

# Called to Be the Church

## CONGREGATIONAL GIVING PROGRAM



Called to Be the Church Congregational Giving Program  
Discipleship Is Stewardship 2021



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L'Église Unie du Canada



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The United Church of Canada  
L'Église Unie du Canada  
3250 Bloor St. West, Suite 200  
Toronto, ON  
Canada M8X 2Y4  
1-800-268-3781  
[www.united-church.ca](http://www.united-church.ca)

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Research and writing: The General Council Philanthropy Unit

Cover Design: Diane Renault-Collicott, Graphics and Print  
Layout: Ian Ball, Graphics and Print  
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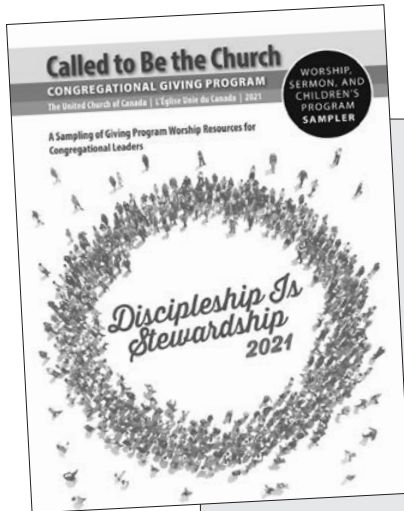
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### Worship Sampler: Giving Program Resources for Congregational Leaders

With worship, sermons, and children's programs included in every service, the Worship Sampler shares Week 1 from each of the following programs.

- All in One Gratitude Sunday: A Single Sunday Program
- Loving Our Neighbours Near and Far: A Program for Any Three Weeks
- Loving Our Neighbours: Worship for Five Sundays of Lent
- The Early Church in Eastertide: Worship for Five Sundays after Easter
- 28 Days to Thanksgiving: Offering Our Gratitude
- Season of Gratitude: World Communion Sunday to All Saints'

**NEW**

Discipleship Is Stewardship: Five Sundays for Any Time of the Year  
(includes "Stewardship@Home" for families)

Also new this year, Lectionary Worship Starters for 2021 will help communities of faith accommodate all of the five-week worship series to the 2021 Lectionary readings.

All worship, sermons, and children's programs,  
plus more, can be found at

[united-church.ca/stewardship](https://united-church.ca/stewardship)

# Welcome

Welcome to *Called to Be the Church 2021*, your guide to increasing generosity and giving in your congregation as it supports God's mission. This congregational giving program frames a time for learning, reflection, prayer, and generosity. It is also an opportunity for the people in your community to deepen their faith, to create a foundation for future mission, and for seeing generosity and gratitude as a way of life and as a spiritual practice. It is about discipleship.

## New for 2021

- NEW five-week worship series for any time of the year that focuses on the theme **Discipleship Is Stewardship**. Each week includes liturgy, sermon, children/youth programming, and a Stewardship@Home section. It also includes a NEW theme song written by David Kai
- Newly designed Stewardship website: [united-church.ca/stewardship](http://united-church.ca/stewardship)
- More opportunities to seek individual coaching and support through Called to Be the Church: The Journey modules

## Still True for 2021

### 1. Stewardship Is an Integral Part of Living Our Faith

This giving program continues to position generosity and stewardship as the way of discipleship, calling us to live all aspects of our life in the light of faith in Jesus. An additional resource, *I Intend*, looks at how we might practise our faith in all aspects of our life—the environment, our time, our talents, our financial resources, and our mental and physical wellbeing. Check it out!

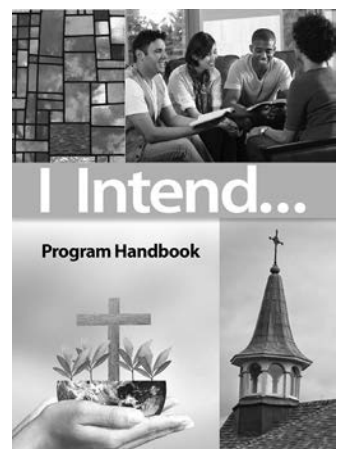
### 2. Worship Sampler – worship, sermons, and children's programs are included in samples taken from:

- All in One Gratitude Sunday: A Single Sunday Program
- Loving Our Neighbours Near and Far: A Program for Any Three Sundays
- Loving Our Neighbours: Worship for Five Sundays of Lent
- The Early Church in Eastertide: Worship for Five Sundays after Easter
- 28 Days to Thanksgiving: Offering Our Gratitude
- Season of Gratitude: World Communion Sunday to All Saints'
- NEW! Discipleship Is Stewardship: Five Sundays for Any Time of the Year.

If you don't know where to start, check out the **Quick Start Guide video** at [youtu.be/X8VXXVoWuBc](https://youtu.be/X8VXXVoWuBc)

And God saw that it was good.

Genesis 1:12, 1:18, 1:25



Download from [united-church.ca/stewardship](http://united-church.ca/stewardship)



Get a free set of  
Thank You cards  
for your ministry of  
appreciation. Contact  
us at [called@united-church.ca](mailto:called@united-church.ca)

### 3. Created by and for The United Church of Canada

*Called to Be the Church* is continually revised and improved based on **your** annual evaluation. In addition, we have talented writers from across the country contributing their best and most creative work for this essential resource.

### 4. Three Practices: Inspire, Invite, and Thank

These are the foundational practices of any giving program. *Called to Be the Church* has resources for each. The important thing is to do something that inspires, something that invites, and something that offers thanks.

**Inspire** people by sharing how your community of faith makes a difference—how it is responding to God’s mission in their lives as people of faith and in the life of the community around them.

**Invite** people to share their gifts as a commitment of faith and to help ensure their ministry continues to thrive.

**Thank** people for all they contribute to the church’s mission and ministry, and model gratitude.

### 5. Adapt the Program to Your Needs, Size, and Setting

START where you are

USE what you have

DO what you can

These are wise words from the late activist and tennis star, Arthur Ashe.

## User Support

If you have questions or would like some coaching, the Philanthropy Unit provides

- staff people to assist communities of faith with stewardship work
- *Called to Be the Church: The Journey*; coaching and training modules. (coming in 2021)
- webinars through **United In Learning**
- the newly designed [united-church.ca/stewardship](http://united-church.ca/stewardship)

Contact us at [called@united-church.ca](mailto:called@united-church.ca). We answer our e-mails and will connect you with support for this important ministry.

Blessings on your work and heartfelt thanks for everything you do as you serve Jesus in your community of faith and in support of The United Church of Canada.

# Getting Started

## Using the Program Guide

Start here for an inspiring overview of the program ([youtu.be/X8VXXVoWuBc](https://youtu.be/X8VXXVoWuBc)). The Program Guide, together with the Quick Start Guide Video, Planning Workbook, Worship Sampler, and [united-church.ca/stewardship](https://united-church.ca/stewardship), will help you plan and coordinate your giving program.

The **Program Guide** includes: agendas for Giving Team meetings, a workshop on gathering *Why I Give* stories, guidelines for formulating a Narrative Budget, and support for creating invitations to a Community Meal(s) and a Letter of Invitation. There are also other resources such as Stewardship Prayers. Finally, the **Program Guide** has a section on Wrap-Up and Evaluation.

The **Planning Workbook** complements the **Program Guide** with resources to help keep you on track: setting goals, mapping out the tasks for the giving program you choose, and evaluating the program for the future. It will come in handy if a key team member drops out and will give you a head start for your next giving program.

**Worship Sampler** – We have worship, sermons, and children’s programs for key seasons of the liturgical year. The **Worship Sampler**, which includes Week 1 from each of the worship programs, will help you choose a time and a program that fits your faith community. The programs are:

- All in One Gratitude Sunday: A Single Sunday Program
- Loving Our Neighbours Near and Far: A Program for Any Three Weeks
- Loving Our Neighbours: Worship for Five Sundays of Lent
- The Early Church in Eastertide: Worship for Five Sundays after Easter
- 28 Days to Thanksgiving: Offering Our Gratitude
- Season of Gratitude: World Communion Sunday to All Saints’
- Discipleship Is Stewardship: Five Sundays for Any Time of the Year

Using the tables in the Planning Workbook, pp. 5–8, fill in the **local data** before the first meeting of the Giving Team, so that you can set goals based on the most current information.

**All of the resources are available at [united-church.ca/stewardship](https://united-church.ca/stewardship).**



## Gather Your Giving Team

Your first step is to gather a small and dedicated team to plan and run the program—even if that team is just you! Your team may be led by laypeople or a combination of ministry personnel and laypeople. Ideally, have two people co-lead the team to support each other and increase accountability. The team will

- coordinate the program, acting as its visible leaders
- invite people to give, to support the ministry in your community
- increase your community of faith's understanding of how giving is a spiritual practice and stewardship contributes to God's mission
- teach and encourage everyone to be faithful and generous stewards at all ages and stages of faith

What does the **Giving Team** look like? It should look like your congregation and include people who are

- younger and older
- representative of all genders
- long-time and new
- introverts and extroverts
- keen on the ministry of the congregation
- wise and respected in the community

## Giving Team's First Meeting

At this first meeting (90 minutes to two hours) you will

- increase understanding of generosity and giving as a way of living our faith
- introduce this year's *Called to Be the Church* Congregational Giving Program—Discipleship Is Stewardship 2021
- introduce *Why I Give* stories and invite team members to develop their stories
- invite everyone to make a meaningful and intentional gift to the mission of your church and to complete a Response Card, returning it at the next meeting
- start setting goals and a timeline using the Planning Workbook
- plan communication with the congregation

You may want to move some of these tasks to Giving Team's Second Meeting, p.13.

**Every** Giving Team member will commit to making a meaningful and intentional financial gift to support the ministry of the community and Mission & Service.



## Ahead of Time

1. Set up equipment to show video(s).
2. Create a Response Card for your program (sample p. 34). Have a return envelope for each Response Card.
3. Decide if you are going to customize the following:
 

**Planning Workbook** – If you are going to copy this resource for all members of the Giving Team, fill in current data from your congregation noted on pp. 5–8.

**Decision-Making Resources** – These tools (see pp. 32–35) help members of your community make an informed and meaningful decision about their support of your ministry. Review the samples.
4. Make copies of the following for everyone:
  - Quick Start Guide
  - Planning Workbook
  - Giving Guide
  - Response Card
  - Step Chart
5. Have available a calendar of events for your community of faith so you can choose the most suitable dates for your giving program and set a timeline.
6. Provide paper and pens for note taking.

### united-church.ca/ stewardship

- Program Guide
- Planning Workbook
- seven Worship Programs
- videos
- supplemental resources
- samples and templates

## BEGINNING

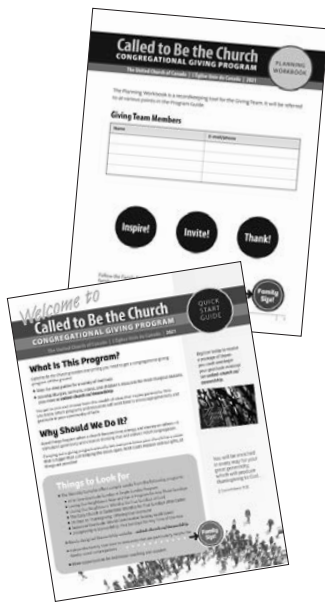
### Welcome

Thank people for responding to the invitation to be part of this important venture.

### Opening Prayer

Mighty and tender God,  
we ask your blessing upon our work and ministry,  
our response to your call to be the Church:  
to celebrate God's presence,  
to live with respect in Creation,  
to love and serve others,  
to seek justice and resist evil,  
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,  
our judge and our hope. Amen.  
—based on A New Creed

Whoever is leading the first meeting might have their **Why I Give** story ready to share, plus their Response Card completed and sealed in an envelope.



## Introduce the *Called to Be the Church* Giving Program

Hand out copies of the *Quick Start Guide* and *Planning Workbook*.

Show the introduction video. The video puts the program in perspective and introduces the three pillars of the program—Inspire, Invite, Thank.



You can find the video “Promo for Called to Be the Church” at [youtu.be/7vu3CujOmMM](https://youtu.be/7vu3CujOmMM).

## MIDDLE

### Inspire—Introduce *Why I Give* Stories

*Why I Give* stories are personal testimonies and are an important element of the **Inspire** part of our giving program. We can all be inspired by one another when we share stories from the heart—in this case, exploring the basis of our faith and why each of us participates in and gives to God’s mission.

These stories will also form part of the **Invite** practice of the giving program. Snippets can be included in a letter to members and shared at the Community Meal. When the Giving Team invites people to give to the mission of your church, sharing your *Why I Give* stories will be a key part of the invitation.

Show the *Called to Be the Church: Quick Start Guide* video at [bit.ly/Q\\_S\\_G](https://bit.ly/Q_S_G). Together, discuss the video and ask:

- What did you, as listeners, find compelling or want to know more about?
- How would the stories you heard help to invite others to join you in supporting our church’s mission?

For a comprehensive workshop on gathering **Why I Give** stories, see pp. 18–20.

Then ask these questions to help each person find their story:

- What brought you into The United Church of Canada or to this congregation?
- Why do you stay?
- Share a memorable experience of either giving a gift or receiving a gift.
- Why do you give? (Why? Not how or what.)
- Why do you give to God's mission—in your congregation, your community, and through Mission & Service?

Your team may feel comfortable discussing the above questions together, or they might jot down ideas to think about after the meeting.

As a group, consider how to share your stories: with a friend; with a group in the congregation; in worship; by including stories in the bulletin.

Invite everyone to write out their story after the meeting. People might practise telling their stories to other Giving Team members in the coming days or at the Giving Team's Second Meeting (pp. 13–17). Do what you can to help one another improve your stories to give them more impact.

## Invite—Giving Team Makes the First Gifts

Distribute Response Cards, return envelopes, and Proportional Giving Charts or Step Charts.

Invite all team members to join in supporting the mission of your congregation. Include your *Why I Give* story in your invitation to inspire them.

Explain that it is important for every member of this leadership team to have already considered what they will contribute. Request that everyone give the invitation prayerful consideration and determine an **intentional and meaningful gift**, fill in the Response Card, and return it in a sealed envelope to a designated person as soon as possible. The idea is for the Giving Team to indicate their support and model the process before inviting others in the community of faith to do the same.

You have just made your first invitation!

## Key Decisions

As a group, review the purpose of your meetings:

- First meeting—set goals and a timeline for the program
- Second meeting—decide on how you will invite people (see p. 24)

These are critical decisions and may require more time to make sure the program will meet your goals.

Your invitation will be more successful if you help people feel that returning their Response Card is a way of including and **honouring their gifts**. By inviting everyone to return the card, regardless of how it is filled out, you show that you value their contribution. This may be a new practice for your community; it may help if you explain how the information will be helpful in determining whether goals are met and how the leadership can plan for future ministry.

## Set Goals (Planning Workbook, pp. 5–8)

If you have a goal, you know what you are working toward and you will know whether you are successful.

A congregational giving program can have many different goals. Here are a few examples:

- generous donations
- increasing participation rates
- increasing donations received
- having more people join Pre-Authorized Remittance (PAR)

## Set a Timeline (Planning Workbook, pp. 9–14)

Keeping in mind the life of your community, determine which giving program will be best for you and the best time to launch it.

- Which is the best season in your community?
- Will the Sundays coincide with any important dates?
- Will your program be for five weeks, three weeks, or one Sunday? Will it be planned for consecutive weeks, once a month, or a different schedule?

## END

## Wrap-Up

Identify what needs to be accomplished immediately—who will do what and by when. Review what you will need at the Giving Team's Second Meeting and who will do what to prepare for it.

Set the next meeting date.

## Closing Prayer

Gracious and generous God,  
 Creator and giver of all that is good,  
 we thank you for our many blessings.  
 We acknowledge that all that we have is from you.  
 We offer you thanks and praise  
 for the beauty of the earth, our work, our family, our loved ones,  
 and all the gifts we have been given.  
 Help us to hear your call to be good stewards, caretakers, and managers  
 of all your gifts by sharing them for your purposes.  
 Help us plan to serve our church, our community, and our world with your gifts.  
 May we serve you and pray with a joyful spirit of mind and heart.  
 We remain your faithful stewards.  
 Amen.

# You Are Not Alone!

Coaching and support are available. If you get stuck, have a question, want to ask for advice, connect with us.

**[called@united-church.ca](mailto:called@united-church.ca)**

**[united-church.ca/stewardship](http://united-church.ca/stewardship)**

It's all online for download.

**[www.facebook.com/groups/1497896833864628/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/1497896833864628/)**

Inspire! Invite! Thank! – A Facebook community for leaders engaged in congregational giving and stewardship ministry. We support one another along the way.

**[www.unitedinlearning.ca](http://www.unitedinlearning.ca)**

Webinars to help get you started or to keep moving in this important ministry.



## Giving Team's Second Meeting

The goals of this meeting are to

- share one or more *Why I Give* stories from team members
- introduce the concept of a Narrative Budget and begin creating one
- review and add to the plan and timeline for the program
- begin the practice of giving thanks—including handwritten thank-you notes—for the gifts already received (Encourage others on the team to submit their Response Cards as soon as possible.)
- take next steps to inform the congregation about the program (See Communication p. 36 in this Program Guide and pp. 18–19 in the Planning Workbook.)

## Ahead of Time

1. Write a thank-you note to everyone who has returned their Response Card.
2. Set up equipment to show video(s).
3. Print out copies of a sample Narrative Budget (see p. 23 and [united-church.ca/stewardship](http://united-church.ca/stewardship)).
4. Have a calendar handy to plan the timeline.

## BEGINNING

### Welcome

Honour God with everything you own; give [God] the first and the best.

Proverbs 3:9 (*The Message*)

Thank people again for responding to the invitation to be part of this important venture. Practising gratitude is a foundation of this program; we can never thank enough.

### Opening Prayer

Mighty and tender God,  
in your loving purpose,  
help us to use and share  
the gifts you have given us  
to contribute to your mission.  
In all things,  
give us the grace and wisdom to accept your will.  
In Jesus' name, we pray.  
Amen.

### Why I Give Stories

If possible, have one or more volunteers share their *Why I Give* story with the group. Encourage everyone to finish preparing their stories and practise sharing them in the coming days.

### Giving Team's Gifts: Modelling Gratitude

This is an opportunity for the co-leaders to model gratitude for all the gifts that have been received. Express thanks and give each person a handwritten thank-you note for their contribution. This is the beginning of the Thanks pillar.

Encourage other team members to hand in their Response Cards as soon as possible.

## MIDDLE

### Key Decisions

1. **Goals:** Referring to the *Planning Workbook*, review the goals established at the first meeting and refine goals as necessary.
2. **Inspire:** There are two key tools to inspire generosity:
  - the *Why I Give* stories you have already worked on
  - the Narrative Budget or the story of the ministry of your congregation

These two tools form the centrepiece of the **Invite** phase of the program. Together, they will encourage generosity among your members.

Why I Give stories	Narrative Budget
<i>Sharing personal testimony</i>	<i>Sharing the story of the ministry of your congregation</i>
Sample Stories <sup>†</sup>	Sample Narrative Budgets <sup>†</sup>
<p>Now that there are a few <i>Why I Give</i> stories in development, consider who else might be approached for their story. If there are a half dozen or so potential storytellers, consider hosting a workshop to assist people in honing their stories.</p> <p>Plan how the stories will be shared during the active time of the program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• written for the bulletin or an e-mail</li> <li>• shared in a service</li> <li>• videoed and shared on screen or on the website</li> </ul>	<p>The Narrative (ministry-based) Budget:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• tells the story of your ministry through words and pictures. It shows how generosity impacts your community and empowers your people to work for God's mission in our world</li> <li>• recognizes that we do not give money to the church so much as give money through the church to translate God's mission into action</li> <li>• tells the story of what the money <b>does</b> (helps feed the hungry and serve the homeless); not where the money <b>goes</b> (paying for heat, salaries)</li> </ul>
<b>Review the <i>Why I Give</i> workshop, p. 18. <sup>†</sup></b>	<b>See how to develop a Narrative Budget, p. 20. <sup>†</sup></b>

<sup>†</sup>Resources can be found at [united-church.ca/stewardship](http://united-church.ca/stewardship)



### Five reasons to invite every person

1. Models the regular and consistent spiritual practice of giving
2. Provides an opportunity to inform everyone about the ministry you undertake and how it changes lives
3. Provides an opportunity to listen to people in your community
4. Provides the basis for all other giving: legacy giving and major project giving
5. Models the regular and consistent spiritual practice of giving (yes, this is worth repeating!)

The best reason for **inviting everyone personally** is because it is the way Jesus did it. Jesus called individuals to follow his way of life:

As [Jesus] walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.” Immediately they left their nets and followed him.

Matthew 4:18–20

**3. Invite:** The best way to invite others to support the ministry of your congregation is for one person to tell another, face-to-face, why they support this ministry and to invite the other person to join them by making an intentional and meaningful gift. This is the tried and true method employed by other successful charitable organizations.

However, there is a more compelling precedent for us as people of faith: **the individual invitation is how Jesus called people to follow his way of life and become disciples.**

We know the main reason many people don't give is because they have not been asked. The United Church of Canada, like other mainline denominations, has largely abandoned the practice of annually inviting everyone in the community to pledge support of their mission by making an intentional and meaningful gift. Instead, we have turned to event-based fundraising. This type of fundraising has its place. Ideally, it supplements the generosity of members by building fellowship and encouraging people beyond the community of faith to support the church's work for justice.

It is time to return to the practice of inviting everyone in our faith community to contribute to our mission by using the two ways suggested by this giving program: Community Meal(s) (see Planning Workbook, pp. 15–16) and Letter of Invitation (Planning Workbook, p. 17).

## Communication

Prepare to introduce the giving program to the congregation (see Planning Workbook, pp. 18–19, and Communication, p. 36 in this Program Guide).

You might plan to introduce the program at Sunday worship ahead of, or, in Program Week 1 (see Planning Workbook, p. 9), but whatever your timeline, it is wise to consider now how you will get the word out: spoken announcement, bulletin insert, e-mail, letter, or other communication tool.

Communicating with your community throughout the weeks of the program helps to create and maintain interest and excitement. See the chart on p. 18 of the Planning Workbook for some ideas.

## END

### Wrap-Up

- List the tasks for the coming weeks and dates. Decide who will do what.
- Identify what needs to be accomplished immediately—who will do what and when.
- Set the next meeting date. (The next meeting outline provided in this resource is for the Giving Team’s Evaluation, p. 40. Other meetings may need to be called along the way to review progress.)

### Closing Prayer

Mighty and tender God,  
we ask your blessing upon our work and ministry,  
our response to your call to be the Church:

to celebrate God’s presence,  
to live with respect in Creation,  
to love and serve others,  
to seek justice and resist evil,  
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,  
our judge and our hope. Amen.

—based on A New Creed

# Resources

## Inspire

Stories of *Why I Give* and a Narrative Budget form the centrepiece of the **Inspire** phase of the program. Together, they will encourage generosity among your members.

### Why I Give—a Workshop for Gathering Stories (90 min.)

#### Ahead of Time

Invite a selection of members to develop their stories of why they support the mission of your congregation. You will need:

- set up for video<sup>†</sup>
- pens and paper
- copies of the centrespread of the Quick Start Guide (Inspire! Invite! Thank!)

<sup>†</sup>Resources can be found at [united-church.ca/stewardship](https://united-church.ca/stewardship)

### BEGINNING (15 min.)

#### Opening Prayer

Gracious and loving God,  
you call us to be disciples of your son,  
Jesus, and good stewards of your many gifts.  
Open our minds and hearts to a greater awareness and deeper appreciation  
of our countless blessings.  
Transform us through the power of your Spirit to nurture a stewardship way  
of life for all our days.  
Help us to be the salt that brings out the God-flavours of this earth,  
to encourage vitality and joy, and to never lose our saltiness and our  
purpose.  
Help us to be a light with beams of community, compassion, and hope for a  
better and more just world.  
We pray this in the name of Jesus, crucified and risen, our judge and our hope.  
Amen.

## Introduction

Share the purpose of this gathering:

- to learn more about the congregational giving program
- to introduce the program theme (Discipleship Is Stewardship), the Giving Team, and the plans so far
- to create each individual's *Why I Give* story to share with others

## MIDDLE (65 min.)

### Why “Why I Give”? (5 min.)

Sharing *Why I Give* is an important element in the **Inspire** part of our giving program. We can all be inspired by one another when we share stories from the heart—in this case, exploring why each of us gives to God’s mission.

### Video (5 min.)

Introduce the video: *Called to Be the Church Training: Why I Give*  
([youtube.com/watch?v=KcWMNRlnLtY&list=PLQDu-SgFb3Ri\\_n1T\\_wvmVB6a3i8CaX6wm&index=1](https://youtube.com/watch?v=KcWMNRlnLtY&list=PLQDu-SgFb3Ri_n1T_wvmVB6a3i8CaX6wm&index=1))  
Watch the video.

## Your Story

Distribute pens and paper. Have participants work through this exercise in pairs, with the co-leads keeping time and moving things along.

### Round 1 (20 min.)

Taking turns, each person listens and takes notes as their partner shares their responses to:

- What brought you into The United Church of Canada or to this congregation?
- Why do you stay?
- What is so special about this church?

### Round 2 (20 min.)

Each person listens as their partner answers the following questions and forms their story. Notes are taken to help each person remember their *Why I Give* story.

- Why do you give? (Why—not how or what.)
- Why do you give to God’s mission—in your congregation, your community, and through Mission & Service?
- What is the impact of your gift? What difference do we make?

**Round 3** (15 min.)

Each partner takes a turn (about 7 min.) responding to:

- What did you, as the listener, find compelling or want to know more about?
- How would this story invite others to join you in supporting our church's mission?

**END** (10 min.)

Encourage each participant to take time to reflect on their story and add more notes. Later, they might write out their story and seek opportunities to practise their story with other volunteers. They might plan to share their story with a friend, with a group in the congregation, or in worship.

Do what you can as leaders to help them improve the story and make it even more impactful.

Close with a prayer of thanksgiving. See additional stewardship prayers on pp. 42–43.

**Narrative Budgets**

The Narrative or ministry-based budget tells the story of your ministry through words and pictures. It shows how generosity impacts your community and empowers your people to work for God's mission in our world.

This communication tool **does not replace a line-item budget**, but rather supplements it as it

- communicates complex financial information for a broader audience
- links vision, values, and ministry with financial priorities
- helps develop a deeper understanding of the impact of our ministry
- inspires generosity and giving because people can see how their gifts change lives
- encourages people to discuss the needs of the ministry more deeply
- tells others about the mission and ministry of the congregation
- reflects how each person's giving is an expression of their faith

The Narrative Budget recognizes that we do not give money **to the church** so much as give money **through the church** to translate God's mission into action. It tells the story of what the money **does** (helps feed the hungry and serves the homeless) not where the money **goes** (paying for heat, salaries).

The time it takes to produce this critical resource is an investment. Once you have produced your first Narrative Budget, you can update it annually with stories of the most recent year's accomplishments.

We suggest including your Narrative Budget as part of the invitation package you will be sharing widely.



## Start with a One-Page Narrative Budget

If a Narrative Budget is a new idea for your community, start with a one-page budget (examples from United Churches on [united-church.ca/stewardship](http://united-church.ca/stewardship)). Next year you can take it a step further.

The story of the ministry is the important element here. If the task of allocating the line-item budget into the ministry categories is daunting, don't give up. Just tell the story of **what the money does**.

Decide who will prepare the Narrative Budget so it is ready in time for sharing with the congregation.

### Enhance your Narrative Budget

- A letter from ministry personnel setting the theme for the coming year
- A prayer written especially for your congregation's ministry and used regularly throughout the year
- Track the gift of time—volunteer opportunities and impact
- Include more stewardship information, such as giving charts or a Q&A about the stewardship program
- Include more Mission & Service information: search [united-church.ca](http://united-church.ca) for M&S at a Glance and the United Church Annual Report
- If you are putting this on your website, include video testimonials, e.g., "Why I come and why I stay"; highlight the impact of a ministry area

Check out **Five Steps to Writing a Narrative Budget** in "Telling the Story of Your Ministry" at [united-church.ca/stewardship](http://united-church.ca/stewardship)



## The Story of Our Ministry at [Name]

This year, because of the generous giving of people in our congregation, we were able to accomplish so much for God's mission.

### Through WORSHIP

*Include how many people contribute to your community worship. Think of EVERYTHING that goes into it.*

### Through LEARNING

*Include all the ways people of all ages grow in understanding of their faith.*

### Through SERVICE

In the congregation:

*All the pastoral care and support of the people of God so they can in turn serve others in their daily lives.*

### Beyond the congregation:

*All the ways in which the congregation serves the needs of the wider community (e.g., providing affordable space for community groups such as a daycare centre, AA, Guides, and Scouts). The support from the congregation for the ministry of the denomination through Mission & Service (see [united-church.ca/community-and-faith/get-involved/generosity-through-mission-and-service](http://united-church.ca/community-and-faith/get-involved/generosity-through-mission-and-service) to point to projects nearby and across the globe).*



# One-Page Narrative Budget



**A Home for Everyone**

Did you know SJUC houses 10 community groups from Martial Arts to Bridge to Girl Guides!

"God loves what you're doing."

Grade 12 Free KD Alumni.

ST. JOHN'S UNITED CHURCH

LOVE GOD  
LOVE PEOPLE

Gathering Community.  
Nourishing The Soul.  
Reaching Out In Compassion.

**GATHERING COMMUNITY** \$34,899.54

**Minister & Pastoral Charge Costs** - Coordinating and/or chairing 12 regular committees at SJUC building community partnerships with Phoenix, Atlantic School of Theology, Government, Cobequid Community Health Board, Lockview High, local clergy, Al Rasoul Islamic Center, representing SJUC at Presbytery and Maritime Conference.

**Administrator** - Coordinating with staff, first point of contact with the public, community bulletin boards, Facebook, website, weekly emails, church rental space for committees and groups.

**Church Groups** - United Church Women and countless events, fundraisers, and support (30 members, 1006 volunteer hours). Stewardship committee, tech team, Property Committee, gift certificate program, Church In Action Committee, Out of the Cold Suppers, free KD, the Great Escape, Syrian Refugee Committee, Compassion Project (Ecumenical/Interfaith)

**NOURISHING THE SOUL** \$90,542.22

**Minister & Pastoral Charge Costs** - Sunday morning, planning, set up, A/V, sermon and leading worship, Sunday small group, confirmation, social media, baptisms, communion, provide refuge, training & supervision for AST ministry students.

**Administrator** - Sunday morning, bulletins, power point, coordinating volunteers and teams, documentation for funerals, baptisms and weddings, copyrights and licensing.

**Music Team** - Sunday morning, United Voices choir, children's choir, special performances and duets, planning with Minister and Administrator, all worship music.

**Spiritual Oversight Committee** - worship planning, volunteer greeters, readers, leaders of prayer, morning coffee, piano tuning.

**Christian Life and Growth Committee** - curriculum and support for Sunday School and KOGA (Kids On God's Adventure), nursery, retreats, movie & potluck, Christmas cantata, Spirit of Advent, and special events such as the recent fundraiser for Ewing Sarcoma.

**Wise Cafe Program** Materials, planning, refreshments, leadership & music.

**REACHING OUT IN COMPASSION** \$36,701.33

**Minister & Pastoral Charge Costs** - Visitation and pastoral care, recruiting & training pastoral care team, funeral planning and coordination.

**Administrator** - Funeral planning and coordination with Minister and teams.

**\$22,950 in Mission & Service** money is given to the United Church of Canada to reach beyond our local community.

**Where Our Gifts Go & What They Do**

**The Cost of Our Mission: \$185,093.09**

- Gathering Community \$34,899.54
- Nourishing the Soul \$90,542.22
- Reaching out in compassion \$36,701.33
- UCC Mission & Service Fund \$22,950

Reaching Out: M&S gifts go to the United Church of Canada for work outside our local congregation. We gave \$22,950 in 2017.

Our mission's corresponding financial figures include staff, structural, committee and supply costs.

**The Gift of Our Mission: 31,035 Volunteer Hours**

- Gathering Community - 29,472 hours
- Nourishing the Soul - 921 hours
- Reaching Out in Compassion - 642 hours

Sample Courtesy of St. John's United Church, Fall River, Nova Scotia.

## Invite

You have gathered some *Why I Give* stories and told the story of your ministry in a Narrative Budget. Now it is time to invite every person to make a meaningful, intentional gift to support the ministry of the local community of faith and the Mission & Service of the United Church.



As you decide how you are going to make your invitations, please be sure to consider the new realities of the COVID-19 pandemic. Check with your local health unit and follow all government mandated requirements and guidelines. With the necessary physical distancing and use of masks, inviting can still be done safely.

## Include Everyone

Whichever method of inviting others to give you choose, make sure everyone in your community of faith is included. Sharing the story with everyone is important and allows everyone to make their own decision in response to the invitation. Beginning with thanks allows the opportunity to acknowledge all gifts. It also allows for a clear communication that all gifts make a difference and are welcome. The request is for each person to make a **prayerful, intentional, and meaningful gift**—whatever the amount might be.

**Whenever** you are inviting people to support your ministry it is an opportunity to

- tell the story of the faith community and how it makes a difference in the lives of individuals in your community and in the world through the ministry of the Mission & Service of the United Church
- share how people think and feel about the ministry of the congregation
- affirm past and present involvement and discover new gifts, talents, and needs
- renew participation in the mission of the faith community and grow in Christian stewardship

## Face-to-Face Invitations

The best way to invite others to support the ministry of your congregation is for one person to tell another person, face-to-face, why they support this ministry and to invite the other person to join them by making an intentional and meaningful gift.

A face-to-face invitation is a chance to

- thank people personally for contributions to the congregation
- talk about the ministry of the congregation and the denomination
- personally invite their generosity
- thank them again

For the giver, it is an opportunity to

- plan their gift in the context of the ministry of the congregation
- learn more about what their generosity accomplishes
- discuss the work of the church locally and the work of the denomination

For the person making the invitation, it is an opportunity to

- first plan their own gift before inviting others
- fully internalize and own the ministry of the congregation and the denomination
- listen to the needs and concerns of others and pass them on to the appropriate leaders

## Community Meal(s)

If asking an individual face-to-face is new for you, or if you suspect there would be significant resistance to such conversations in your community, consider hosting a Community Meal(s). A meal is a fun way to share *Why I Give* stories and the Narrative Budget, and to give each guest their letter with Decision-Making tools and a Response Card. There is a step-by-step guide to hosting a Community Meal on pp. 15–16 in the Planning Workbook. Also, check out the video *Inviting Generosity – Community Meals* at [youtu.be/yG303-YB4lk](https://youtu.be/yG303-YB4lk). Gathering together for a meal and conversation is a wonderful opportunity to build and model community. At the table, we are fed both physically and spiritually as we eat together, learn together, and pray together. It is at the table that we discover what it is to have enough to share with our neighbours. At the table, we are encouraged; we learn we are not alone and that we are each appreciated and loved.



## Gathering

There are various ways to organize a meal to reach as many people as possible:

- Gatherings of six or eight in individual homes
- One or more gatherings at the church property

When planning your meal(s) please follow all public health and government regulations and suggestions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

If there is more than one Community Meal, you might invite people randomly (see what new relationships are formed) or by neighbourhood, area of interest (e.g., outreach, music), or by stage of life (families, singles, seniors, young adults).

## Meal

You might want to make food a special focus of your meal, e.g., a 50-mile or local menu, or you may feel comfortable hosting a community outreach dinner. You might ask another church to cater the meal (offering to do the same for them in the future).

### Format

- Have co-hosts for the meal to share the responsibility.
- Invite as guest speaker someone who has benefitted by the mission of your congregation so they can share what a difference your community's generosity makes.
- Focus on one area of ministry, e.g., outreach, pastoral care, learning, worship, and invite a guest from that area to talk about what they do and why they do it.

## Ahead of Time

- Set up for video(s): *Called to Be the Church: Inspiring Generosity – Community Meals* ([youtube.com/watch?v=yG3O3-YB4lk](https://youtube.com/watch?v=yG3O3-YB4lk))
- Prepare a menu card with the agenda, meal plan, and maybe faith-sharing questions (see below).
- Print thank-you placemats that read “Thank you, God. Amen.” in different languages (see [united-church.ca/stewardship](https://united-church.ca/stewardship)).



- Have copies of the invitation package for everyone. It will include:
  - Letter of Invitation
  - Narrative Budget
  - Giving Guide and Proportional Giving Chart or Step Chart
  - Response Card and return envelope
  - Other vehicles that draw attention to the ministry of the congregation and the giving program
- Faith-sharing questions printed on cards at the tables or on a flipchart or shown on a screen:
  - What gift have you most recently received? From whom? What did it mean to you?
  - What gift have you most recently given away? To whom? Why?
  - Whom do you consider to be a role model of a generous and giving person?

## Gather

Co-hosts welcome everyone and review the purpose and outline of the evening.

## First Course

Table hosts welcome their guests and invite people to introduce themselves and to reply to the following questions:

- What brought you to \_\_\_\_\_ Church? Why do you stay?

Following the grace and while the first course is being served, show one of the videos.

Select a grace from the many suggestions at [united-church.ca/stewardship](http://united-church.ca/stewardship).

## Main Course

**Inspire:** During the main course, the table host shares their *Why I Give* story.

## Main Course and Dessert

The co-host introduces the guest speaker and/or others who will share *Why I Give* stories. The co-host reviews the Invitation Package and shares their own *Why I Give* story. Looking at the church's Narrative Budget, the co-host invites everyone to share dreams of what might be done with increased generosity.

**Invite:** The co-host then invites others to join them in supporting the mission of the church with a personally meaningful and intentional gift to the congregation. The host also refers to the Decision-Making Tools (pp. 32-35) and asks that people make a prayerful decision, sharing their decision on the Response Card. Details are given as to when and how the Response Cards should be returned. The aim is to have everyone in the congregation participate.

## Dessert

The co-host invites people to discuss all that they have listened to and to submit questions to the table hosts. These questions will be shared with the Giving Team.

## Wrap-Up and Follow-Up

**Thank:** The co-hosts thank everyone for coming to share the meal. They also share the next steps in the giving program and emphasize again the importance of the Response Cards. The concluding prayer might include another "Thank you." Within two or three days, the hosts send a (handwritten) thank-you note to everyone who attended, reminding them to return the Response Cards.

## Letter of Invitation

Plan to send a letter to every individual or household in your community of faith immediately following Sunday 1, or plan to hand out the letter with the Narrative Budget at a Community Meal. The objective is to write an inspiring letter that is also personal. It is an opportunity to tell the story of your faith community and how it makes a difference in the lives of individuals in your community and in the world through the ministry of the Mission & Service of The United Church of Canada.

## Letter-Writing Guidelines

- Your letter needs to sound authentic and natural and reflect the culture of your community of faith.
- Remind your readers that God is the provider of an abundance of resources for ministry and mission. Communities of faith have many assets, including financial ones, with which to carry out their mission; your congregation is rich in faith, service, love, talent, and life experience. Remind your readers of their abundance. How does your community offer thanks for God’s generosity and respond to God’s generosity by serving others?
- Hand-address each letter with a note of encouragement (e.g., “We are so grateful for all you do in working with your Sunday school program.”) and sign each one.
- Begin your letter with gratitude and give thanks for past and current gifts. Where possible, be specific about each individual’s contribution to the ministry of the congregation (with total if appropriate) and tell them what their generosity has, and will, accomplish.
- Keep your letter
  - concise—ideally one page
  - easy to read
  - story-based—connected to your ministry and *Why I Give* stories
  - framed in positive language—do not beg or use guilt
- Invite each person to consider giving time and talent, as well as treasure.

## Different Letters for Different Donors

A letter that invites your community to be generous with its givings will be more successful if you tailor the letter to different groups in the congregation. People give for different reasons and find different kinds of information helpful when making their giving decisions. It is wise to identify a strategy of creating different letters that works for your community.

So how might you group people in the congregation and what might be unique about each letter? Use the following table to help you determine the appropriate groups for your congregation.

Group	Message
<b>Those on Pre-Authorized Remittance (PAR)</b>	Thank them for their consistent support of the mission. Invite them to consider increasing their gift and include the tools to do so, making it as easy and seamless as possible.
<b>New donors in the past (number) months</b>	Welcome them to the community. Share some of the highlights of mission and ministry in the time before they arrived and how their contributions have had an impact recently.
<b>Occasional attenders or donors</b> For example: those who return home for the holidays; those who go only on holidays; those who are summer attenders	Thank them for their generosity and how their giving helps make a difference throughout the year. Share some highlights of your ministry in the time between their visits. Avoid any language that smacks of guilt or judgment about their giving pattern.
<b>Those with an interest in a particular ministry</b> For example: outreach, church school, youth work, music	Thank them for their general support of the ministry of the congregation and then include stories about the impact of their giving on the area of their interest.
<b>Over 65</b>	Include encouragement to consider long-term support through a bequest or other planned gift. Include a reply card that they can return to indicate their interest in pursuing this.
<b>Those using envelopes</b>	If you are a PAR (Pre-Authorized Remittance) congregation, you might encourage people to shift from envelope giving to signing up for PAR. Include a PAR brochure; share a quote from someone in your congregation who uses PAR, sharing why they choose to give in this way, e.g., it's easier and helps with cash flow. See <a href="http://united-church.ca/community-faith/get-involved/ways-give/giving-monthly-through-par">united-church.ca/community-faith/get-involved/ways-give/giving-monthly-through-par</a> .

If you are writing to several different groups of people, such as regular givers and occasional givers, customize the letters but keep the main elements the same. See the examples that follow.





## Letter Template for Those Who Already Give Regularly

Dear Bob,

Thanks so much for all the skills you brought to us this year by.... I trust the holiday you had in...was memorable and that you enjoyed....

You consistently and generously support this church with your time and talents as well as your treasure.

Thank you for your previous contributions for the ministry and mission of our congregation and the Mission & Service of The United Church of Canada.

It is great to have your presence in our congregation. We also appreciate your generous financial gifts, which support the life and work of..., in.... Thank you!

We cannot say thank you enough for all you do to make our ministry possible as a congregation and as The United Church of Canada.

As a faith community we have responded to the call to be the church in the past year by....

And we have plans for the coming year.

This year, we want to encourage you to continue your practice of supporting God's mission (knowing that this is an intention that may change due to future circumstances). By making your intentions known to the leadership of the congregation, we can plan our ministry and support God's mission in our congregation and our denomination through the Mission & Service of the United Church. To assist you in making a decision we include....

Identify your current level of giving in the Step Chart. Then we challenge you to step up one or more levels in your giving for 2021.

Please prayerfully consider how you will contribute to God's mission and return the enclosed card by Sunday..., when we will dedicate our gifts to God's future ministry in this place.

With heartfelt thanks for your support,

*(handsigned)*

Called to Be the Church Giving Team

## Letter Template for Not-Yet Givers



Dear Linda,

Thanks so much for all the skills you brought to us this year by.... I trust the holiday you had in...was memorable and that you enjoyed....

It is great to have your presence in our congregation. We cannot say thank you enough for all you do to make our ministry possible as a congregation and as The United Church of Canada. You consistently and generously support God's mission with your time and talents.

As a faith community we have responded to the call to be the church in the past year by....

And we have plans for the coming year.

This year, we want to encourage you to begin making an intentional gift to support our ministry. By beginning to make a weekly or monthly gift (with envelopes or by Pre-Authorized Remittance), you will be helping our community respond to God's mission in our community.

To assist you in making a decision, we include a chart showing how people are currently giving to our ministry. It is offered as a guide to help you make a meaningful gift to support our work. In addition, *(name)* at *(e-mail address or phone number)* is available to answer any questions you might have.

Please prayerfully consider supporting God's mission here at...United Church. Please fill in and return the enclosed Response Card by Sunday..., when we will dedicate our gifts to God's future ministry in this place.

With heartfelt thanks for your support,

*(handsigned)*

Called to Be the Church Giving Team

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, **generosity**, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Galatians 5:22–23

Thank you, Riverbend United Church, for sharing your ideas for an intentional giving sheet and response card.

## Decision-Making Tools

These tools will help people make informed decisions based on concrete information.

While people may know the amount they currently give to support the mission of the church, they are often unaware of the generosity of others or what might be expected of them. The Proportional Giving Chart helps people see what proportion of their income (either net or gross) they are giving to the mission of the church. You can include the version that aligns with the giving pattern of your people—weekly, monthly, or yearly. This chart also helps identify what the weekly or monthly donation would need to be if people wished to make a specific proportional gift—two percent or 10 percent (a biblical tithe).

## Intention Sheet and Response Card

There are many benefits to keeping track of the response to the giving program. Doing so will be more successful if returning the Response Card is positioned as a means of including and honouring everyone's gifts.

By asking *everyone* to return a Response Card (in a sealed envelope), regardless of how it is filled out, you show that you are valuing everyone and their contribution—whatever that may be.

This is a pastoral matter and will be more readily received if it is approached that way. Successful programs have a person with strong pastoral skills who calls those who have not yet returned their Response Card, offering a gentle reminder and sharing the rationale for giving.

On the next page is a sample that you can adapt for your own purposes. To help members make an informed and meaningful gift, Riverbend United Church in Edmonton created a Making Your Intention sheet to help determine the amount given to God's mission. Participants kept this for their records and filled in the Response Card, which was returned to the church.

## Riverbend United Church | 2020 Giving Guide



### Making Your Intention

Having decided to make a gift, how much will you give?

Here are some steps to help you make a prayerful and intentional gift to the mission of God's church – and to support our 2020 congregational goals.

1. Your household income: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

2. The percentage of your total income you wish to give to God's work: \_\_\_\_\_

Two percent might be considered a starting point. Use the Proportional Giving Chart below to help you gauge the percentage you already give or what the percentage means as a weekly or monthly amount.

Proportional Giving Chart						
Family Income	Annual		Monthly		Weekly	
	2%	10%	2%	10%	2%	10%
\$10,000	\$200	\$1,000	\$17	\$83	\$4	\$19
\$25,000	\$500	\$2,500	\$42	\$208	\$10	\$48
\$50,000	\$1000	\$5,000	\$83	\$417	\$19	\$96
\$75,000	\$1,500	\$7,500	\$125	\$625	\$29	\$144
\$100,000	\$2,000	\$10,000	\$167	\$833	\$38	\$192
\$200,000	\$4,000	\$20,000	\$333	\$1,667	\$77	\$385

3. Intention statement – It is my/our intention to contribute to the mission of God's church by committing to the following financial support for the 12 months beginning January 2020.

#### Riverbend United Church

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ per month to **Our Ministries**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ per month to **Our Building**

#### Wider Church

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ per month to **Mission & Service**

4. Fill in the Response Card and return to the church office.


5. Make a note to check every few months to see if you are on track with your intention.

### OUR 2020 CONGREGATIONAL GIVING GOALS

1. Increase Response Card submissions by 100% - grow from 25 to 50 submissions
2. Grow PAR givers by 50% - support your intention and reduce our administration efforts
3. Make **Our Building** 25% of the overall givings – and an incremental increase

### Additional Wording Suggestion

I would like to learn more about Planned Legacy Giving.



## 2020 Giving Program | Response Card

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_

### My / Our Monthly Giving

**Riverbend United Church**

Our Ministries \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Our Building \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Wider Church**

Mission & Service \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### My / Our Method of Giving

☐ Envelopes

☐ Existing Monthly Pre-Authorized Remittances (PAR)

☐ NEW Monthly Pre-Authorized Remittances (PAR)

If NEW to PAR, you will be contacted by our Envelope Steward to make arrangements to begin your monthly withdrawals.

**Our 2020 Congregational Giving Goals**

1. Increase Response Card submissions by 100% – grow from 25 to 50 submissions
2. Increase PAR givers by 50% – reduce our administration efforts
3. Make Our Building 25% of the overall givings – and an incremental increase

**Please remit this card  
before November 25<sup>th</sup>  
– Thank you!**

All information is for the church's ministry planning. It will be received and processed in a confidential manner by the Envelope Steward. You may change your amount if your financial situation changes.

## Additional Wording Suggestions

It is my/our intention to contribute to the mission of God's church by committing to the following financial support for the 12 months beginning \_\_\_\_\_.

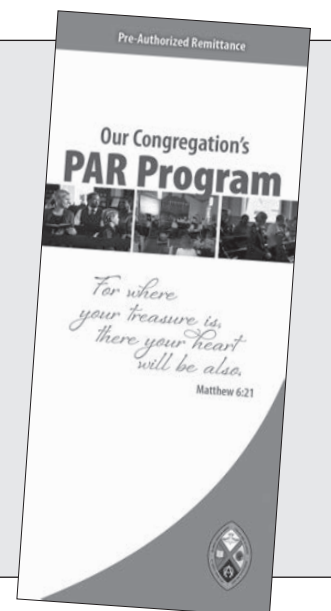
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ per week/month to \_\_\_\_\_ local ministry and mission

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ per week/month to Mission & Service

**Attention PAR givers!** It's easy to increase or change your monthly gift. Just indicate the changed amount on this form, and we'll take care of the rest.

Increase or change from \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
to \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per month effective  
\_\_\_\_\_ (month).

I would like to make my donation through Pre-Authorized Remittance (PAR)—automatic deduction from my bank account or credit card. (Please note that a 2–3 percent bank service charge reduces the total of your credit card donation.)



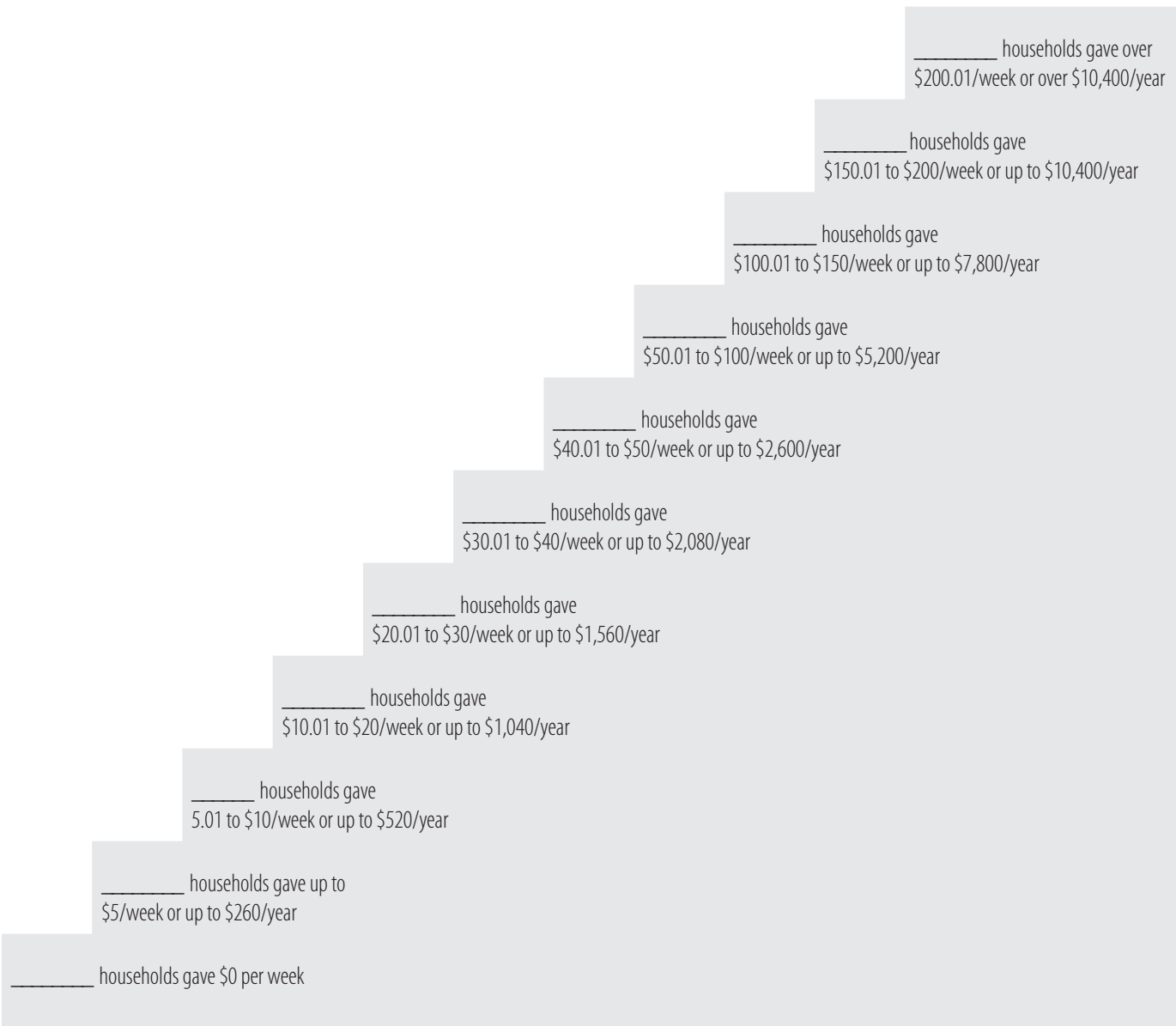
# Step Chart

The Step Chart shows where a gift level fits within the giving pattern of the rest of the congregation and suggests a next step that might be taken. There is a template at [united-church.ca/stewardship](http://united-church.ca/stewardship) that you can customize for your congregation.

## Sample Step Chart

Here is a breakdown of a congregation’s giving patterns.

Where are you on the chart? Can you move up one step?



## Communication

Communication is vital to the success of any program. Here are some suggestions to get the juices flowing and to start talking about *Called to Be the Church* in your community. Add your own creativity to suit your context, check out ideas for bulletin covers, digital slides, logos, and other resources at [united-church.ca/stewardship](http://united-church.ca/stewardship), and refer to the Communication planning resource on p. 18 of the Planning Workbook.

Use all communication channels possible—congregational announcements, bulletin inserts, church e-mail lists, and social media—and stay connected throughout the program to build interest, enthusiasm, and commitment.

## Program Announcements

As soon as your plans are formalized, communicate what is being planned to build anticipation and support and to encourage participation. If you are mailing letters, make sure they are timed to arrive two weeks prior to Sunday 1.

In your written and verbal messages, be sure to communicate the following:

**Why:** Our congregation carries out God's mission locally in our own community and in the wider world through the Mission & Service of the United Church. This is important and makes a difference. We are inviting everyone in our community to learn more about how we do this and to make their own informed and intentional gift so we can continue this good work.

**What:** This is our congregational giving program—to invite everyone to contribute to God's mission for us.

**When:** We will begin our program (*date*), continuing for (*number*) weeks until (*date*).

**How:** We will be inviting participation through a mailing to every member or a Community Meal being planned for (*date*).

## Sample: Verbal Announcement, Bulletin Insert, or E-mail

Edit or rewrite to suit your community:

Our worship is filled with scripture, song, and story about God's generosity and our response—discovering that Discipleship Is Stewardship. In our worship we regularly say what we believe when we say A New Creed. We believe that we are called as individuals, families, communities of faith, and as a denomination to follow in the way of Jesus to bring about a world of justice and peace.

I respond to this call and give to the ministry of (*name of community of faith*) because (*include personal "Why I Give" paragraph*).



Over the coming weeks, we will focus on how we love our neighbours by supporting God's mission. We will share more stories about why we give; how our generosity makes a difference here at *(name of your congregation)*; how we have an impact on the community around us; and how, through the Mission & Service of the United Church, we respond to this call nationally and globally.

We will have worship and learning opportunities for all ages. *(Include details about what is planned.)* Also, we will invite you to join us in giving an intentional and meaningful gift to this ministry.

It is going to be an inspiring experience. Listen for your own call, and please respond with generosity!

## Sample: Personalized Letter or E-mail

Mail a letter to each individual or family in the congregation. Adapt the following wording for your context:

### Opening

Dear *(handwritten salutation using first name—or Mr., Ms., Mrs. and surname)*,

A New Creed calls us to be the church: to celebrate God's presence, to live with respect in Creation, to love and serve others, to seek justice and resist evil, and to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our judge and our hope.

We are called to follow in the way of Jesus as individuals, families, communities of faith, and as a denomination. (I/We) respond to this call and give to the ministry of *(name of your pastoral charge/community of faith)* because...(begin with a "Why I Give" paragraph from the Giving Team co-leads).

Over the coming weeks, our community of faith will be focused on how we are Called to Be the Church. We will share more stories about why we give, how our generosity makes a difference here at *(name of your pastoral charge/community of faith)*, how we affect the community around us, and how, through the Mission & Service of the United Church, we respond to this call nationally and globally.

Join us week by week to hear the stories of how we are called—in our worship and through a variety of learning opportunities. *(Include notice of children's and youth programs, and adult learning events.)*

*(Explain how you will be inviting everyone's participation: through one or more community events or via a mailing.)*

- Draft a letter to introduce your giving program
- Throughout the program, communicate your message on screens, websites, and with e-news

## Closing

Between now and then we encourage you and all members of your family to prayerfully consider your own reasons for giving and how you will respond to this call. We hope this will be a rich opportunity for you to reflect on the blessings of your life and how you can live out your own response.

With thanks and blessings,

*(handsigned)*

Giving Team Co-Leads



## Thank

### Thank Everyone

A culture of generosity is built on a foundation of gratitude. In a culture of gratitude, we thank God for the blessings in our lives. God is generous again, again, and again. Say thank you again, again, and again—and in many different ways.

We thank individuals and groups for their generous support of the ministry in their community. We cannot thank enough. We give thanks for every gift.

### Timely, Sincere, Personal

We make sure our gratitude and thanks are

- timely: closely connected to when the gift is received
- sincere: communicating what a difference the gift will make
- personal: face-to-face or in a handwritten note

Find opportunities to say thank you directly. Find opportunities to write personal notes of thanks. Thanking needs to be planned if it is to become a habit in your congregation and for everyone who gives to be thanked.

### Make It Timely

- Don't wait until the end of the program.
- Thank donors as soon as the Response Card arrives, phoning them to say you received the gift and are grateful.
- Thank every new donor as soon as possible with a phone call or handwritten note.

## Make It Sincere

- Adding appreciation to thanks builds sincerity. Acknowledgement is thanks. Think about ways of adding appreciation—affirming the qualities of the donor, their motivation, and their hopes.
- Show yourself in the thanks and connect yourself with your donor. Wear your heart on your sleeve!
- Add a simple homemade gift, such as cookies or bags of special tea with a note that reads: “Every time you make a cup of tea or have a cookie, remember that we are grateful for your generosity.”

## Make It Personal

- Formal and generalized expressions of gratitude are often necessary. However, they lack the personal touch. Use “I,” “we,” and “you” in your sentences so that the tone of your message feels warm.
- Be specific about the reasons for being grateful—the impact of the gift or your personal reaction to their generosity.
- The person who did the inviting is most likely to be the best person to do the thanking. Handwritten notes and speaking face-to-face are the most personal ways to thank someone.

## Make Giving Thanks a Habit

- **Send a handwritten note to a few people each week**—thank leaders for their time and talent; remain connected to those who are homebound, asking for their prayers for the work of the congregation; thank every person who makes a contribution to worship services (e.g., choir members, greeters).
- Every once in a while, **take a look at how you offer thanks** and how you might refresh it a little, or think of a new or unusual way of saying thank you.
- **Encourage others** to develop the habit of thanking within the congregation and in the rest of their lives. For example, each time they meet, have Board/Council members write thank-you notes to people they have witnessed contributing in some way to the congregation’s mission. Have the Board/Council members hand deliver their notes the following week.
- Always, be sure to **thank in ways that build relationships!**



# Wrap-Up and Evaluation

People have been **inspired**, everyone has been **invited**, all have responded in some way, and you have had a celebration of **thanks!** The important parts of this program have been accomplished, and just a bit more energy and focus are needed to wrap things up. Taking as much care with this, as with everything else, will have long-term benefits.

Within a week or two of Sunday 5 (or the last Sunday of your chosen program), gather the Giving Team and take time to debrief the experience of developing and guiding the giving program. This can be informal, with someone taking notes to keep track of any next steps and to help next year's Giving Team.

## Giving Team's Evaluation Meeting

### Opening Prayer

Gracious and loving Creator,  
we give thanks for all the generous gifts we receive through you.  
We are called to be disciples of your son, Jesus.  
We give thanks for Jesus and how his life is a model for our own.  
Through *Called to Be the Church: Discipleship Is Stewardship*, we have received many blessings.  
We are specifically grateful for (*specify*).  
(*Allow sufficient time to share the blessings of this experience and all the things you are thankful for.*)  
May your Spirit be with us as we continue to live as your faithful disciples and stewards.  
We ask this in Jesus' name.  
Amen.

## Review Your Experience

Complete the **Evaluation** form that appears on p. 20 of the Planning Workbook using the following questions to help your team.

- Revisit the goals and objectives you established when you were getting started (see pp. 5–8 of the Planning Workbook). What was fulfilled? What changed?
- What went well?
- What did you do differently?
- What would you do differently in the future?
- What did you learn?
- What did you hear?
- Consider who needs to know this information:
  - ministry personnel: about pastoral issues
  - envelope secretary: to provide updated information
  - Christian educators or others: to provide program ideas

As you think about the whole process, include notes on conversations shared with members of your community of faith.

## Follow-Up

- Report to your congregation's Board or Council.
- Plan further communication now and over the course of the next year.
- How will you report on any future gifts received?
- How will you update people about the impact of their generosity?
- Identify when to get started for next year. Since the worship materials for 2022 will be for the Season of Epiphany, you will receive the Worship Sampler with your October 2021 e-newsletter *E-ssentials*. You may wish to keep your Program Guide and Planning Workbook. As always, *Called to Be the Church 2022* will be available online.
- Please send your evaluation to:
  - e-mail: [called@united-church.ca](mailto:called@united-church.ca)
  - mail: Called to Be the Church Giving Program,  
3250 Bloor St West, Suite 200, Toronto, ON M8X 2Y4
- Wrap up any loose ends.

## Closing

- Cake and a celebratory beverage might be called for!
- Conclude with a blessing.

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

## Stewardship Prayers

Mighty and tender God,  
Creator and giver of life and all things,  
we give our thanks and praise.  
We are especially thankful for (*specify*).  
Mighty and tender God,  
we ask your blessing upon our work and ministry,  
our response to your call to be the Church:  
    to celebrate God's presence,  
    to live with respect in Creation,  
    to love and serve others,  
    to seek justice and resist evil,  
    to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our judge  
    and our hope.  
—based on A New Creed

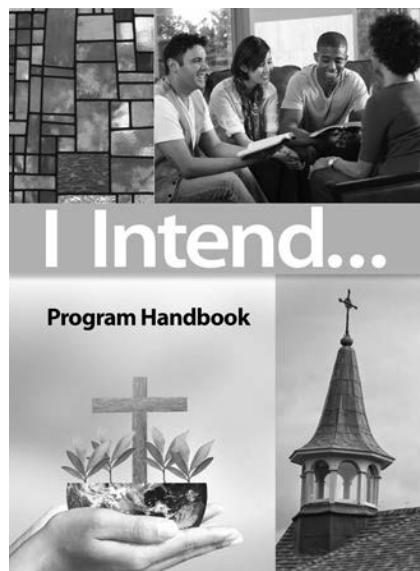
Gracious and generous God,  
Creator and giver of all that is good,  
we thank you for our many blessings.  
We acknowledge that all that we have is from you.  
We offer you thanks and praise for the beauty of the earth,  
our work, our family, our loved ones,  
and all the gifts we have been given.  
Help us to hear your call to be good stewards,  
caretakers, and managers of all your gifts  
by sharing them for your purposes.  
Help us plan to serve our church,  
our community, and our world with your gifts.  
May we serve you and pray  
with a joyful spirit of mind and heart.  
We remain your faithful stewards. Amen.

Mighty and tender God,  
 hear us as we pray  
 for the church throughout the world  
 in its life and ministries;  
 for the nations and peoples of the world  
 as they strive for peace and justice;  
 for all who suffer:  
 people who are sick, grieving,  
 lonely, oppressed;  
 for peaceful relations among friends, colleagues,  
 family, and strangers (*names*).  
 Mighty and tender God,  
 in your loving purpose help us  
 to use and share the gifts  
 you have given us to contribute to your mission.  
 In all things, give us the grace and wisdom  
 to accept your will.  
 In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Generous and loving God,  
 you call us to be disciples of your son, Jesus,  
 and good stewards of your many gifts.  
 Open our minds and hearts  
 to a greater awareness and deeper appreciation  
 of your countless blessings.  
 Transform us through the power of your Spirit  
 to nurture a stewardship way of life for all our days.  
 Be with us as we encourage vitality and joy,  
 never forgetting our purpose and your call.  
 Help us to be a community of compassion  
 and hope in our homes, our community, and the world.  
 We pray this in the name of Jesus, crucified and risen,  
 our judge and our hope. Amen.

Discover more resources at

**united-church.ca/  
stewardship**



### **Include *I Intend* among your resources!**

*I Intend* is a discipleship program based on the Called to Be the Church section of A New Creed. It fosters spiritual growth, offers a holistic understanding of the life of faith, and proposes practical and specific spiritual practices for daily living.

For congregations, small groups, and individuals.

**[united-church.ca/stewardship](http://united-church.ca/stewardship)**



# *Dedication*

*Called to Be the Church 2021* is dedicated to Susan Graham Walker (retired in 2020), whose passion, planning, and insight continue to help nurture generous disciples across the church.

