


IDEAS FOR YEAR-ROUND FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP



Created by the
Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation.
The mission of the Foundation is to be the
primary resource in the
Wisconsin United Methodist Fellowship
for lifelong financial stewardship.



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 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!

We suggest you use this booklet with your stewardship team, church council, or a small group committed to growing generosity in your congregation.

- 1) Mark the items your congregation is already doing.
- 2) Then, have each person circle 5-6 ideas they think might work well in your congregation at this time. Tabulate these results.
- 3) Implement one new idea per quarter, evaluating as you go.
- 4) Schedule them into the existing church calendar, avoid conflicts, and work in harmony with the current mission and ministry of the church.

Be sure to 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!

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.gbod.org/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, FAQ's, sermon starters, and newsletter nuggets.
- Make giving easier by providing Electronic Funds Transfers, www.electronicdonations.com/GCFA/gcfa_home.htm
- 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.
- Remove any communications that inadvertently imply that the church is not fiscally sound. Compare any "year to date" statistics to past years.
- Celebrate what you DO have and refrain from dwelling on what you DON'T.

MONTHLY

- Give a 2-3 minute talk during worship (right before the offering collection) on the stewardship topic of the month. (see Page 5 for topic ideas)
- Give a 2-3 minute talk during worship (right before the offering collection) 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 5)
- Prepare newsletter articles or bulletin inserts about the topic of the month. (see Page 5)
- Use the Foundation's stewardship newsletter article. If your church doesn't receive it, call us at 1-888-903-9863, email us at wumf@wumf.org, or check past issues at www.wumf.org.
- Prepare bulletin inserts relating to stewardship. Because of your gifts...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.
- Encourage your pastor to review the giving records of the congregation.
- 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.



POSSIBLE STEWARDSHIP TOPICS OF THE MONTH

- 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
- 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
- The greatest joy in giving is...
- I discovered the joy of giving when...
- I give because...
- What a particular ministry has done for me or others

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 cost or call 1-800-363-2122 for information.
- Schedule a brief stewardship education time during the Church Council meetings.
- Include a session on stewardship in your new member classes and 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.gbod.org/stewardship and www.umcgiving.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 5.) 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 tithing emphasis, inviting people to try tithing for 3 months at a time.
- _ 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 connectional 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.
- _ Encourage your pastor to meet with top donors to the church to listen and hear of their dreams for the church and to get opinions on future ideas.
- _ Regularly offer a personal financial planning and budgeting class. Call the Foundation to see when the next *Freed Up From Debt* session will be held or go to fpu.com and find a Financial Peace University class near you.



ANNUALLY

- Bring a team to the annual Stewardship Retreat at Pine Lake to develop a year round stewardship plan.
- Hold an annual campaign that emphasizes giving. Use a purchased campaign or develop your own. Visit the Foundation's Stewardship Resource Room to view samples.
- Publish a "Year-End Giving" brochure which would 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.

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- _ Do a "Spiritual Gifts" or "Time and Talent" survey.
 - _ 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 possible suggestions of trained Guest Leaders for the New Consecration Sunday Program.



OTHER IDEAS FOR ANY TIME...

- Send a THANK YOU to those that give gifts other than money, such as their time and talents. “Catch” people being givers and say Thanks!
- 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, Companions in Christ, or similar in-depth spiritual studies. These are 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.

- _ Have your finance/stewardship committee members read and discuss Not Your Parent's Offering Plate or Whose Offering Plate is It? New Strategies for Financial Stewardship by J. Clif Christopher.
- _ Make an effort to separate the Stewardship Committee from the Finance Committee.
- _ Make an effort to separate the timing of the annual campaign from the preparation of the annual budget.
- _ Hold a mission and ministry fair. Have 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 \$2.95 from Cokesbury. It does an excellent job describing your function as a committee and gives more great suggestions.
- _ Ask parents and grandparents of kids being baptized if they've have a will.



"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

FREE PRESENTATIONS

AVAILABLE TO YOUR CIRCUIT...

Leaving a Legacy - Consider how you want to be remembered and where you feel called to share the blessings you've received. Learn of ways to meet your charitable giving goals through outright gifts or planned gifts. Designed for folks over 50 and those thinking about their legacy.

Charitable Gifts - Learn of ways to meet your charitable giving goals through outright gifts or planned gifts. Designed for anyone with assets.

Charitable Gifts in the midst of a Capital Campaign - Learn of ways to meet your charitable giving goals through outright gifts or planned gifts, while maximizing your current assets to make current gifts to the campaign.

Charitable Gifts with an emphasis on Charitable Gift Annuities - Learn of ways to meet your charitable giving goals without lowering your fixed income. Designed for older folks who want to learn about the only thing that gets better with age!

Endowment Fund/Memorial Committee - Learn how to design, set guidelines, establish and promote an endowment fund in your church.

Investment Services - Learn of the different investment strategies used by the Foundation to maximize the church's funds. Designed for the Finance or Investment committee.

Annual Operating Campaigns - Learn about myriad annual operating campaigns on the market. For Stewardship and Finance teams in your church or circuit.

Stewardship Consultation - Individual consultation with church Finance/Ad Council teams to discuss strategies particular to your congregation that may encourage member commitment. (sorry, we don't have a magic wand... but can offer suggestions and encouragement)

Year Round Stewardship - Learn ways to develop a 3-5 year stewardship ministry plan for your church. Designed for Stewardship/Finance teams in your church or circuit.



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