel, and sits by the side of the bed.)*

*(EDYTHE kicks off the covers and sits bolt upright, revealing rollers in her hair.)*

EDYTHE

It’s not enough! It’s not enough!

ANGEL

What’s not enough?

EDYTHE

Good heavens! Where did you come from?

ANGEL

*(Indicating halo and wings.)*

Heaven! Where do you think?

EDYTHE

Oh, it’s my guardian angel! For a minute there, I thought I was dreaming.

ANGEL

Were you having a nightmare?

EDYTHE

No. Two problems keep going round and round my mind. As soon as one pulls over for a pit stop, the other races ahead.

ANGEL

Get them off that closed track and out in the open. Talk to me, Edythe.

EDYTHE

Well, the first one has to do with church and my big mouth. You know, I'm coming to the end of my third year as Chair of the Stewardship Committee at St. Paul's.

ANGEL

How time flies!

EDYTHE

Umm ... yeah. Anyway, I'm passing the torch in Stewardship. The rector is putting a whole new committee together.

ANGEL

What are you going to do now?

EDYTHE

Something for the church that has absolutely nothing to do with money. But we're having a little trouble finding what that is.

ANGEL

I can imagine. Is that one of the problems?

EDYTHE

No. See, every year, the first thing the Stewardship committee does is put on an all-church party.

ANGEL

Party! Great idea!

EDYTHE

But we might not have much to celebrate this year.

ANGEL

Of course we do. Let's party!

EDYTHE

I thought we'd have a record-setting year. It all began when someone stepped in and donated a big new stove for the kitchen.

ANGEL

Big enough to make pizza for the party? I love anchovies.

EDYTHE

The surprise gift seemed to inspire people, and it started to look like we were going to get more and bigger pledges this past year than any year in St. Paul's history.

ANGEL

Will you have a deejay spinning discs? Or, are you getting a live band?

EDYTHE

Listen to me! Is your head so far up in the clouds that you don't know what's happening down here on earth? The economy has the jitters, and people are worried about their jobs.

ANGEL

In that case, I'd keep the music up-tempo.

EDYTHE

A few folks are already retrenching. Now it looks as if we won't break our pledge record after all. And I'm afraid that the congregation will think it's the wrong time to throw a big party.

ANGEL

Sounds like the perfect time to me.

EDYTHE

I wish I'd never brought it up. The new committee is having its first meeting today. I'm telling them that we don't have money to throw around. We have to cancel the party.

ANGEL

Cancel a party? Edythe, that doesn't sound like you. You're a party animal!

EDYTHE

I am?

ANGEL

Absolutely! You are the light of the world. You are the city on the hill. Light your lamps and let them shine!

EDYTHE

This 'city on a hill' feels very exposed right now. I want to close all the curtains and pretend nobody's home.

ANGEL

That's not my fearless Edie talking. What's really wrong? What's your other problem?

EDYTHE

Something else entirely. I retired last year, you know. The timing seemed right. I thought that my nest egg would carry me all the way through to the end.

ANGEL

Which end are we talking about here?

EDYTHE

Then Mom passed away.

ANGEL

Your mother has such a sweet spirit.

EDYTHE

Yes, she did. Anyway, seeing how her savings got used up in those last months of care ... I just don't know anymore. I'm afraid my little nest egg won't be enough.

*(EDYTHE draws quilt up around her.)*

ANGEL

*(Touches quilt.)* What wonderful colors. Did you make this quilt?

EDYTHE

No, My great-grandmother made it, and gave it to Mom when she was just a little girl. See, here's the date stitched into the corner: 1932.

ANGEL

Nineteen thirty-two? Wow. That was quite a year.

EDYTHE

It was?

ANGEL

For us guardian angels, it sure was. We were ramping up, big time. And we already had more work than we could handle.

EDYTHE

Oh, right. The Great Depression. Lots of people out of work in this country.

ANGEL

All over the world. I got transferred from Dayton, Ohio, to Outer Mongolia. Didn't get back to the states till the big crisis in the mid-60's.

EDYTHE

Drug wars?

ANGEL

Nope. Beatle-mania.

EDYTHE

Goodness.

ANGEL

We did what we could. How did your great-grandparents make it through the Depression?

EDYTHE

They had a little farm. Just 30 acres, but it fed them.

ANGEL

Did they always have enough?

EDYTHE

They were probably scared sometimes. But they did what they had to do, and it turned out to be enough. They must have had a pretty good guardian angel.

ANGEL

Yes, they did.

EDYTHE

*(Touches quilt.)* This quilt was on Mom's bed during her last weeks. What a time that was. I had such trouble letting go.

ANGEL

Letting go of your mom?

EDYTHE

No, not really. That part was almost easy, compared to letting go of the idea that I had any control over the situation. I'll tell you a secret. I actually like being Stewardship Chair. With me in charge, at least we have a well-run meeting, stick to the agenda, and adjourn on time.

ANGEL

What about when you're not in charge?

EDYTHE

My nightmare meeting is when no one's in charge, there's no agenda, and the meeting never ends. So when Mom went into the care center for the last time, I thought that the best I could do for her would be to help bring order to the process.

ANGEL

What happened?

EDYTHE

Turns out that dying is not an orderly process. I just had to let go, and let go, and let go. In the end, all I could do was be there with her. And I couldn't even do that all the time. Thank goodness for the hospice volunteers, and the pastoral support from the church.

ANGEL

What did they do?

EDYTHE

Paid attention. Prayed. It was enough. Here's the funny thing. It turned out that the order and efficiency I thought I could bring to the process weren't what was needed after all. Only love.

ANGEL

Abundant love.

EDYTHE

Exactly! There was plenty of love in that room, and I didn't even have to bring it. In a way it was Mom's and mine—but it wasn't ours alone. I don't know how to say what I mean.

ANGEL

I know what you mean.

EDYTHE

There was plenty. Plenty of love. And plenty of life too. I've never felt as alive as I felt in that room, even after she was gone. Now this quilt helps me remember all the love and all the life.

ANGEL

*(Touching quilt.)* Look at those stitches.

EDYTHE

Every one made by hand.

ANGEL

Where did your great-grandmother get the fabric?

EDYTHE

From what she had. When bed sheets wore out in the middle, she used the sides and ends. Mom said that these pieces with flower prints came from Grandma's old house dresses.

ANGEL

Her nest egg had more than one life.

EDYTHE

It's still alive, three generations later. *(Cherishing quilt.)* What was the matter with me? I'm this woman's great-granddaughter! And I don't think I have enough? That is not true. You know what? We are having that party at church!

ANGEL

Hurray! Party! I'm there, baby. *(Checks watch.)* Oops—gotta go! I don't want to be late for class!

*(ANGEL exits.)*

EDYTHE

Class? What kind of classes do angels take? Oh well, time to get up and get ready for that meeting.

*(EDYTHE gets out of bed and exits.)*

*(ANGEL enters.)*

ANGEL

Times can feel good.  
Times can feel tough.  
But living and loving –  
Perhaps that's enough.

Still Edythe worries,  
Now what will she do?

We'll return in a bit to show you.

*End of First Skit*

Second Skit  
“Called to Order”

*(Meeting room at the church.)*

*(EDYTHE enters, carrying Stewardship files and materials, and sits at table.)*

EDYTHE

Where is everybody?

*(HOWARD enters.)*

EDYTHE

Hello.

HOWARD

Hi, I’m Howard. Is this the Stewardship meeting?

EDYTHE

That’s why I’m here. I’m Edythe. I was Stewardship Chair last year.

*(CAROL and TED enter.)*

HOWARD

So you’re Edythe!

CAROL

Sure – Edie’s an eight o’clocker, like me. Hi, I’m Carol.

TED

And I’m Ted. Is this the Stewardship meeting?

HOWARD

This is it. Edythe here’s in charge.

EDYTHE

No, I’m not in charge! I’m here to help with the party and hand off the files to the new chair.  
Who is it?

CAROL

Not me, that's for sure. I was so surprised to be asked to join this committee. I've never signed a pledge card in my life.

EDYTHE

What? You don't pledge?

CAROL

Nope. But I'll tell you what I think St. Paul's ought to do. Lift up the tithe, until everybody does it! The church I grew up in never used pledge cards, and everyone was expected to tithe.

TED

Did they actually do it?

CAROL

When it came time to make a budget, the church had faith that the money would come in, and it did. I haven't come around to pledging, but I still believe in the tithe.

EDYTHE

Well, we have always encouraged proportional giving—

HOWARD

And I have *not* come around to giving by percentages. But I believe in the pledge.

EDYTHE

Umm ... Biblically speaking—

HOWARD

I get my inspiration for giving from the book of Acts. In those stories of the early church, people came together in community and shared to meet the needs of everyone. That's what matters to me, more than a particular percentage.

CAROL

I still say, what's the point of pledging?

HOWARD

To me, pledging just seems like part of being a member of Christian community. I pledge to communicate my intentions and to help the vestry plan for the year.

EDYTHE

I'm sure they appreciate it. You sound like the new Stewardship chair, Howard.

HOWARD

Heavens, no! I'm just as surprised to be on this committee as Carol here!

EDYTHE

So. Ted. Are you in charge?

TED

Can't be me. I've only been a member of this church for a couple of months, and I only got on this committee because of the toilet paper.

EDYTHE

The toilet paper?

TED

Soon after we started coming, I noticed was that St. Paul's still had those metal containers in all the bathrooms, the ones that dole out one measly little square of single-ply toilet paper at a time.

CAROL

Oh, I hated those! Are you the one who got us on rolls?

TED

I marched right out to the big co-op and bought ten cartons of fat rolls—double-ply—and donated them to the church.

HOWARD

What about storage?

TED

My garage. I drop off new rolls every week.

CAROL

God bless you.

TED

Then I installed the new holders. After that, the work crew asked me to join them, and for some reason the rector asked me to be on Stewardship—the last committee I thought I'd ever be on.

EDYTHE

So, who's in charge?

TED

I warned her that, to me, the word “stewardship” does not mean “annual fund-raising drive.” I wouldn't be on this committee unless stewardship was a year-round thing for us.

HOWARD

I can't agree with that. At my last church, they nickel and dimed us all year long, constantly asking for money. It turned me off.

EDYTHE

I have material from the diocese about that problem—

TED

No, that's not what I mean. “Stewardship” means managing and sharing resources for the common good every day, as a way of life.

HOWARD

Isn't one-ply toilet paper cheaper?

TED

Of course it is, by the roll. But think about it. Every time I'm in some public rest room that stocks the cheap thin stuff—well, I'm sorry, but I'm doubling up!

CAROL

Me, too.

TED

Take my word for it, by the end of the year, the cost difference won't be all that much.

CAROL

Think what we'll save in exasperation alone!

EDYTHE

That's your contribution? Toilet paper?

TED

Oh, I'll pledge. I know that's part of good stewardship. But I can't say that I make my pledge to help the vestry plan. My pledge comes out of a conversation between me and God about what I have, and how attached I am to it, and how I can let go and let God work.

CAROL

In that case, why sign a pledge card?

TED

The pledge is between God and me. The pledge card is its outward and visible sign.

EDYTHE

That has a familiar ring.

TED

But I still don't know what I'm doing on this committee. I've never run a pledge drive in my life. Who's going to do that?

EDYTHE

Good question! Who's in charge?

*(ANGEL enters. EDYTHE sees ANGEL and stands, hoping for help.)*

*(To committee.)* Excuse me. Potty break.

*(Crosses to ANGEL.)*

*(While EDYTHE talks to ANGEL, the others talk among themselves, looking through the material EDYTHE brought.)*

EDYTHE (CONTINUED)

*(To ANGEL.)* Help!

ANGEL

You need my help planning the party?

EDYTHE

No! *(Indicating committee.)* They need help with stewardship! Those people don't know what they're doing! I think I made a mistake when I resigned as chair of this committee.

ANGEL

You did?

EDYTHE

The rector must be desperate. I think I should tell her I'm back on board. I'll chair one more year and save the day. What do you think?

ANGEL

Save the day? Edythe, last I heard, the church already *has* a Savior.

EDYTHE

But this committee is going in all different directions! Sure, each person here cares a lot about giving, but they do it in all shapes and sizes and colors!

ANGEL

Kinda like pieces on a patchwork quilt?

EDYTHE

... Oh ...

ANGEL

So tell me, Edythe, when you started out in Stewardship, did you know what you were doing?

EDYTHE

No. When you come right down to it, I learned most of what I know about stewardship by listening to the people I visited that first year as a canvasser.

ANGEL

Why did you go on the canvas drive?

EDYTHE

Because I cared a lot about giving. (*Referring to new committee.*) Like they do. Okay ... so ... this is going to be another one of those faith deals, isn't it?

ANGEL

It's time to let go.

EDYTHE

But ... but no one's in charge, and they don't even have an agenda! This is the nightmare meeting that never ends!

ANGEL

Edythe, you are the light of the world. And here's the good news: you're not the only one.

*(ANGEL exits.)*

*(EDYTHE returns to the meeting table.)*

EDYTHE

Now, about the party—

HOWARD

We've got it all worked out. Food, decorations, everything. We heard something about celebrating record pledge numbers, but we scrapped that. The theme is "Abundant Love, Abundant Life."

EDYTHE

Really? That sounds pretty good.

TED

Well, we got the idea from your stuff here.

EDYTHE

You did?

CAROL

You just bring the music, Edythe, and let the new Stewardship Committee do the rest.

*(CAROL picks up the stewardship material as ALL stand to leave.)*

EDYTHE

That went surprisingly well.

*(ALL exit.)*

*(ANGEL enters.)*

ANGEL

We all want what we want.  
We all want things just so.  
But sometimes the moment's  
To give and let go.

Can we learn this lesson?  
And Edythe, has she?

We'll return in a bit and you'll see.

*End of Second Skit*

### Third Skit

#### “Abundant Love, Abundant Life”

*(Fellowship Hall, audience seated at tables with food. A boom box sits in a corner of the stage area, turned on and paused at the start of music for line dance. Nearby is a single bag of potato chips.)*

*(EDYTHE enters, carrying CD's, which she puts down next to the boom box.)*

EDYTHE

What a windy night! Where is everybody? I hope the storm doesn't keep people away. *(Picks up chips.)* One bag of low-fat chips? Dear God in heaven, that's nowhere near enough!

*(Lights flicker.)*

Oops! I mean – potato chips! Praise the Lord!

*(ANGEL enters, wearing cowboy boots, practicing dance steps.)*

ANGEL

*(To herself.)* Now kick, now kick, now ... now what?

EDYTHE

What are you up to?

ANGEL

Practicing my moves from dance class. Almost got it.

EDYTHE

Dance classes in heaven? You mean like a minuet? *(Acting it out.)* All the heavenly hosts in graceful rows, bowing and turning. Must be beautiful!

ANGEL

Oh, Edythe – the minuet is so last-millennium! King David taught us a terrific new line dance.

EDYTHE

King David teaches line dance in heaven?

ANGEL

He's a dancing fool! And an inspired dance instructor. Writes all our music and plays in the band. Hey, check out my boots. Are these stompin', or are they stompin'? (*Demonstrates boot stomping.*)

EDYTHE

But ... but what about the little cherubs? What if you step on their bare toes?

ANGEL

Those are babies, baby. I'm talking about a heavenly adults-only dance class for newcomers and guardian angels. It's sort of a mixer. Come on – let me show you what we learned. (*Pulling Edythe along.*) 'To the right, to the right –

EDYTHE

What? No! I can't dance! I'm not coordinated enough for that! Nowhere near enough ability!

ANGEL

It's easier with music. Where's the party band? The deejay?

EDYTHE

(*Pointing.*) Boom box.

ANGEL

Perfect! (*Pushes Pause button.*)

EDYTHE

No, there's no CD in there yet...

*(Music plays for line dance. We used "Cupid Shuffle" by Cupid. You can hear the music and see the line dance at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iJQKBk4oDr4>. Or, you can use any simple line dance with appropriate music. )*

Good heavens!

ANGEL

Okay, Edythe – (*Teaching the steps.*) 'To the right, to the right, to the right, to the right, to the left to the left, to the left, to the left, now kick, now kick, now kick, now kick, now walk it by yourself, now walk it by yourself.'

*(CAROL enters, carrying a basket of apples, which she puts down.)*

CAROL

I know what you're doing! My Dad learned that line dance in his group at the retirement community.

*(CAROL joins the line.)*

*(HOWARD enters.)*

HOWARD

I saw that line dance on YouTube!

*(HOWARD joins the line.)*

*(TED enters.)*

TED

My granddaughter learned that in kindergarten!

*(TED joins the line.)*

*(At the end of a sequence, the line breaks up, everyone laughing.)*

*(Music fades.)*

CAROL

That was fun. Thanks, Edythe!

EDYTHER

Oh, it wasn't me.

HOWARD

Wonderful idea to bring that music, Edythe. Thank you.

EDYTHER

But, I didn't bring that music—

ANGEL

Edythe, say "You're welcome."

EDYTHER

*(To the others.)* You're welcome. What's in the basket?

CAROL

I brought apples from our tree. It's loaded this year!

EDYTHE

So we're having apples and chips?

HOWARD

Look around, Edythe!

*(EDYTHE sees the food on all the tables.)*

EDYTHE

Goodness! I didn't even see all the food, and it was here all along.

HOWARD

Most of it grown or made right here in the area.

EDYTHE

*(Sees the people at the tables.)*

And look—everybody's here! The wind didn't keep people away. This is wonderful.

TED

And now for our record-breaking announcements!

EDYTHE

*(Thrilled.)* Oh, did we break the pledge record after all?

TED

I have no idea. But I do know this: when you add up the breakfasts and lunches for the homeless shelter, lunches for the habitat volunteers, Wednesday Soup, the Cookie Extravaganza, and drop-ins at the barbecue for Launching Sunday, we broke records in feeding people out of our church kitchen this year!

CAROL

And that was with an old stove that didn't have all its burners working! With our big new stove, who knows how many we'll feed next year?

HOWARD

By this time next year, we hope to open our doors and our hearts to more souls than ever before—children and young people, families and individuals—in ways that we can't dream of tonight.

TED

But the best announcement is for right now—that we are here together tonight in abundance—abundant love and abundant life.

EDYTHE

All my worry for nothing. This is a great party, and we have everything under control after all!

*(ANGEL shrugs, addresses audience directly)*

ANGEL

Under control?! Looks like Edythe still hasn't learned how to let go. Let's try this.

*(Lights go out.)*

EDYTHE

Oh no! The power is out! Now what will we do?

*(PIANIST begins "This Little Light of Mine." While cast brings out lighted votive candles and places them on the tables, all cast and audience sing "This Little Light of Mine.")*

# This Little Light of Mine

## **This little light of mine**

I'm gonna let it shine  
This little light of mine  
I'm gonna let it shine  
This little light of mine  
I'm gonna let it shine  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

## **Jesus gave this light to me**

I'm gonna let it shine  
Jesus gave this light to me  
I'm gonna let it shine  
Jesus gave this light to me  
I'm gonna let it shine  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine

## **Hide it under a bushel - NO!**

I'm gonna let it shine.  
Hide it under a bushel - NO!  
I'm gonna let it shine.  
Hide it under a bushel - NO!  
I'm gonna let it shine, Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

## **Shine all over the whole wide world,**

I'm gonna let it shine.  
Shine all over the whole wide world,  
I'm gonna let it shine.  
Shine all over the whole wide world,  
I'm gonna let it shine, let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

*End of Third Skit*

Bible references:

“You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.” *Matthew 5:14-16*

Hymn references

“This Little Light of Mine,” music by Harry D. Loes, original lyrics by Harry D. Loes, with variations.