



# TIPS FOR FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP



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## Year-Round Financial Stewardship — WHY & HOW?

People give when they are convinced their giving is directly related to something good happening. This 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 Finance or Stewardship Committee can use to develop a comprehensive stewardship strategy, focusing on nurturing Christian disciples, rather than balancing a budget. When a church replaces its goal of “increasing the budget” with “helping persons make a faithful response,” miracles will happen.

We suggest you share 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. *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. Avoid trying too many new things at once.*
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 people as possible.

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

**Be positive in all that you do! Lift up what is already being given—not what is still needed— particularly when reporting financial stewardship.**

## Ideas to use WEEKLY

- Pray for the spiritual growth of the entire congregation. Send out prayer concerns and updates via email.
- Redesign and vary the weekly offering time. *Receive* the offering instead of *taking* the offering. Use appropriate scripture, make personal comments about meaningful giving, involve kids, share a story. Make it a creative, celebrative point in worship!
- Celebrate what you DO have and refrain from dwelling on what you don't. **Say THANK YOU**.
- Utilize [umcgiving.org](http://umcgiving.org) for offertory prayers, weekly mission moments, leader kits and more.
- Send a personal note to a first time giver by Tuesday.
- Make giving easier by providing LARGE, easy-to-complete offering envelopes in the pews. Offer multiple ways to give: mail-in prepaid envelope, online debit card, auto bank draft, etc.
- Provide opportunities for special, over-and-above gifts: loose coin offerings (“empty your piggy bank”), special envelopes or baskets for specific missions.
- Remove any communications that inadvertently imply the church is not fiscally sound. Don't compare “year-to-date” statistics to past years.
- Set the tone for people and create a culture of giving: offer a free gift to first time givers, offer breakfast to Sunday volunteers, offer movie tickets to those who bring guests, etc.



## Ideas to use MONTHLY

- Give a 2-3 minute talk during worship on the *Stewardship Topic of the Month*.
- Write an email or letter to all members on this topic; choose a different writer each month. Can be used as a newsletter article and/or bulletin insert.
- Give a 2-3 minute talk during worship about a ministry of your church through which lives are being changed and thank people for their gifts which make that ministry possible.
- Prepare bulletin boards to highlight different missions and ministries your church supports. Example:



- Use the Foundation's newsletter articles relating to stewardship. Sign up at <https://iumf.org/connect/>
- Ask the council or Stewardship Committee Chairperson 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 part of God's vision instead of who will pay for it.
- When reviewing the giving records of the congregation, look for changes—this may reflect a life change for them.
- Mail offering envelopes monthly rather than using a yearly box.

# STEWARDSHIP TOPICS OF THE MONTH

1. *How God has Blessed Me*
2. *My Plan to Support the Ministry I Love*
3. *How I can Make a Difference*
4. *What Giving Means to Me*
5. *How my Giving is an Investment in What's Important*
6. *Why I Give to this Church*
7. *Why I Love this Church*
8. *How I Decide how Much to Give*
9. *The Greatest Joy in Giving is...*
10. *I Give Because...*
11. *How my Giving Relates to:*
  - The Sacrifice of Jesus*
  - The Gift of Life*
  - My Spiritual Growth*
  - The Ministry of Our Church*
  - The Gifts of the Magi*
  - Being Thankful*
  - (A Chosen Scripture)*
  - Faith and Living*





## Ideas to use QUARTERLY

- Mail quarterly statements in something that doesn't look like junk mail.
- Present a brief humorous skit during worship about giving.
- Send a THANK YOU letter to every giver indicating the total amount received. The giving envelopes for next quarter can be included, as well as an auto debit enrollment form or a ministry story about how previous gifts were used.
- Schedule a brief stewardship education time during council or Finance Committee meetings. Include a session on stewardship in your new member class and with confirmands.
- Develop a devotional guide or prayer calendar.
- Preach and teach stewardship in mid-January, right after back-to-school (September) and at least two other times.



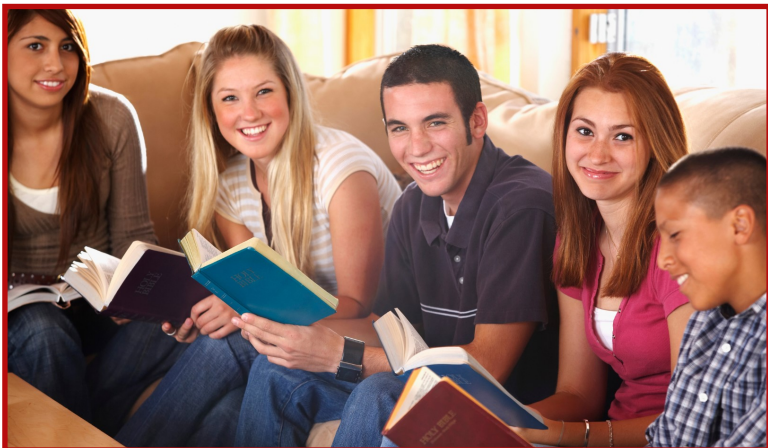
## Ideas to use SEMI-ANNUALLY

- Hold a Bible Study class on stewardship. Invite a Sunday School class, the UMW, the UMM or a Wednesday evening class to choose a stewardship study.
- Invite a guest speaker to share information about 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 hear their dreams for the church and to get opinions on future ideas.
- Offer a personal financial planning and budgeting class. Call or email the Foundation for resources.
- Create a “Giving Test” to challenge non-givers to give something every week for eight weeks (or a month, or during Lent, etc.)
- Have a tithing emphasis, inviting people to try tithing for three months at a time.



## Ideas to use ANNUALLY

- Publish a “Year-End Giving” brochure in November, giving suggestions of gifts with tax benefits. Email the Foundation for an example.
- Hold an annual campaign that emphasizes percentage giving. Use a purchased campaign or develop your own.
- Hold a Charitable Gifts Seminar annually or every two to three years. Call the Foundation to schedule a presentation.
- Hold a class or presentation. Topics offered by the Foundation are listed on the back of this brochure.
- Create a narrative budget to explain the finances, rather than a line item budget. A narrative budget helps to celebrate what is happening at your church and is a lot easier to read!
- Make a video of happenings of the church. For instance, not everyone knows what goes on in Sunday School.
- Choose a year-long stewardship theme.
- Hold a training session for Sunday School teachers to enable them to teach stewardship themes in class.
- Hold an appreciation lunch or dinner to celebrate and thank faithful givers both in top dollar amounts and in fulfillment of commitments.
- CELEBRATE all the things that your congregation is already doing in ministry with the gifts received!





## Ideas to use ANYTIME

- Celebrate with 3x5 notecards for four Sundays. Have people write their responses to statements such:
  - 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.

Example:

### **United Methodist Church of Iowa**

Sunday, September 8th

A vision God has given me for the future of  
this church is: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

## Ideas to use ANYTIME

- Include a “wish list” for ministry needs in the giving statement or narrative budget. Include a testimony about mission and ministry in the statements.
- Expect your pastors and staff to tithe.
- Encourage the pastor to preach and teach about stewardship during worship as often and as comfortably as done about prayer, scripture study and serving.
- Have children do an “adult sermon” for the congregation about stewardship/sharing/giving.
- Have a poster/banner contest for a mission or ministry.
- 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!



- Circulate stewardship books through your church library. Consider a book club using these books.
- Make all reports to congregation positive and affirmative.
- Watch out for stories about exemplary giving. Share them with the congregation.

- Interview someone who has been a giving member forever, or who has recently begun tithing.
- Invite someone from the Conference to speak about connectional sharing (apportionments).
- Make an effort to separate the Stewardship Committee from the Finance Committee, and to separate the timing of the annual campaign from the preparation of the annual budget.
- Send a personal handwritten note and/or a gift after an unusually large gift.
- Hold a mission and ministry fair. Have various groups run a booth that informs others about their group.
- Read the booklet *Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation—Stewardship*, available from Cokesbury.
- Present Confirmands with a personalized box of offering envelopes.
- Recognize and thank a different category of volunteers each week, verbally and in the bulletin.



## Presentations Available to your Church From the Foundation:

**Tips for Making the Budget this Year** – A general overview for the Stewardship Committee and Administrative Council, sharing strategies to encourage financial support.

**Your Will Your Way** – A time to consider how you want to be remembered and designate that your plans be communicated for the future.

**How to Start an Endowment** – Learn how to design, set guidelines, establish and promote an Endowment Fund in your church.

**Renewing an Endowment** – Review your Endowment guidelines and encourage future gifts.

**Investment Services** – Learn about different investment strategies and the options and possibilities at the Iowa United Methodist Foundation. Review the church's current accounts.

**What to do When a Large Gift is Coming** – Learn how to receive bequests and other gifts, reviewing a Gift-Acceptance Policy and how to encourage more gifts.

**Capital Campaigns** – When you are dreaming of a major remodel or a new facility, a workshop and resources on how to accomplish this, step-by-step.

Other popular topics: Budgeting & Money Management (currently offering the Wespath course *Saving Grace: A Guide to Financial Well-Being*), Money Management for Empty Nesters, What are Apportionments?, Building Loans and MORE. We are happy to present on any finance topic of interest to your church.

Visit our website [iumf.org](http://iumf.org) to learn more!

