



# **Best Practices for Stewardship**

**A guideline for**

**Christ United Methodist Church**

**Compiled by Lori Jones, Business Administrator**

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## PREFACE

*Best Practice is an idea that asserts that there is a technique, method, process, activity, incentive or reward that is more effective at delivering a particular outcome than any other technique, method, process, etc. The idea is that with proper processes, checks, and testing, a desired outcome can be delivered with fewer problems and unforeseen complications. Best practices can also be defined as the most efficient (least amount of effort) and effective (best results) way of accomplishing a task, based on repeatable procedures that have proven themselves over time for large numbers of people.<sup>1</sup>*

There are things that keep stewardship at the forefront of our Christian walk and service to our church. They are multifaceted and include communication, education, elements in services, teaching, etc. What follows in this guidebook is a list of best practices which has been produced in an effort to provide a reference and resource document which can be used to promote a lifestyle of good stewardship for all ages at Christ United Methodist Church.

*What has been will be again,  
what has been done will be done again;  
there is nothing new under the sun.*

Ecclesiastes 1:9<sup>2</sup>

These practices have been compiled from many good and reliable sources and from professionals who make stewardship their ministry focus. They includes the most pertinent items to be done on a regular basis as well as ideas for future implementation. For those new to serving with the Stewardship Committee, this can serve as a primer and reduces the time required to "get up to speed". For the more experienced committee member, this manual may serve as reminder of those things that fall by the wayside.

The overall goal is to bring consistent focus of Biblical stewardship to the Christ Church family. The practices and suggestions should be reviewed, discussed and implemented at the discretion of the Stewardship Committee. What is presented is a short description of ideas that, in some cases, have entire books written about why they're important and how to carry them out. Additional resources can be consulted for a more in-depth look at any particular practice.

# LEADERSHIP

Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries.  
Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy  
(1 Corinthians 4:1-2)

A stewardship committee has the responsibility and privilege of helping the congregation develop into more faithful and effective stewards of the time, talents and treasure that God has given.



*Build an engaged, effective stewardship team*

This list is taken from [www.episcopalchurch.org](http://www.episcopalchurch.org) and includes a very complete and effective section on stewardship that can be an incredible resource to any church.

1. Ask God for help. Pray for wisdom about identifying committee prospects and assistance in recruiting them. Ask God to help you issue the invitation.
2. Remember Jesus' example. He recruited the Twelve one at a time, face to face. Imagine what would have happened if He had run a request for volunteers in the Temple newsletter!
3. Tell them the work is important. Most of us are busy. Who has time for an unimportant job?
4. Tell them the work may be challenging.
5. Tell them they have the ability to do the work well. If they do not have the skills to do the work, you would not have asked them to do it.
6. Be specific about the time required. If you expect to meet for two hours each month, say so.
7. Set term limits on the commitment. People are more willing to say "yes" if they know it's for a year than if they are afraid they may be stuck for life. You can always ask them to re-enlist.
8. Be prepared to offer training opportunities.
9. Think "discernment." And ask every member of the committee to do the same. Look for signs of interest in other members of the congregation. New members can be invited to join the group any time. Ask members of the group to be attentive to persons who express interest in your work or have skills you need. Encourage the notion that recruitment is everyone's job, that great committee members help fill the pipeline with new talent.
10. Don't be afraid to be creative. The Stewardship Committee at St. Michael's in Lexington, Kentucky sent a letter to committee prospects modeled after one of those awful sweepstakes announcement letters. You know, the ones that begin "You have already won..." The prize listed in small type between the car and television was membership on their committee.

11. Say "thank you" often and in diverse ways. Acknowledge volunteer efforts in your newsletter. It helps if you are specific about what they did. (Example: Thanks to Mary Ruth for beautiful table decorations and to Billy Joe for setting up the tables.) Personal notes of thanks help a lot, once people get over the shock of receiving one. This may be the most important tip. People who are appreciated enjoy their work. Committees who are thanked can find recruits.
12. As in all things and most especially, give thanks to God.



*Build an intergenerational team*

It's important for the Stewardship Committee as well as the church to recognize the generational realities of financial giving. From GIs (those born from 1901 – 1924) through the Silent generation, the Boomers and Gen Xers to the present Gen Yers (1983 – present), having a varied age group of committee members would be helpful in having diverse input. This representation could assist in understanding how and why each generation gives and what is the best approach for reaching them.



*Provide leadership tools to the committee*

- Present each new member with a copy of the Stewardship book from the current United Methodist Leadership Guide.
- Regularly review Best Practices for Stewardship
- Have a book review – either have every member read one book together and then discuss a portion of it at each meeting, or have each member read different books and make a report to the committee. In Appendix A, Abundant Stewardship Resources is a listing of books, websites, newsletters and stewardship organizations that can be utilized.<sup>3</sup>



*Write a vision statement for the stewardship committee.*

Set goals to be accomplished over a three-year period. The goals should answer the question, "How do we plan to teach key concepts and key truths? How do we plan to hold up the key questions?" Less than one-third of the goals should involve the financial commitment program. Do not keep either the vision or the goals secret. Ask for General Council approval of the goals and plan and then let the congregation know.

# SPIRITUAL FORMATION / TEACHING – PREACHING

Jesus talked about money, things, and possessions more than any other topic in the New Testament. Generosity is a spiritual issue of the heart. A person cannot move toward spiritual maturity until he or she understands that “where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Asking for money without the backdrop of spiritual formation has minimal financial results. The church that aligns spiritual formation and money will never lack. One cannot help but to give generously if there is a vibrant connection with their faith and finances.<sup>4</sup>



*Commit to stewardship as a year-round ministry.*

Stewardship isn't just a sermon series and a pledge drive in the fall. The infusion of all areas of stewardship into the DNA of the church is crucial for a sustainable, vibrant congregation.

Keep biblical stewardship before your people all year long. Never limit your vision merely to “pledging the budget.”<sup>5</sup>

The church that preaches and teaches about sound, biblical financial practices will create a long-term culture that gives abundantly to match its compelling vision. Be daring in coaching. Teach people how to get out of debt. Teach them how to save. Inspire them to live above the roar of our consumer driven machine.<sup>6</sup>



*Teach the congregation about freedom from debt*

When large sums of money are needed to pay off debt, there are fewer discretionary funds to give to the church. Help members get out of debt by providing education and providing personal financial counseling.

Programs of personal financial counseling to consider are:

- Crown Financial Ministry
  - Money Map Coaches – available for budget counseling
  - Church Wide Seminars
  - Small Groups
- Managing our Finances God's Way – Saddleback One out of every six verses in Matthew, Mark, and Luke is about material possessions, and nearly half of Jesus' parables are about possessions. *Managing Our Finances God's Way* is a 7-week, video-based small group study that will inspire members to live debt-free and

manage their finances according to Biblical principles. Developed in partnership with Crown Financial Ministries

- Financial Peace University – Dave Ramsey’s 13 week video series designed to teach families to get out of debt and stay out of debt. Statistics from past participants show the study helps the average family reduce debt by \$5200 and save \$2700 in 91 days, resulting in more ability to give.
- Good \$ense – Willow Creek Association - The Good \$ense resources can be utilized to teach, train and support and encourage your congregation in the core value of biblical stewardship. The resources can be used as their own ministry system or in conjunction with other stewardship resources.

The General Board of Discipleship of the United Methodist Church provides a comprehensive list of resources and links to explore for additional curriculum.



*Encourage the pastor to preach regular messages of giving and generosity*

One of God’s greatest gifts in the church is the pulpit. Just as a rudder steers a sailing ship, so the pulpit steers the congregation. When the pastor realizes that a generosity message can be based on the authority, breadth and depth of God’s word more than the needs of the church budget, there is great freedom and boldness in the message.<sup>7</sup> Consultants recommend a minimum of seven to nine stewardship focused messages each year.

“When a pastor says, ‘Money is not my thing,’ that is like saying ‘Preaching, or prayer, or worship is not my thing.’ Stewardship is a fundamental part of our spiritual relationship with Christ.”  
Herb Miller



*Commit to an all church stewardship emphasis which includes a sermon series and teaching for all adult small groups, youth and children*

There are many resources to help facilitate the undertaking of a church wide project. Listed below are just a few.

#### **40 Day Spiritual Journey to a More Generous Life – Brian Kluth**

Daily Bible devotional readings, weekly discussion questions, inspirational articles and weekly generosity worksheets in this program will motivate, encourage and challenge people to live and give more joyfully and generously than ever before.

#### **Revealed: Life Discovered... Legacy Defined**

A 30-day program on experiencing God’s best for your life. Utilizing a church-wide plan, those in small groups, bible classes and worship services all learn how they can spend

their time, talent and treasure in a way that God desires, ultimately surrendering to a life of peace and fulfillment. The five-lesson curriculum uses DVD lessons and individual workbooks to teach churchgoers of all ages these principles together – from children to senior adults. Through this study, individuals will discover stewardship isn't just about the money, but about giving of one's whole self for the Lord's purposes.

### **The Generous Church Toolkit –**

This comprehensive, church wide preaching program is designed specifically to help pastors preach, teach and lead their congregations on the subject of Christian generosity. The month-long, holistic plan involves teaching (biblical preaching from the pulpit, equipping (personal devotions and Sunday school lessons or small group studies) and modeling (powerful testimonies by others growing in their own giving).

### ***New Consecration Sunday Program Kit by Herb Miller***

This popular stewardship financial response method is a stewardship program for congregations of all sizes, rural or urban, and speaks from a spiritual rather than a fund-raising perspective. This program stresses the giver's need to give; sees giving as spiritual growth process. It contains a six to eight week focus leading to Stewardship Sunday with the budget being built after the program. This philosophy affirms *that we do not like to give to budgets but are glad to give to God and answer the call to service.*



*Challenge the Youth and Children's Ministry Directors to incorporate giving and generosity into their teaching and services*

Good stewardship begins at a young age. As we teach our children about stewardship, a foundation begins to form upon which they can build throughout all of life. It is our responsibility and challenge to present stewardship in such a way that our children and youth can begin to make the conversion of heart that is necessary to begin a life of stewardship.

The following are examples of programs geared to specific age groups for youth and children. There are many resources and a quick search of the internet will yield a plethora of links and opportunities for further investigation.

### **Youth Curriculum**

**Discovering God's Way of Handling Money Teen Study Workbook** – A recent article confirmed that the number of high school students who have credit cards has tripled in the past two years. This study is designed to help teens create practical habits that will set them on a lifelong journey of handling money responsibly.



**No Matter What** series for teens – An all-inclusive program for teaching money management. Perfect for Sunday School classes, youth groups or after school programs, the series includes video lessons and workbook pages that challenge teens to decide that no matter what – they will not get into debt and will avoid the other financial difficulties that adults face.

**Three Key Questions** is a simple, user-friendly small group curriculum designed to help students grasp the concepts taught through the Three Key Questions: Where does money come from? What can I do with money? Whose Money is it, anyway? The leader and students are guided through 4 one-hour sessions.

### **Children’s Curriculum**

**The ABC’s of Handling Money God’s Way** study. Recommended for ages 5 – 7 this Crown study teaches children basic principles of working, giving, saving and spending.

**The Secret of Handling Money God’s Way** Children’s Study. Recommended for ages 8 – 12, this colorful, story based workbook will engage children as they learn God’s plan for handling finances. Crown also offers a number of games and savings banks to help teach financial principals to children.

**Let The Children Give – Time, Talents, Love, and Money**, Delia Halverson – offers seemingly endless ideas for church leaders and teachers to engage children of all ages in the most important task of stewardship.

The Diocese of Providence Rhode Island has prepared A Guide for Introducing Stewardship to Children<sup>8</sup> which is included as Appendix B. This short booklet includes ideas to integrate stewardship into children’s lives which includes stressing the use of specific curriculum, parent involvement, and their own commitment card for displaying their gifts of time, talent and treasure.



*Mail communications/devotional reading material to congregation*

If Biblical generosity teaching is to truly take root in people’s heart and then spring to life in people’s pocketbooks, it must be processed and discussed at home. Material should include clear Biblical teaching on generosity that is easy to read. It should help people assess their giving to the Lord’s work in light of their income sources, lifestyle choices, and giving priorities.<sup>9</sup>

Mailing is encouraged because even if materials are made available at the church, people will either forget to pick them up or choose not to explore anything to do with finances and giving. In the quietness of their own home, they can read and reflect on what is written without the issue of a pastor’s preaching style or personality or the

church budget getting in the way of the spiritual transformation that needs to take place in people's hearts.<sup>10</sup>



*Incorporate information on stewardship in membership class*

This is a key learning opportunity for those who have no clue as to what stewardship commitment is all about! Don't be afraid to say what is expected in terms of membership and giving.



*Teach financial principles and planning during pre-marital counseling.*

Whether the pastor does pre-marital counseling or makes recommendations to engaged couples to seek other counseling opportunities, encourage clergy to include the suggestions of attending a financial class such as those offered by Crown Financial or Financial Peace University. Perhaps members of the congregation could be recruited to sponsor and/or advise young couples through the process.



*Make printed material about stewardship available at information displays at the visitor welcome centers*

Care Notes (preprinted tracts from Abby Press), denominational brochures, and local church financial information should be easily accessible from locations where regular attendees and visitors can browse and choose these resources.



*Publish a financial newsletter*

This newsletter could be sent with statements or on a schedule that the Stewardship/Finance Committee(s) deem is reasonable in publicizing the church's financial condition. (See Appendix C and D, Faith and Finances newsletters from First Evangelical Free Church, Colorado Springs.)



*Be intentional about cultivating new members*

"Most new members take up to two years to become consistent, dependable stewards. You can accelerate this process by making stewardship an integral part of new member cultivation and assimilation" says Dr. John H. Hewett, CFRE, president of the church division of Cargill Associates<sup>11</sup>. Utilize spiritual gifts workshops and questionnaires to identify giftedness. Follow up on interest surveys is critical to keeping people involved.

## COMMUNICATION



*Develop a clear and purposeful church mission statement.*

According to David S. Bell, president and founder of Covenant Quest, one of the most cited reasons for giving to a charity is the donor's belief in the organization's mission. This principal is also a key motivator to people's giving through the church. The church's mission statement should be: (1) clear and concise, (2) easily understood by people outside of the immediate community, and (3) memorable.

If people believe in the mission of the church they will be more motivated to increase their level of financial and personal commitment to the community. This increased commitment will lead ultimately to a growth in discipleship and witnessing for transformation.<sup>12</sup> "Without a vision for ministry, people will devote their resources to non ministry ventures," says George Barna in his book, *How to Increase Giving in Your Church*.<sup>13</sup> Once a mission statement has been finalized it can help to form the culture of the church community. The mission drives the strategic plan.



*Talk about generosity!*

Conversations must move beyond stewardship to generosity. With all due respect to the biblical concept of stewardship, the term itself is passive, hard to understand and boring. In the secret places of the heart, people do not long to be good stewards. They do long to make an impact. To be a difference maker. To be generous to the point of giving up something that is good in exchange for something that is better.

Churches that celebrate generosity become more generous. Churches that are silent about generosity become zealous about cutting expenses. Try a vocabulary shift. Replace stewardship with generosity and unpack the stories of how the generosity of our church changed lives. Watch giving flourish.<sup>14</sup>



*Encourage percentage and step up giving*

Challenge the congregation to increase their level of giving by 1% of their income each year as they move toward the Biblical tithe of 10% and beyond. Challenge those who already increase their pledge each year to do so by a greater percentage. In challenging an increase in giving, tell the congregation how the increased giving will be used. This can be effectively communicated with a narrative budget which is described later in this guideline.

Messages on tithing never offend a tither!



*Remind the church family through newsletters, testimonies, video presentations, interviews, posters and sermons what their giving is really accomplishing.*

Don't ask for money to pay the bills – challenge them to join the giving team that's accomplishing the will of God through the church. This gives every woman, man, girl and boy a reason to give. <sup>15</sup> Communicate what their money does for the Kingdom.



*Communicate the church finances*

Stewardship and financial information should be an integral part of the church website. It should communicate how to give, who to contact for financial information and what accountability processes are in place. First Evangelical Free Church of Colorado Springs ([www.1freechurch.org](http://www.1freechurch.org)) and Sierra Vista First of Sierra Vista, Arizona ([www.sierravistafirst.org](http://www.sierravistafirst.org)) are very good examples of effective financial web sites.

Very few people have the financial training to understand complex reports. Utilize financial pie charts and make detailed reports available for those who request them. Do not put financial information in the weekly bulletin for visitors to view, especially if it is delivering bad news. Use the monthly newsletter to review your financial condition. It is important to be conscious of what (intentionally or not) is being communicated to visitors.



*Educate the congregation about United Methodist Apportionments*

A significant portion of the church's annual budget is payments made to the Iowa Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church referred to as apportionments. The amount of apportionments each church pays is determined by the Finance and Administration office based on their annual budget and the amount of giving received by the individual church. Educating the congregation about the many ministries and missions that benefit from the payment of these funds from the general budget will help them understand its importance. Appendix E is brochure provided by the Conference from the Finance and Administration section of their website at [www.iaumc.org](http://www.iaumc.org) and can be made available at the information display in the foyer.



### *Hold Town Hall meetings*

These group meetings provide opportunities for conversations about the work God is calling the congregation to do. They are an excellent idea for congregations engaged in vision/mission review and future planning. Hosts and discussion leaders should be skilled in leading this type of open forum to keep discussion flowing and create a positive atmosphere for people to share.



### *Have committed givers write notes*

These are personal notes, written by members of the congregation to other members, not to be confused with the letter composed by pastor or stewardship chairman mail merged through the computer (or, even worse, copied on the copier) and sent to everyone. Letter writers tell why they give and ask others to respond to their own call from God. Quill, The Personal Demonstration Stewardship Program, is just one example of a letter writing campaign which provides all the guidelines for success.

## STEWARDSHIP IN WORSHIP

Giving is an act of worship. The offering is truly a time where all believers can actively participate in the worship service. For many churches the offering feels like a brief interruption in the order of service. Instead, worship through giving is a time to inform and educate the congregation on life transforming ministries of the church as well as biblical teachings. Moreover, it is a time to celebrate and honor God.<sup>16</sup> Establish the offering as an integral act of worship



*Provide an opportunity for people to express the blessings they have received by being a part of the church.*

By using a simple form which is made easily available to them, the church family has an opportunity to give a short written explanation of how they have been blessed. Clear instructions for where the completed forms can be turned in (a box at the visitor's center, in the offering plate, in a staff mailbox) will eliminate any confusion. The stories and comments can be used to stimulate video presentations, written stories or testimonies of how God is at work. See Appendix F for an example.



*Use the Stewardship logo on any video or written communication*

Using the logo (shown on the front page of the guidelines) on everything that is presented to the congregation gives an identity to matters of stewardship.



*Dedicate a section of the bulletin for a weekly generosity verse*

There are an identified 2,350 verses in the Bible which deal with finances and material possessions. Having a written scripture weekly keeps God's word about our offerings at the forefront of weekly written communication. Brian Kluth of Maximum Generosity ([www.maxiumgenerosity.org](http://www.maxiumgenerosity.org)) provides a list of "100 Scriptures that Encourage Generosity" which includes a place for recording the date it was used to avoid duplication.



*Include written discussion notes in the bulletin for people to read/discuss after they've heard the sermon*

In order to help people process what they are reading, listening to and learning about, it is very helpful to give people discussion questions that help them process the material. Thought provoking, memory-jogging-soul-stirring, and life changing questions can help transform people from miserly tight fisted takers to joyful hilarious givers! When material is reviewed for an all church initiative, it is important to be sure it has helpful questions in the materials or the pastor can write his/her own to help stir faith-filled discussions.<sup>17</sup>



*Use giving testimonies in services or in written communication*

There is nothing like the power of a personal true story to get people's attention. Whether it's a live 2 to 4 minute giving testimony of when and how God taught individuals to be faithful givers, or a video interview shown in the service, or personal quotes and stories in a printed pamphlet, the use of testimonies dramatically touch people's hearts in a way that nothing else can.<sup>18</sup>

Capital stewardship consultant and author John Weinstein says "I have taken informal surveys in the churches I have worked with. More than 90 percent of Christians who identified themselves as stewards indicate the greatest influence in their decision to become biblical stewards was the example of others."



*Include a drama about stewardship in the service from time to time*

People of our congregation witness God's word in different ways. Some people are verbal learners and others are visual. Biblically based skits and dramas used prior to the offering can provide a positive experience.



*Show a monthly highlight video in services*

Use clips of video taken at ministry events to make a message come alive, to witness, or to teach. Show interviews of people whom the ministry of the church has touched. A narrated video can provide information on how tithes and offerings are making an impact in God's Kingdom.



## *Celebrate the offering with elements of the services*

It is feasible for the worship leader to share with the congregation words and sentiments to encourage their praise and worship to go along with the celebration of the offering. It is of vital importance that you and I see “our all” is an offering “holy and acceptable unto God.” Therefore the offering should not appear to be an afterthought, but an intentional decision about celebrating the offering with the context of praise and worship.<sup>19</sup>

In addition to printed scripture in the bulletin, video presentations, testimonies during the service, dramas, etc. (covered above), consider other elements of the service.

- **The Call to Worship** can set the tone of the service as we express it “with great conviction as you declare the significance of worship, and the importance of being a steward.”<sup>20</sup>
- **The Invitation** to participate in the offering can be done by the worship leader presenting a declaration or a biblically based statement that inspires and encourages believers to prepare for the presentation of the tithes and offerings.
- **Reading Scripture** before the offering to present biblical insight and adding a phrase at the end of the reading such as, “Let us celebrate in our giving,” or “Be a cheerful giver,” can bring a sense of encouragement as well as enthusiasm to the entire congregation.<sup>21</sup>
- Occasional **offering meditation and reflection** before the offering creates an atmosphere for celebrating giving. Brief, scripturally based one to two minute inspiring words can inspire, motivate and educate listeners as they prepare to participate in worship through giving.<sup>22</sup>
- **Offer a prayer** before and/or after the receiving of the offering. Prayers can be given by the pastor, worship leader, liturgist or said in unison by the worshipers. On the website of the United Methodist General Board of Discipleship, a prayer of offering for every Sunday is provided as a resource. Below is an example.

God of the ages past and present, you are timeless and eternal. You offer us today the covenant relationship that you first established with Noah. May we openly receive your powerful and timeless love. Pour out your blessings on this offering so that people throughout the generations respond to you with a resounding, “Thank you, Lord!” Amen. (*Genesis 9:8-17.*)

- **The doxology** is a musical declaration of praise and thanksgiving. So that the doxology does not become mundane, occasionally explain the reason we have one, read the words and share their meaning, or change the version used altogether, perhaps using one from another denomination or music genre.



## COLLECTIONS & ADMINISTRATION



*Present a narrative budget to the congregation*

A line item budget is a management tool, not a fund raising tool. Think about it, no other organizations (American Heart Association, Habitat for Humanity, Red Cross) promote a line item budget to get people to give . . . they tell stories of changed lives.

The narrative budget is one way to give people — especially those in leadership positions — an opportunity to experience the mission and ministry that are achieved through the various line items. It focuses less on the financial numbers and more on what the income accomplishes. It is a one- to two-page presentation that explains: (1) what the church hopes to accomplish and (2) why the funding is needed to reach and exceed its goals.<sup>23</sup>



*Provide multiple ways for people to donate*

- Offering Envelopes – Envelopes provide a hard record of donations for tax purposes, they make for relative secrecy during the worship service and they tend to stimulate greater and more regular giving. Make numbered envelopes available to those who request them at the beginning of the year. The faith commitment card can include a box for those to indicate their desire for envelopes.
- EFT giving offered – Electronic funds transfer is an automated giving program designed to help the congregation conveniently and consistently contribute. Gifts are made through a pre-authorized withdrawal from an individual's bank account.
- Online giving – Devote a portion of the Stewardship page on the church website for online giving – a secure site for entering financial information for the transfer of funds from the giver's account of choice, directly to the church. There are companies like E-giving, ServiceU, Vanco Services and others that help to set up a program. There are generally fees to the church involved.
- Debit machines located in the church – there is an entire generation of young people who rely on electronic banking and rarely carry cash. It is possible, with an internet connection, to have a debit card scanner available for those who choose this method. This option would be set up through the church's bank.
- Stockbrokerage giving account – Maintain an account which makes it easy and convenient for the donation of stocks.
- Planned giving – the church must make an intentional effort to inform people of the possibility of supporting the church through their estate plans as well as offer assistance in including the church within their documents. Provide estate planning/planned giving seminars at least once a year. Make an informed speaker on the subject available to small group meetings within the church (United Methodist Men/Women, Circle groups, Bible study groups, etc.)



*Provide numerous opportunities for people to be able to give.*

Think out of the box in ways people can give – create an eBay team where people can give items that will be placed for sale on e-bay with proceeds going to church or one of it's missions.

Special appeals are okay. Different people will give for different reasons. Create a calendar of special offerings, monitoring the frequency so they are not overused. Make the congregation aware in advance so they can be prepared to make their prayerful contribution.



Send Giving Statements Quarterly

Regular written statements to donors, accompanied by a note of thanks from the Pastor or Stewardship Chairman, a report of what God is doing or another insert, reminds givers that their money is doing something good for God and His Kingdom.



*Say "Thank you!"*

Consistent and sincere expressions of gratitude may be the most effective request for funding. The failure to express appreciation undermines the value on which biblical stewardship is based and misses an opportunity to deepen people's commitment to stewardship.

### **Letters of Receipt**

Every member of the congregation should receive an annual or semi-annual letter from the pastor thanking them for their faithfulness as stewards. In addition to expressing thanks to the entire "giving team," this type of letter can update the church on its ministry impact. The story of a life changed can be shared with permission and, if appropriate, without names. People do not give to programs; they give to changed and saved lives. Share the church's stories of ministry as a thank you for the gifts that facilitate ministry. <sup>24</sup>

### **Personal Notes**

When a gift comes in under unusual circumstances, a personal note can be appropriate and appreciated. A memorial to a loved one, a gift given during a time of financial transition or a generous gift to a specific need might warrant a personal note as a means of saying "thank you." This personal touch expresses gratitude for the heart of giving. A personal, meaningful acknowledgement affirms the giver like "apples of gold in settings of silver." Proverbs 28:3<sup>25</sup>



*Create a specific identity for a written monthly newsletter article*



At Christ Church, “Steward” imparts random information and observations in Stew’s News which includes both ongoing and historical data with a stewardship emphasis. Maintaining the same look allows the newsletter reader to have an immediate recognition of the stewardship theme.

## MAJOR PROJECTS



### *Conduct an annual faith commitment drive*

According to the average church member, the purpose of the annual campaign is to underwrite the budget and pay for next year's expenses. According to David S. Bell, of Covenant Quest, it should be a focused time in the life of the church where the congregation is encouraged to develop the joy filled spiritual gift of generous giving.<sup>26</sup>

The culmination of a stewardship journey is a safe arrival at a final destination -- the final destination being a new mindset, a new desire, a new willingness, and a new plan to be more faithful and generous to do the Lord's work. This happens best on a specific Sunday when faith promise cards are turned in that indicates their intended giving plans for the coming year. This card could also include the opportunity to indicate ways they will give their time and talent to specific ministries in the coming year.

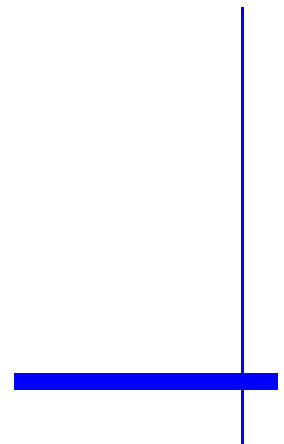
Annual campaign models could include member-base expansion – to add to the number of committed households who give – or step-up – to deepen the joyful commitment of generous givers. These campaigns could be done on a rotating basis depending on the status of the current congregation. For every two step-up campaigns there should be an expansion campaign. Change it up!



### *Conduct a Celebration Dinner*

At the culmination of the stewardship emphasis, host a special dinner to thank the church for its support, to rejoice in the road already traveled and to cast vision for God's plans. Expressing gratitude to God and to the church, coupled with a faithful look for the future is a powerful way of remaining connected to the giving members of the church.<sup>27</sup>

Stewardship Banquet, Festival Meal - whatever you call it, it is a meal for the congregation complete with special activities for the children, an engaging speaker, time for witness to the value of the mission and ministry of the congregation in the lives of members and the community, and an invitation to give as God is calling us to give.



# CAPITAL CAMPAIGN



## Clearly communicate the project to the congregation

People eager to give generously look for certain qualities in a project before giving. Their decision making grid is radically different than even just a few years ago. Generous people look for more specific benchmarks and ask much harder questions in search for validation of the project.

- Does the project make sense? Is the reason to give sacrificially clear and compelling?
- Has the leadership thought this project through? Has the leadership done due diligence? Just because the pastor loves this project has little bearing on my love for the project.
- Would my investment directly help people? Buildings do not inspire me.
- There are far more attractive projects outside the church that appear more meaningful to me. Just because I attend church here does not mean that I automatically buy into this project.
- Does this project help the poor?<sup>28</sup>

A building project must be a logical extension of the vision and kingdom-minded mission of the church. Any project that does not meet these criteria will not connect in the hearts of the people, so it will not connect with their treasure (resources) either.

There must be a clear explanation of how the facility will help accomplish the ultimate goal of helping lost and hurting people. Here are some key questions to ask before any campaign:

Why are we building (or buying) this?

Why are we building (or buying) it now?

What will happen if we do not build (or buy) this now?

External factors come into play with giving, but as long as you keep a dynamic vision before the people, they're going to respond," affirms Scott Landon, director of finance and administration at Wheaton Bible Church in West Chicago, Illinois.<sup>29</sup>

The General Board of Discipleship lists several companies that provide campaign services for local churches. There are also several United Methodist Foundations that can help. A link to a directory can be found at [www.gbod.org](http://www.gbod.org).

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## Helpful Resources

- [www.1freechurch.org](http://www.1freechurch.org) – Great example of a church Finances page.
- [www.barnabasfoundation.com](http://www.barnabasfoundation.com) - Christian Stewardship with Excellence – Planned giving
- [www.cargillassociates.com](http://www.cargillassociates.com) – Capital Stewardship campaign consultants
- [www.churchexecutive.com](http://www.churchexecutive.com) - *Church Executive* magazine is written and edited for senior pastors, executive pastors and business administrators of America's large, Christian churches. A monthly publication, including an annual Buyer's Guide issue, *Church Executive* focuses on topics such as stewardship, finance, human resources, risk management, fund raising, capital campaigns, worship center design and construction, taxes, legal issues and non-profit governance.
- [www.covenantquest.com](http://www.covenantquest.com) Passionate Leadership – Abundant Vision – Inspired Generosity
- [www.Crown.org](http://www.Crown.org) – Crown Financial Ministries
- [www.daveramsey.com](http://www.daveramsey.com)
- [www.episcopalchurch.org](http://www.episcopalchurch.org)
- [www.generousgiving.org](http://www.generousgiving.org)
- [www.goodsenseministry.com](http://www.goodsenseministry.com) – Willow Creek Association – resources for money management, budgeting, encouragement for church leaders to implement a biblically based stewardship ministry.
- [www.maximumgenerosity.org](http://www.maximumgenerosity.org) – Pastor Brian Kluth's MAXIMUM Generosity
- [www.rsirevealed.com](http://www.rsirevealed.com) – Life Discovered – Legacy Defined – A stewardship Experience to engage your church.
- [www.sermonspice.com](http://www.sermonspice.com) – videos to promote stewardship

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# APPENDIX

## APPENDIX A

### *ABUNDANT STEWARDSHIP RESOURCES*



## **APPENDIX B**

Used by Permission from Anthony Gwiazdowski  
Director, Stewardship & Development Office  
Diocese of Providence, Rhode Island



**TIME · TALENT · TREASURE**

**A**

**GUIDE**

**FOR INTRODUCING**

**STEWARDSHIP TO CHILDREN**



**PREPARED BY:**

**THE OFFICE OF STEWARDSHIP & DEVELOPMENT  
DIOCESE OF PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND**

# APPENDIX C



## Faith & Finances Newsletter

*"No man should appear before the LORD empty-handed: Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the LORD your God has blessed you."* Deut 16:16-17

Helpful information for those providing financial support for God's work at 1<sup>st</sup> EFC.

### BY THE NUMBERS COMPARISON LAST YEAR TO THIS YEAR:

	<u>Jan-Mar Last Yr</u>	<u>Jan-Mar this Yr</u>	<u>% Difference</u>
Average Sunday Attendance	288	363	Up 26%
Average Weekly Offerings	\$8200*	\$9400*	Up 15%

\*Rounded off to nearest \$100

### SPIRITUAL FINANCIAL CHECK-UP

In evaluating your finances, generosity and your relationship with the Lord, here are some helpful questions to ask yourself?

- Do you acknowledge God's provision and ownership of all you have or ever will have?
- Have you made a financial decision to honor God with 10% or more of your income?
- In reviewing your giving statement, have you faithfully given what you intended to give?
- Do you pray about financial purchases and ask the Lord for His direction and provisions?
- Have you ever participated in a financial Bible study so you can learn God's principles for operating your finances according to His word?
- Do you have a will or estate plan that is current (within the last 3 years)?
- Have you honored God by including your church and Christian charitable interests in your will or estate plan?
- Are you actively using some of your financial resources to help mission work, relief work or people in need?
- Has the pursuit of financial gain or on-going financial problems distracted you from faithfully spending time in God's word and being an active part of your church family?

### CROWN 12-WEEK FINANCIAL BIBLE

**STUDIES:** On a regular basis, our church offers 12-week small group financial Bible studies. If you would like to know more information about these studies or would like to be part of a future 12 week Bible study group, please contact Tim Howard at 634-5413 or [timhoward@adelphia.net](mailto:timhoward@adelphia.net).

**GIVING ENVELOPE:** Your quarterly giving statement is enclosed in this mailing. We invite you to use the "Christian Giving Chart" on the back of this newsletter to determine if your giving equals what you have intended to give. If there is a shortfall between what you intended to give and what you actually gave so far, we would invite you to prayerfully consider making a "catch up" gift. Your faithful gifts are vital to the on-going ministries of your church.

(This space was reserved for a financial cartoon from:  
<http://store.yahoo.com/buildingchurchleaders/finances1.html>)

## APPENDIX D



### Faith & Finances Newsletter

*"Remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth." Deut 8:18*

Information about the finances & financial ministry of 1<sup>st</sup> EFC – September 2004

**GIVING SUMMARY:** YTD Budget\*: \$363,000 YTD Giving\*: \$343,000 YTD Shortage\*: -\$20,000

\*Rounded to nearest \$1000

#### HOW ARE YOUR OFFERINGS USED AT CHURCH?

- Missions – 18% goes for 25 missionaries and Christian organizations
- Church Staff – 53% goes for pastoral and support staff salaries and benefits
- Ministries – 21% goes for children, youth, women, worship, pastoral, admin, congregational care, etc.
- Facilities/Equipment – 8% goes for the care of buildings, grounds & equipment

**CATCH UP GIVING?:** Your giving statement is enclosed in this mailing. We invite you to use the "Generosity Check Up Chart" on the back of this newsletter to determine if your giving equals what you have intended to give. If there is a shortfall between what you intended to give and what you actually gave so far, we would invite you to prayerfully consider making a September "catch up" gift. Your faithful gifts are vital to the on-going ministries of your church.

**WEEKND WORSHIP ATTENDANCE & GIVING:** We experienced some record attendance months this summer. June's attendance (353 average) was up 46% in the past 5 years and we also had record attendance in July (346 average). Our average church offerings are up 52% in the past 5 years.

**RELOCATION FUND:** We are grateful for the relocation pledges and special gifts that continue to come in. The relocation team will be meeting this month to assess our future steps. We continue to monitor any potential properties that are available or might become available within 3-4 miles of our current facilities. Your prayers for God's leading, timing and provision are greatly appreciated.

**CROWN 10-WEEK FINANCIAL BIBLE STUDIES:** On a regular basis, our church offers 10-week small group financial Bible studies. If you would like to know more information about these studies or would like to be part of a future 10-week Bible study group, please contact Tim Howard at 634-5413 or [timhoward@adelphia.net](mailto:timhoward@adelphia.net).

**CREATIVE GIVING:** God blesses us in many different ways. During the past few years, through the generosity and connections of people in our church, we have received donated vehicles, a furnished home, office copier, computer equipment, appliances, office furnishings, stocks, an estate gift, furniture, printing, and many other items. If you would ever like to consider making a gift of stock, real estate, vehicle, gifts-in-kind, estate gifts, equipment, supplies, or professional services, please contact the church office at 634-3144.



## APPENDIX E

### GROWING AS GENEROUS PEOPLE: BY BEING STEWARDS OF OUR MONEY the Iowa United Methodists fund



The mission of the Iowa Annual Conference is to  
**DEVELOP LEADERS**

### WHO PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL

- recruitment/appointment/supervision of ministry and mission personnel
- academy for Lay Leadership, Stewardship, Christian Education and Preaching
- community centers such as Bidwell/Riverside, Waterloo Ministry Center, Shalom Zones, Hawthorne Hill

### AND TRANSFORM THE WORLD

- supporting mission personnel in Iowa and around the world
- giving youth and young adults opportunities to develop leadership skills
- advocating for racial and gender equality as well as support for children at risk
- responding to disasters by volunteers in mission and gifts for immediate and long term relief and reconstruction

*...so that every Iowa United Methodist Church congregation  
and faith community can fulfill its mission  
through its primary task of making disciples.*

- five camp and retreat centers for children through adults' spiritual growth
- eight specialized ministers to consult with local congregations who want to grow in ministry and mission
- a partnership with the United Methodist Church in Nigeria
- a ministry of presence at four Wesley Foundations and four Iowa United Methodist based colleges
- an office of pastoral care and counseling for the emotional/spiritual health of our clergy families
- a network of advocacy for children and those who live in poverty



Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.

The people of The United Methodist Church™

[www.umcgvn.org](http://www.umcgvn.org)

**APPENDIX F**

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# Blessings

How have you been blessed by the ministries and family of Christ United Methodist Church?

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ \*

\*not required but helpful!

Blessing may be shared publically (but that's the point!)

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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Wikipedia is a multilingual, Web-based, free-content encyclopedia project. The name "Wikipedia" is a portmanteau (a combination of portions of two words and their meanings) of the words *wiki* (a type of collaborative Web site) and *encyclopedia*. Wikipedia's articles provide links to guide the user to related pages with additional information. It can be located on the internet at [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org).

<sup>2</sup> *Holy Bible*, New International Version, Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers Inc., 1984.

<sup>3</sup> "Abundant Stewardship Resources", Author unknown, taken from [www.umstewardship.org](http://www.umstewardship.org), the website of the United Methodist Stewardship Foundation of Central Pennsylvania

<sup>4</sup> Leeper, Brad, "10 Stewardship Issues Every Church Leader Should Consider in 2009", [www.nacba.net](http://www.nacba.net)

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<sup>7</sup> Kluth, Brian, "Guide to increase Church Giving for Pastors and Church Leaders", [www.maximumgenerosity.org](http://www.maximumgenerosity.org)

<sup>8</sup> Time Talent Treasure – A Guide for Introducing Stewardship to Children, [www.providencediocese.org](http://www.providencediocese.org)

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid

<sup>11</sup> Hewett, Dr. John H., "Based on Biblical Stewardship"

<sup>12</sup> Bell, David S., "Mission possible: Motivational Factors for Charitable Contributions", Church Executive, Volume 2008, Issue 5

<sup>13</sup> Barna, George, *How to Increase Giving in Your Church*, Regal Books, 1997

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<sup>15</sup> Weinstein, John, "Planting the Seeds of Change – 5 proven Tenets for Growing Generosity at Your Church", [www.churchbusiness.com](http://www.churchbusiness.com) June 2006

<sup>16</sup> Amerson, Melvin and James Amerson, *Celebrating the Offering*, Nashville, Discipleship Resources, 2007, 39

<sup>17</sup> Kluth, "Guide to Increase Church Giving for Pastors and Church Leaders".

<sup>18</sup> Ibid

<sup>19</sup> Amerson, *Celebrating the Offering*, 40

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 42

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 44

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 45

<sup>23</sup> The Narrative Budget, Copyright © 2004 The General Board of Discipleship of The United Methodist Church. Used with permission. [www.gbod.org/stewardship](http://www.gbod.org/stewardship)

<sup>24</sup> Weinstein, John, "Saying "Thanks" Appropriate Gratitude for Uncommon Generosity", [www.churchbusiness.com](http://www.churchbusiness.com) June 2006

<sup>25</sup> Ibid

<sup>26</sup> Bell, David, Encouraging the Joy of Generous Giving, Training in Financial Discipleship, presented to the Iowa Annual Conference Stewardship Leaders May 2008



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- <sup>27</sup> Weinstein "Saying "Thanks" Appropriate Gratitude for Uncommon Generosity"  
<sup>28</sup> Leeper, "10 Stewardship Issues Every Church Leader Should Consider in 2009"  
<sup>29</sup> Sheppard, Jim, "Secrets to Strong Giving in a Struggling Economy", copyright 2009  
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