

Theology of Giving Study Resource

Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee

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Contents

Introduction	3
What is our purpose in this work?.....	3
Why now?	3
Giving and generosity are cultural: A place to begin.....	4
Scriptural grounding	5
Grounded in the current times: Giving and receiving for today	6
Giving and generosity as a spiritual practice	8
Different ways of giving	10
Details to consider about giving and receiving.....	10
Make giving easy!	12
The offering plate.....	12
Offering envelopes.....	12
Pre-Authorized Remittance (PAR)	12
Post-dated cheques	12
Online giving platforms and e-transfer.....	13
What are the limits of giving?.....	14
Unpacking our practices of giving and thanking.....	15
Inviting giving	15
Thanking.....	16
Suggested resources	17
United Church of Canada resources	17
Books.....	17
Appendix A: Scripture passages related to generosity, giving, and stewardship.....	18
Appendix B: Case studies for discussion.....	21

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Introduction

Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above... *James 1:17*

What is our purpose in this work?

This study resource is intended to articulate a theology of giving and generosity, specifically within The United Church of Canada at this moment.

This statement is about giving in its broadest sense. Giving and generosity take place in many forms, often expressed as time, talent, and treasure. We are aware, though, that many United Churches tend to avoid talking about treasure—i.e., money. The principles and concepts explored in this document apply to all forms of giving and generosity. However, the primary focus of this statement is financial giving and generosity.

It is our hope that this will be a useful study document, linked to practical application, within communities of faith and beyond, in order to encourage a discussion about giving, especially in relation to money.

Why now?

This study resource comes following a request of the General Council Executive and the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee (TICIF). It is timely, given both the multitude and the speed of change within the church and the world around generosity and giving due to new technologies and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Giving and generosity are cultural: A place to begin

What does it mean to give a gift? What does it mean to receive a gift? Both giving and receiving, no matter whether the gift is time, ability, presence, money, food, or anything else, can mean very different things to the giver and the recipient. Context is critical, and one of the most important components of context is culture.

What each of us believes about generosity and receiving gifts is a direct result of the culture in which we were raised and/or the culture in which we now claim membership. Each of our beliefs about giving and generosity is unique from everyone else's, even if they come from the same or similar cultural group. Each of our cultures is actually the sum of numerous micro-cultures. Recognizing this added diversity adds another layer of complexity to the practice of generosity.

Not only do we each have a racial culture, but we also have, for example, an economic culture, a religious culture, a culture of what is normal in our family of origin. Our age, our sexual orientation, our lived experience, and so on also increase cultural diversity across and within broader cultural groups.

Therefore, rather than attempting in this document to describe the many different cultures that exist in our Canadian context, and the variety of understandings about giving and receiving that exist within them, we offer an approach based loosely around three ideas.

1. *All giving and receiving creates a relationship.* Listening and finding understanding are the starting places. Good relationships require openness, honesty, time, and energy. This is especially true when the difference between the cultures of the participants is larger.
2. *Know yourself.* In any discussion of the theology of giving and generosity, it is vital to begin by checking the beliefs you bring about giving and generosity from your home culture or the culture you now inhabit. How did you learn to be generous? Why do you give? When do you refrain from giving? Is it easy for you to receive a gift? What obligations or responsibilities are created when you give or receive?
3. *How might what you believe about giving and generosity be the same, or be different, from those to whom you are giving or from whom you are receiving?* How can you find out? What will those similarities and differences mean to how and what and when you give? Or to how you respond when you receive?

With this in mind, we set out this theology of giving and generosity for The United Church of Canada at this time.

Scriptural grounding

We suggest that the starting point for a theology of generosity is the start of the Bible itself: the Book of Genesis. In the story of creation, we find the immense generosity of God, who brings together all that is into an orderly fashion from the chaos that at first existed.

The Bible from the very beginning does not speak about “eking out a living” or “managing with limited resources.” From the start, the Bible speaks to the generosity and abundance of God. We are invited to begin with that same perspective as we speak about giving and generosity.

For the people of Israel, travel and pilgrimage were very important to their identity—from the relocation of Abram and Sara, to the journey to the Promised Land, to a later exile and return, travel marks the history of the Israelites. The early Christians were known as “people of the Way” before the term Christian was coined and applied to them as a matter of course.

One thing is clear about that travel: People were to look out for one another. The biblical rendering of journeys guided by God always speak of the community as being above any individual goals or desires.

Appendix A lists several passages of scripture to help ground this discussion. You will find there that generosity is a gift of the Spirit. One is urged to give according to one’s means, but signs of generosity and caring are part of living one’s faith.

Some think the Bible claims that money is the root of all evil. That is not so. In 1 Timothy we read that “the love of money” is “the root of all kinds of evil.” In other words, when we treasure money and our personal assets more than we treasure God, or Christ, or our neighbour, or spiritual well-being, then we get trapped into a view that falsifies what is key to life. A legacy of faith is built not by the amount of money one has accumulated, but by the caring shown to others, and the witness to the gospel shared.

The Bible also has what has been termed in recent years “a bias toward the poor.” The Bible does not celebrate the wealth of people as a goal in itself, but rather asks the wealthy to share their abundance with those in need. Justice evolves when we share with others.

We have learned that often churches are among the most efficient at sharing the gifts of donors to meet the needs of those struggling around the world due to economic pain, natural disasters, war, and famine, to name a few challenges. Giving financially to the ministry of the church as it seeks to share in God’s witness to the world is an important element of living our faith today.

Grounded in the current times: Giving and receiving for today

Generosity and abundance are foundational in our theology of giving. By orienting ourselves towards seeing and experiencing God's abundance in creation, we prepare ourselves to participate in generosity and sharing abundance. Using a lens of abundance affirms that everyone has something to contribute to the work of knitting together God's vision for us.

Generosity in giving is integrated into our theological understandings of ourselves, and our relationship to God and one another. Serving the needs in our community (*diakonos*) calls us to be generous. Living as the body of Christ calls us to be generous. Seeking a more just and equitable world calls us to be generous. Praising the sovereignty of God-the-Creator calls us to be generous.

Generous giving enacts our trust in God's care for us. By investing in God's commission and our service, we express our trust in God's generous abundance in the future. This is not an investment in hopes of being rewarded with prosperity. Instead, we are daring to bring what we have to the communal table, trusting that the banquet will have everything to meet the needs of everyone in our community, including ourselves. We are also daring to ask for what is needed.

There have been significant shifts in philanthropic approaches in recent years, including how people give and how we ask for gifts. We can no longer assume that people will give to the church as a matter of regular commitment. (That is all the more true as we live through the COVID-19 pandemic and church attendance in person is significantly reduced.) Personal invitations, and direct asks for support, are needed.

Jesus was very direct in his "ask" when seeking the support of others for a cause, requesting people to change their ways as they sought healing, or looking for food or a place to stay as he travelled throughout the region in which he ministered. The church needs to be both sensitive and direct in its ask for support.

As methodologies change, we also need to invite new ways of giving. Pre-Authorized Remittance (PAR) allows people to give on a monthly basis when unable to attend worship, or helps with budget planning. In such giving the individual makes sure the support to the church is part of their up-front commitments each month—equal to a mortgage payment, car payment, heating bill, etc. —rather than given with one's leftover resources at the end of the month, or only when attending worship. This new mode of giving resonates with ancient directives, such as in Deuteronomy, to set aside gifts for God and others before taking our share of the harvest. Using automatic transfers and payroll deductions are new ways of living out our theology through tithing.

Some people may be accustomed to using credit cards for donations, especially online. Other people may be most comfortable with e-transfers. Churches can explore a variety of avenues for giving, including online portals such as CanadaHelps or point-of-sale systems. Whatever

methods of giving are provided, individual congregational members should be careful to avoid undue burdens (such as incurring high interest rate indebtedness).

The church also has a program to encourage major gifts and estate planning. Each of us has three “pockets” that are potential sources for giving:

- the pocket of our regular income, such as work income, pension, etc.
- the pocket of our accumulated assets
- the pocket of our estate, left when we die

When assessing what we can and should give, we need to include all resources available.

If we give in response to the goodness of God that we have experienced, then the church needs to be clear about its appreciation for the gifts received. There cannot be a cheerful giver unless there is a thankful receiver, so the church needs to be diligent in thanking all who give, and show that thanks in real, personal ways.

Giving and generosity as a spiritual practice

When we give in response to God's generosity, our giving becomes a spiritual practice. Each offering reflects our trust in God and expresses our love for our neighbours. The practice of giving focuses our attention on the needs of others and on our gratitude for the abundance we have.

Many spiritual practices have been identified and are often thought of as key to spiritual development. In addition, giving and generosity are important spiritual practices for followers of Jesus.



Like other spiritual practices, there will be times we feel a sense of well-being or connection as a result of our generosity. Generosity can take us out of ourselves, and focus our attention on other people, on God, or on all our relations in creation.

At other times, giving might feel like an obligation or habit. Our practice of giving might be regular, planned, or spontaneous. Reflecting on how we give, our feelings about giving, and our motivation for giving can deepen our spirituality.

Reflecting on the ways we are generous provides opportunities to reflect on our expectations: Do we expect blessings from God as a reward, or public recognition, or a tax credit? Are we tempted to view religious giving as a pathway to "earning" prosperity? Do we have a prayer practice yoked to our practice of giving?

Like all spiritual practices, approaching our giving as a spiritual practice will change us over time. Our ideas of abundance will grow, our understanding of value will be transformed, and

we will become more thankful and in turn more generous with what we have. Generosity can teach us to let go of ego and shore our defences against cultural narratives of independence, greed, and worth measured in wealth.

Different ways of giving

All ways of giving are appropriate if we are giving from the heart with a sense of purpose and concern for others. Giving can be toxic (or at least self-serving) when we give out of a desire to make ourselves look good or to push our own agenda ahead of the concerns of the community.

Too often in society, and maybe especially in the church, we measure giving as monetary or financial giving. Gifts of money through the offering or through special donations are significant, and certainly are necessary to help a community of faith to live God's call upon their lives, but a community of faith relies on many forms of giving to support the greater good.

People give of their time in working at outreach projects, feeding the homeless, or providing clothes and furniture to those formerly unhoused. People offer their time in fundraising activities or donate items to garage sales and baking sales. People share their skills in reading scripture, teaching Sunday school, leading study groups, or maintaining the building and property. All of these gifts of service, talent, and support are ways to give to the church.

Each one of us is challenged to give as we are able. No two people have the same resources and life situations, so no two people can be expected to give in the same way. That means we should not diminish the gifts from those with limited income and resources, and we should not dismiss the gifts from those with significant assets and wealth. Each person within a community of faith is on a spiritual path, and each person should be invited to share their resources in helpful, significant, and proportionate ways.

Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians that the gifts of the Spirit are many—all spiritual gifts seek to support the community and provide sustenance for the faith. Giving of time, concern, money, possessions—all are part of those spiritual gifts.

Details to consider about giving and receiving

Giving is possible only if there is someone who is willing to receive. We have heard the proverb "God loves a cheerful giver," but the same could be said of the reverse: "God loves a cheerful recipient." A giver can only give when there is someone willing to receive.

If you have ever witnessed the tug and pull of someone offering a gift and the potential recipient being adamant in refusing it, you know what we mean. A gift that is offered with a sense of concern for the other person (or organization or community of faith or activity they represent) should be treated with respect. If the gift is not helpful or appropriate in the eyes of the receiving individual or organization, then it should be refused with careful explanation and handled graciously. Both the gift and the giver are diminished when a gift is not respected or is refused for an unknown or unstated reason.

At the same time, there is a responsibility (both legal and moral) for a gift to be used for the intent that it is given. When donors respond to an appeal to support a certain project or activity, they expect to have that gift used in the manner indicated when the request was made. When the intent changes, or maybe the project is cancelled or significantly modified,

then the donors should be approached to see what they wish done with their gifts, including the option of receiving their money back since the intended end result is no longer valid.

Make giving easy!

Since generosity and giving are hallmarks of the Christian Way, it is important to ensure that everyone professing to walk that journey has opportunities to exercise the spiritual practice of giving. Practising being generous in small ways on a regular basis helps develop and prepare disciples to be generous in larger ways when those opportunities ultimately present themselves. To nurture disciples, which is a key purpose of the church, congregations need to be intentional about making giving easy.

As you consider how you will make giving easy, start where you are. How are people currently giving to your community of faith? Then, consider how else they might be invited to give and who needs a different way to give. Forcing everyone to give in a specific way is not conducive to increasing generosity or revenue.

The offering plate

For many years, passing the offering plate during worship has been a mainstay for people to financially support their local community of faith. For those who regularly attend in-person worship, this may continue to be an easy and accessible way to give.

Offering envelopes

Normally used along with the offering plate, dated offering envelopes for each Sunday worship also serve as a reminder to be generous. For the community of faith, offering envelopes provide an easy way to track individual or family giving in order to produce an annual tax-credit receipt while restricting access to donor information. As with the offering plate, donations given using offering envelopes must be physically delivered to the church building.

Pre-Authorized Remittance (PAR)

PAR has many advantages for both the donor and the community of faith. For donors, it encourages intentional planning to be generous as they decide how much they wish to give each month as an automatic transfer from their bank account to the local congregation and Mission & Service. Once in place, PAR giving is simple and requires no further action on the donor's part. Giving occurs regardless of the location of the donor. For the community of faith, PAR ensures a regular, predictable source of funding for ministry.

In addition to inviting people to give through PAR, when training disciples in generosity the community of faith must also remember to treat those on PAR just as they would those who give in any other way. PAR donors also need to regularly be inspired and invited to give generously. Getting people on PAR is not the destination; it is one part of someone's journey to consistent generosity.

Post-dated cheques

Writing a series of post-dated cheques gives donors who are not comfortable with electronic banking a way to give consistently without necessarily being physically present to give. Post-dated cheques also encourage intentional planning to be generous.

Online giving platforms and e-transfer

As more people become accustomed to shopping, paying bills, and donating in the digital world, ways to give electronically need to be made available. Although not exclusive, there is a clear trend to giving this way in younger people.

The community of faith should have a clearly labelled donate button that is easy to find on their website. Directing people to that button becomes part of the invitation to give in any context, including during worship, and a way for people to give anytime from any place.

Online giving does not just have to mirror in-person giving processes but can also be used creatively to boost in-person giving. For example, during an o-line book study on poverty, you could invite participants to give a specific poverty-related gift from the online [Gifts with Vision](#) catalogue.

Many online giving platforms allow setting up regular (monthly) giving, so they also encourage intentional consistent giving, part of training disciples to be generous.

What are the limits of giving?

Giving is one way we remember that what we have actually belongs to God and is entrusted to our care. Each time we give, we remember that what we keep and all we have is a gift from God. Generous giving is born of grace, an obedient, grateful response to God's gift in creation. To practise generosity is to release our grip on wealth and so make wealth release its grip on us. In a world where justice and resources are not distributed equally, generous giving is transformative. (Visit ["Rejoice in all the good things: Giving and the Bible"](http://givingingrace.org/theology) at givingingrace.org/theology.)

There are situations, however, when giving is not done from a place of generosity. Other motivations may dominate. Giving or buying indulgences in order to reduce afterlife punishments for oneself or relatives was challenged at the time of the Reformation. Similarly, giving financially to the church does not ensure prosperity or material success in the present. If we give as a form of penance for misdeeds or out of a sense of guilt, the anticipated forgiveness and sense of peace is not guaranteed. Giving money may not, on its own, be sufficient to resolve psychological issues or make up for past wrongs.

If power or recognition within the community is the motivation, we may feel frustrated if the rewards are not received or the gift is not suitably acknowledged. Others in the congregation may become resentful if perceived privilege is attached to large donations and their givers.

There are also those who give of their time and resources to the point of exhaustion and bitterness. This is not healthy either. We do not want people to give beyond their means and create situations of personal hardship. Generous giving comes from a sense of abundance, and it is important that the giving does not deplete our souls and lessen the awareness of God's abundance, love, and grace. Generous giving should help our spirits to grow and provide sustenance for our souls.

Unpacking our practices of giving and thanking

Inviting giving

At virtually every worship service that we conduct, we incorporate a form of giving. We invite the congregation to give as a response to God's generosity to us. When we fail to make that connection, we miss an opportunity to invite people to respond to God's goodness. Therefore, during worship we need to position the offering in the context of being a people who seek to be faithful to God's promises. The offering is one clear way to respond to the invitation to participate in God's purpose for the world. The offering is essentially a time to focus on God's generosity to us, and our response to that generosity; it is not a time to focus on ourselves, on how we value wealth or personal social status.

Both a clear invitation to the offering and a prayer of thanksgiving and dedication that focuses on our response to God's generosity help a community of faith more fully understand how their financial giving relates to worship, stewardship, purpose, and faithfulness as a whole. The invitation and prayer also provide a clearer understanding for the regular participant, newcomer, or guest of what is expected in worship and why we do what we do in our worship practices.

Sometimes ministry personnel are anxious about inviting people to give to the church, especially because salaries are often the biggest expense for a congregation. Ministry personnel might wonder if participating in a stewardship initiative is a conflict of interest. It is not a conflict of interest since financial stewardship is an important part of ministry work, inviting people to donate to support the overall ministry, which includes salaries.

To encourage giving from all ages and recognizing that discipleship starts early, the practice of bringing the offering from the children and youth program to the front of the worship space to be included with the offering from the adults recognizes the wholeness of all gifts shared by all ages.

Each community of faith is invited to find ways to acknowledge giving, and also to facilitate it, beyond the Sunday worship time. Giving is not reserved for the wealthy, and is not preserved only for the offering time in a regular Sunday morning service. Giving can be encouraged (and ultimately appreciated) at any community gathering. Non-Sunday morning activities often include youth groups, children's programs, Messy Church, small group activities, special outreach projects, or study groups. In such cases, the focus of the invitation to give is on the activity and the age group or interests being served. At the same time, we can invite generosity by the participants as they seek to share in the overall ministry to which Christ calls us all. All activities are ways for the congregation to seek to live out God's purpose in their community, and as such are opportunities to speak about God's generosity to us, and our response to that generosity.

Thanking

One of the critical ways a community of faith can model that generosity arises from thankfulness is by having an intentional process for saying “thank you” for the gifts it receives. All gifts, regardless of size, are worthy of thanks. Thanking should be timely, personal, and sincere. Thanking, like giving, is a spiritual practice.

Congregations are often meticulous when offering thanks for larger gifts, especially physical items in the sanctuary. Highlighting these larger one-time gifts may inadvertently diminish the importance of regular gifts, especially gifts that are not highly visible. What constitutes a large or significant gift depends on the assets and ability to give of the individual who has donated.

Care must be taken to acknowledge the gifts that have been received but do not appear on the offering plate (e.g., online donations). That also applies to those people unable to attend worship who give through a cheque or bank draft during the week. All gifts and givers must see themselves thanked and appreciated in worship as they seek to live out their faithful calling as followers of Christ.

Suggested resources

United Church of Canada resources

The [Stewardship Best Practices module](#) of Called to Be the Church: The Journey

[Stewardship in Worship](#) resources

[Congregational Board of Trustees Handbook](#)

[Financial Handbook for Congregations](#)

[Boundaries training for ministry personnel](#)

Planned giving resources and guides:

[Giving through Your Estate](#)

[The United Church of Canada Foundation](#)

Books

Faith and Money: Understanding Annual Giving in Church by Michael Reeves and Jennifer Tyler

The Generosity Path: Finding the Richness in Giving by Mark V. Ewert

Generosity, Stewardship and Abundance: A Transformational Guide to Church Finance by Lovett H. Weems Jr. and Ann A. Michel

Giving to God: The Bible's Good News about Living and Generous Life by Mark Allan Powell

Giving and Stewardship in an Effective Church: A Guide for Every Member by Kennon L. Callahan

Growing Givers' Hearts: Treating Fundraising as Ministry by Thomas H. Jeavons and Rebekah Burch Basinger

Holy Currencies: Six Blessings for Sustainable Missional Ministries by Eric H.F. Law

Money and Possessions by Walter Brueggeman

Not Your Parents' Offering Plate: A New Vision for Financial Stewardship by J. Clif Christopher

The Power of Giving: How Giving Back Enriches Us All by Azim Jamal and Harvey McKinnon

A Spirituality of Fundraising by Henri J.M. Nouwen

Appendix A: Scripture passages related to generosity, giving, and stewardship

Generosity

You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us." *2 Corinthians 9:11*

"By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness." *Galatians 5:22*

"Take from among you an offering to the Lord; let whoever is of a generous heart bring the Lord's offering: gold, silver and bronze." *Exodus 35:5*

"The wicked borrow and do not pay back, but the righteous are generous and keep giving." *Psalms 37:21*

"A generous person will be enriched, and one who gives water will get water." *Proverbs 11:25*

"Those who are generous are blessed, for they share their bread with the poor." *Proverbs 22:9*

"For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich." *2 Corinthians 8:9*

"They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share." *1 Timothy 6:18*

"Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above." *James 1:17*

Gift

Rest and renewal are part of creation. *Genesis 1*

"A gift opens doors; it gives access to the great." *Proverbs 18:16*

"Like clouds and wind without rain is one who boasts of a gift never given." *Proverbs 25:14*

"But Peter said to him, 'May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain God's gift with money.'" *Acts 8:20*

"For if the eagerness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has—not according to what one does not have." *2 Corinthians 8:12*

Give

Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." *2 Corinthians 9:7*

Giving

"If there is among you anyone in need, a member of your community in any of your towns within the land that the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hard-hearted or tight-fisted toward your needy neighbour." *Deuteronomy 15:7*

Money

"He sold a field that belonged to him, then brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet." *Acts 4:37*

"Deacons likewise must be serious, not double-tongued, not indulging in much wine, not greedy for money." *1 Timothy 3:8*

"For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains." *2 Timothy 6:10*

"For people will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy." *2 Timothy 3:2*

Offering

"Tell the Israelites to take for me an offering, from all whose hearts prompt them to give you shall receive the offering for me." *Exodus 25:2*

"Then you shall keep the festival of weeks for the Lord your God, contributing a freewill offering in proportion to the blessing that you have received from the Lord your God." *Deuteronomy 16:10*

"Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering and come before him. Worship the Lord in holy splendor..." *1 Chronicles 16:29* (Compare "Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering and come into his courts." *Psalms 96:8*)

Psalm 54:6 "With a freewill offering I will sacrifice to you; I will give thanks to your name, O Lord, for it is good." *Psalms 54:6*

The poor

Many passages speak of supporting the poor—a common biblical image and teaching—especially *Psalm 72:4, 12; Psalm 74:19, 21; Proverbs 14:21, 31; 19:17; 28:27; 31:9, 20.*

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free." *Luke 4:18*

"Then he looked at his disciples and said: 'Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.'" *Luke 6:20*

"But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind." *Luke 14:13*

Generosity of poor widow. *Luke 21:2-3*

"They asked only one thing, that we remember the poor, which was actually what I was eager to do." *Galatians 2:10*

"Listen my beloved brothers and sisters. Has not God chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the kingdom that he has promised to those who love him?" *James 2:5*

Possessions

"Jesus said to him, 'If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.' When the young man heard this word, he went away grieving, for he had many possessions." *Matthew 19:21-22*

"So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions." *Luke 14:33*

"They would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need." *Acts 2:45*

Tithe

On tithe. *Deuteronomy 14:22-28*

On paying all of the tithe on the third year. *Deuteronomy 26:12*

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cumin and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. It is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others." *Matthew 23:23* (also in *Luke 11:42*)

Wealth

"Jesus looked at him and said, 'How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!'" *Luke 18:24*

Appendix B: Case studies for discussion

The following case studies can be used in discussion groups, church meetings, etc. to help communities of faith integrate the ideas in this document into real situations through imagined scenarios.

1. A member of the congregation died recently and left a significant gift to the congregation. Her son was raised in the congregation but no longer attends regularly. As executor of his mother's estate, he would like her to be given recognition for the donation—maybe a plaque or other permanent acknowledgement of the gift. How might the congregation respond?
2. Several prominent members of the congregation do not like a policy of the United Church and do not want their contributions to go to Mission & Service but rather be documented as going to a local organization. What issues or concerns does this raise?
3. After the recent stewardship program, which emphasized giving a portion of one's income, there is discussion among some in the congregation that certain wealthier members are not giving as much as they should. How could the congregational leaders respond?
4. A congregation takes great care to keep the information concerning donations confidential. At a recent church council meeting there was discussion about who should have access to information about donations. What are helpful ways to preserve privacy while also sharing necessary information for good decision making? Who should know what and when?
5. A donor has informed a member of the building committee that they are prepared to pay for a new sound system and has a supplier who can provide what is needed. How should this offer be handled?