Together We Do More:

NURTURING A SPIRIT OF GENEROSITY
IN YOUR CONGREGATION
Table of Contents

Table of Contents .......................................................... 2

Introduction ................................................................. 3

1 – Invite teens to raise money ........................................ 4

2 – Make a video of parishioners sharing your church values .... 5

3 – Offer a scripturally based book study about giving ............ 6

4 – Ask friends to give to your church ministry instead of gifts .... 9

5 – Highlight a ministry of your congregation in a mission moment .10

6 – Develop a social media strategy .................................. 11

7 – Host a financial planning class for the community .............. 12

8 – Create a narrative budget and share it with your congregation .13

9 – Design posters with photos of church highlights .............. 14

10 – Encourage the congregation to pray ........................ 15
Dear Church Leader,

Together we do more when the church community comes together to support the mission and ministry of the church.

We are connected to a faith tradition that is thousands of years old. Your congregation’s ministries are as vital to your community and the world today as they were when your church was first founded. People continue to need the healing, hope, mercy, and forgiveness that is found in Jesus Christ.

As your congregation lives out the ministries of the church for the glory of God, are they confident that every dollar corresponds to building up the body of Christ? You can help them recognize how every gift reflects that they

• are part of something sacred
• are part of a faith tradition that brings healing and wholeness through our global connection.
• are part of a movement that is bringing God’s justice and peace to the world.
• are part of the body of Christ that is feeding the hungry, healing the sick, loving the lonely.

This resource guide includes ten strategies for nurturing a spirit of generosity in your congregation. We pray these ideas will help connect people more deeply with the ministries of the local and global church and spark new initiatives that reflect gratitude and generosity for the glory of God.
1. Introduce students to Advance projects and allow them to select a project that is meaningful to them.

2. Invite the youth to research and present information about the importance of the mission focus they choose.

3. If you have a smaller group, consider partnering with another youth group to raise money.

4. Ask students to develop a campaign over four to six weeks that includes raising awareness, prayer, fundraising, and making donations.

5. Set aside time for them to reflect each week about how they feel about the topic. What are their concerns and hopes? Where do they see God at work in the process?

6. Plan a worship celebration as the gifts are dedicated and submitted at the end of the time period.
2. Make a video witnessing to what is valued about your local church.

The experience of parishioners varies from person to person and family to family. Help them tell the story of what your church community and the connections with the global church means to them. If possible include people who may not be worshipping members but who are engaged in activities that use the space. You may be surprised by the impact the church has on people involved in AA, scouts, pre-school, etc.

Hearing the diverse voices of sisters and brothers is an encouraging strategy to help the congregation see the bigger picture of the church’s value and impact in the community.

1. What is it that draws them into worship each week?
2. Why does a member teach Sunday school?
3. How has prayer from the community touched a family?
4. When did a teenager experience God’s love?
5. Where have people experienced transformation because of your local church?

Some people may feel uncomfortable speaking on camera. Create a flyer with the words, “What I value about ‘CHURCH NAME’ is __________________.” Ask people to fill in the blank and take a selfie or group photo. Include the images as part of the video.

If you don’t have access to special equipment, a smart phone with a video feature will work. Plan to interview each person in a setting that reflects the role of the person. The video should be between one minute and 90 seconds.
Offer a scripturally based book study about giving.

There are a number of strong resources to begin small group conversations about generosity. Create a series or a season of small group engagement. Encourage church leaders to host discussions.

**The Paradox of Generosity**
Authors: Christian Smith and Hilary Davidson

Determining why, when and to whom people feel compelled to be generous affords invaluable insight into positive and problematic ways of life. Christian Smith and Hilary Davidson show the deep impact—usually good, sometimes destructive—that giving has on individuals. Smith and Davidson show that to achieve a better life, a person must practice generosity regularly; random acts of kindness are not enough.
What would it take for you to make a radical change in the way you earn, save and spend your money? On a deeper level, what would be required for us to experience a fundamental shift in the relationship between our faith and our finances? Shouldn’t our finances be shaped by our faith? Guided by the Bible and the timeless wisdom of John Wesley, popular author James A. Harnish challenges Christians to face the issue of money head-on, with God’s help.

Simple Generosity: Becoming a River of God’s Financial Abundance

Author: Lisa M. Snyder

Genesis 12 says that you are “blessed to be a blessing.” Sounds simple, right? But then there’s life—budgets and bills, incoming money and outgoing expenses. Food, clothes, housing. It can seem that instead of being blessed to bless, you have been blessed in order to worry and do math. When did generosity become so complicated? What if you could begin again and understand what the Bible says about money and generosity, miracles and abundance? What if you could become a river—allowing God’s abundant provision to flow through you to the people around you? What if generosity could once again be simple?
A Spirituality of Fundraising
Author: Henri Nouwen

Have you ever raised funds for your church, another organization, or a mission trip? Maybe you felt uncomfortable about asking people to donate money. It’s time to change the way you view this important task.

Why We Give
Author: UMCGiving

The Bible is clear. Galatians 6:2, NRSV, says, “Bear one another’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” Jesus says it this way, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 19:19b). To learn more about how giving can lead you into a deeper relationship with Christ, complete the form for a free resource guide.
Instead of birthday and Christmas presents, invite people to ask friends and family to give money or time towards a favorite church ministry.

Many of us have way too much “stuff.” And finding just the right gift often perplexes friends and family. This year encourage your congregation to consider alternative giving.

Suggest that those who want to celebrate an anniversary, commemorate a birthday, or exchange Christmas gifts ask family and friends to make a donation of money or time in support of a church mission or ministry that they are passionate about.

Include a note in a party invitation or share on social media a message with a link to giving online and the address to mail a check:

This year, I want you to know that YOU are enough. I am thankful to have you in my life and your presence is the present that means the most to me.

If you wish to commemorate “OCCASION” please consider a gift to benefit “MISSION OR MINISTRY” through “CHURCH NAME.” This is an area I am passionate about because ____________________.

Gifts can be made online through “URL” or by mail to “ADDRESS”. Thank you so much for your love. God bless you.
Incorporate a mission moment each week before the offering to highlight a ministry of your congregation.

It is important to highlight what is happening in the life of the church to build awareness about the breadth of ministry. Not everyone is aware of all of the activities. Be sure to schedule a mission moment on the Special Sunday offering days as well as regular Sundays throughout the year.

Invite a different person, representing a different church mission or ministry, to speak each week.

Here is a sample script each person can follow:

Good morning. My name is “NAME.” A ministry that I am passionate about through “CHURCH NAME” is “MISSION OR MINISTRY.” I first became involved in this project “WHEN” because “WHY.” Include a story about an experience you had or the impact you have seen on another. Together we do more . . . If you would like to be involved in this ministry, we need help with “SPECIFIC ACTION OR FUNDING.” Please see me for more information.

Consider making a video of each mission moment to share on social media and through email.
Develop a social media strategy.

Social media is a great way to easily maintain an online presence in your community. Include the icons with your social media address on all graphics and material. On your weekly bulletin invite worshippers to check-in.

If you made a video of what your church values, share it widely.

Whenever you have a fundraising event, create an event on social media so that others in the community will learn about it.

Create a flyer with the words, “What I value about ‘CHURCH NAME’ is ______________.” Ask people to fill in the blank and take a selfie or group photo. Include the images as part of the video. Social media graphics about giving are available through UMCgive. You are encouraged to download and share them through your networks.
Host a conference approved financial planning class for the community.

With the pressures of family, taxes, credit card debt, higher education, and mounting concerns about making ends meet, it can be hard for families to make intentional decisions about giving to the church.

Trainings are available through your conference and through outside organizations like Financial Peace University.

Contact your Conference Treasurer and ask for a recommendation about hosting a class for your community. You might join with other churches and invite people from outside the church to attend.

When people have clarity about their personal finances, they can prioritize based on their values including giving through the connectional church. They can create a budget with a plan to allocate funds in a way that reflects those values.
In addition to a line item annual church budget, create a narrative budget and share it with the whole congregation.

How do you instill in the congregation that when they look at the annual budget and see line items for things like heat and salaries, those represent so much more than practical expenses? By developing a narrative budget, the congregation begins to connect the local and global ministries they value with the financial implications for the church.

For example, instead of just indicating the line item for “apportionment,” include examples of how connectional giving allows the church to do more together with other churches than you can do alone.

Often only the church leadership team reviews and votes on the annual budget. The congregation isn’t aware of the specific financial needs of the congregation. Giving them the opportunity to see and affirm it deepens the commitment to supporting it.

Using a narrative format you can illustrate that the numbers represent the nurture, witness, and outreach of your congregation:

• Loving your neighbor in times of grief and times of celebration
• Loving God through worship and praise.
• Loving your neighbor who is learning about God’s love through the children’s Sunday school
• Loving God through ministries of music
• Loving your neighbor who is experiencing food insecurity.
• Loving God through prayer circles and small groups.
9 Design posters with photos of church highlights and include a thank you message.

Throughout the year print out poster size images from ministry events, global and local mission experiences, and worship highlights. Include a message of thanks in a large font. Hang up the posters throughout the church building and post on social media.

This gives a visual reminder to congregants and visitors about the impact of tithes and offerings.

Some sample language for the poster:
THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING “CHURCH NAME’S” MINISTRIES LOCALLY AND GLOBALLY. YOUR GIFTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE.
Pray regularly and encourage the congregation to pray, “give us this day our daily bread.”

According to John Wesley, “God’s command to ‘pray without ceasing’ is founded on the necessity we have of his grace to preserve the life of God in the soul, which can no more subsist one moment without it, than the body can without air.”

In our membership vows, United Methodists commit to supporting the church through our witness, presence, gifts, service, and prayers.

Reflecting the direction to pray without ceasing, develop a congregational prayer team that rotates each week. The team commits to pray daily for the health and strength of the congregation and the global church. Remembering that all that we have comes from God, the prayers reflect the prayer that Jesus taught, “give us this day our daily bread.”