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Ideas for Year-Round Financial Stewardship 2017



**MINNESOTA
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FOUNDATION

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Ideas for a Year-Round Financial Stewardship Plan

People give when they are convinced that their giving is directly related to something good happening. That message cannot be told only once a year! Stewardship is not an annual financial campaign, but a way of life.

The ideas in this booklet are tools your stewardship committee or group can use to develop a year-round comprehensive stewardship strategy, focusing on nurturing Christian disciples, rather than balancing the budget. People should give out of a deeply felt joyful response to what God has done and is doing in their lives. When a church replaces its goal of “increasing the budget” with “helping persons make a faithful response,” miracles will happen!

Form a team whose main task is to:

- Develop a strategy to focus on stewardship throughout the year. Choose a number of ideas provided in this booklet, schedule them into the existing church calendar, avoid conflicts, and work in harmony with the current mission and ministry of the church.
- Enlist other people in the church to do these chosen activities. Involve as many *different* people as possible. Remember the youth and other already established groups such as UMW, UMM, Choirs, Worship Committee, Sunday School classes, etc. Match the task with people’s gifts and talents.

The time periods given are only a suggestion. What will work in your setting? Choose only as many as you can do well. Try to vary the choices from year to year. Be sure to keep the pastor(s), Church Council and other leaders informed of your plans!

Be positive in all you do! Lift up what is being given - not what is still needed, particularly when reporting financial stewardship.



- Make an effort to separate the timing of the annual campaign from the preparation of the annual budget.
- Hold a mission and ministry fair. Various groups run a “booth” that informs others about their group. Have one booth on Connectional Sharing (Apportionments).
- Read the booklet Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation - Stewardship, available for \$2.50 from Cokesbury. It does an excellent job describing your function as a committee and gives more great suggestions.
- Contact the *Resource Center for Churches* rcc-mn.org, 1-888-293-9901 to check for additional stewardship materials.



“A campaign is a method of reaping a harvest. The harvest is much more likely to be abundant if you’ve had an effective year-round process for communicating and celebrating the mission and ministry of the church.”

Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation

Other ideas for any time...

- Have children do an “adult sermon” for the congregation about stewardship/sharing/giving in place of the children’s sermon.
- Have a poster/banner contest.
- Write a stewardship hymn.
- Design a special Stewardship bulletin cover.
- Have a “what if all our church read the same book” event. Provide multiple copies of an interesting book about stewardship.
- Circulate stewardship books through your church library.
- Interview someone (live or through video) who has been a giving member forever, or who has recently begun tithing, or
- Make all reports to the congregation positive and affirmative.
- Offer Disciple Bible Study, FaithQuest, or Steward-Living as Disciples in Everyday Life. These are all available from Cokesbury.
- Watch for stories about exemplary giving. Share them with the congregation.
- Invite someone from the Conference office to speak about Connectional Sharing (Apportionments).
- Hold a prayer vigil.
- Make an effort to separate the Stewardship Committee from the Finance Committee.

Weekly

- Pray for the spiritual growth and stewardship of the entire congregation, or divide your congregation into smaller segments and assign individuals to pray for those on their list.
- Redesign and vary the weekly offering time. Use appropriate scripture, make personal comments about meaningful giving, involve children, share a story, use congregational movement. Make it a creative, celebrative point in worship!
- Review the website: www.umcdiscipleship.org/leadership-resources/stewardship for offertory prayers written in conjunction with the lectionary, as well as sermon starters and stewardship nuggets.
- Review the website: www.umcgiving.org for weekly mission moments, offertory prayers and newsletter nuggets.
- Make giving easier by providing Electronic Funds Transfers.
- Provide opportunities for special, over-and-above gifts. Loose coin offerings, piggy banks, special envelopes, or special baskets may be ways to collect gifts for other specific missions and ministries.
- Send out prayer concerns and updates via email.
- Consider the use of various social media outlets to update folks about congregational happenings.

“Like” the Minnesota United Methodist Foundation on Facebook at [Facebook.com/minnesotaunitedmethodistfoundation](https://www.facebook.com/minnesotaunitedmethodistfoundation) and receive weekly offertory prayers, and other financial stewardship

Monthly

- Give a 2-3 minute talk during worship on the stewardship topic of the month. (see Page 4 for topic ideas)
- Give a 2-3 minute talk during worship about a ministry of your church through which lives are being changed.
- Prepare bulletin boards to highlight different missions and ministries your church supports.
- Write a letter to all members/constituents. Choose a different writer each month. The letter could be about the topic of the month. (see Page 4)
- Consider blogging about various topics (see Page 4) and use the blog as part of your church's website.
- Prepare newsletter articles or bulletin inserts about the topic of the month. (see Page 4)
- Prepare bulletin inserts relating to stewardship.
"Because of your gift... this has happened..."
- Ask the Church Council chair to put the Treasurer's Report last at the meeting. Put exciting changes happening in people's lives at the beginning of the meeting. When new items are proposed - ask if it is a part of God's vision instead of who will pay for it.
- Ask children, youth, or adults to write about "How I've shared this week." Publish these edited comments in the bulletin or newsletter.
- Mail giving envelopes monthly, rather than using a yearly box.

- Hold a training session for Sunday School teachers to enable them to teach stewardship themes in their classes.
- Hold a congregational dinner to celebrate and thank people for their giving.
- List and celebrate all of the things that your congregation is already doing to promote all types of stewardship.
- Explore the videos and other materials available from the United Christian Resource Center www.ucrcenter.org.
- Celebrate with 3x5 note cards for 4 Sundays. Have people write their responses to statements such as:
 - 1st Sunday: God was closest to me in this church when _____
 - 2nd Sunday: One person in this church who has helped me grow spiritually is _____.
 - 3rd Sunday: One ministry or program or activity of this church that has helped me grow is _____.
 - 4th Sunday: One future vision God has given me for this church is _____.
- Post the cards for all to read. This could be followed with a pledge card the 5th week.
- Publish a step chart listing the numbers of giving units giving at each level above \$1/week.
- When sending out pledge cards, indicate the current year's pledge on the card for reference.
- Contact the Foundation for a list of trained Guest Leaders for the New Consecration Sunday Program.



Annually

- Hold an annual campaign that emphasizes giving. Use a purchased campaign or develop your own. Call us at the Foundation for information and to view samples.
- Publish a “Year-End Giving” brochure which could give suggestions of gifts with tax benefits. Call the Foundation for an example.
- Hold a Charitable Gifts Seminar annually or every two to three years. Call the Foundation to schedule a presentation.
- Hold a class: (call the Foundation for book suggestions)
 - Budgeting and money management
 - Money management for empty nesters
 - Teaching healthy money values to your children
 - Wills and estate planning
 - Tithing and proportionate giving
 - Money management for retirees
 - What are Apportionments?
- Create a Narrative Budget to explain the finances, rather than a line item budget. This does not have to be done by the Finance Committee, but use the information they provide. A narrative budget helps to celebrate what is happening in your church. And it’s a lot easier to read! Call the Foundation for samples.
- Hold a stewardship retreat.
- Make a video of the happenings of the church. Not everyone knows what goes on in the children’s Sunday School!
- Choose a year long stewardship theme.
- Do a “Spiritual Gifts” or “Time and Talent” survey.

Possible Monthly Stewardship Topics

- How God has blessed me.
- My stewardship plan.
- How I know I make a difference with my giving.
- What giving means to me.
- How my giving relates to the sacrificial gift of Jesus.
- How my giving relates to the gifts of life.
- I discovered the joy of giving when...
- I give because...
- How my giving relates to my spiritual growth.
- How my giving relates to the ministry of our church.
- How my giving relates to the gifts of the magi and the gift of Jesus.
- How my giving relates to thankfulness.
- How my giving relates to (a chosen scripture).
- How my giving connects faith and living.
- How my giving is an investment in what is important to me.
- Why I give to this church.
- How I decide how much to give.
- What is the greatest joy in giving?
- Discuss the benefits of generational giving.



Quarterly

- Send a THANK YOU letter to every giver indicating the total amount received. The giving envelopes for the next month or quarter can be included in this letter.
- Present a brief humorous skit during worship about giving. Check out www.lillenasdrama.com for downloadable scripts for a small fee or contact them at 1-800-363-2122 for info.
- Schedule a brief stewardship education time during the Church Council meetings.
- Include a session on stewardship in your new member classes or with confirmands.
- Have the pastor preach about stewardship about 8 times a year.
- Write a special newsletter specifically about stewardship issues. Keep it positive!
- Check the websites www.umcdiscipleship.org/leadership-resources/stewardship and www.umcsgiving.org for more great ideas.
- Write a letter to all members/constituents. Choose a different writer each quarter. The letter could be about a topic listed earlier (see Page 4). This could be mailed with the quarterly statements.
- Develop a devotional guide or prayer calendar for the next few months.



Semi-Annually

- Find creative ways to say THANK YOU to members for their giving.
- Have a Bible Study on stewardship. Invite the UMW, the UMM or Wednesday evening class to choose a stewardship study.
- Invite a guest speaker to share information about our connective giving (apportionments). For example, invite a camp manager, mission leader, or Conference Council on Youth Ministries (CCYM) member to share how your apportionment dollars are helping them.

