



Stewardship Blueprint

Please acknowledge the source as follows: Alabama-West Florida United Methodist Foundation, Annual Stewardship Kit, 2024, By Andrea Farquhar and Mark LaBranche.

Resource Intention: This resource is intended to be used by the church pastor and/or church leaders on the stewardship/finance team. The ideas listed in this resource compliment the 2024 Storehouse theme for the Annual Stewardship Kit, but can also be used and adapted to your current church stewardship strategy. This resource was created by the UM Foundation and is a compilation of ideas and strategies discussed at our Game Changing Leadership webinars. If you have additional ideas or suggestions to add to next year's resources, please email andrea@alwfumf.org.

Set the Tone: The annual stewardship emphasis is a great chance to reflect and celebrate the impact of your church's ministry over the past year and set the table for what is to come by sharing your vision and the ministry plan for the coming year. By sharing the "why" or vision with your congregation, you create a compelling narrative for your people and move the focus from transactional to transformational ministry.

Sermon Series and Outlines: The Annual Stewardship Kit includes two sermon outlines prepared by UM Foundation staff member Mark LaBranche. These sermon outlines offer two different approaches to the stewardship theme and are designed for the pastor to flesh out further through additions of personal thoughts and illustrations and adapt to your unique context.

Chris Stovall and Broderick Santiago explore several great ideas for planning a series on giving in the Game Changing Leadership webinar "Preaching on Giving: The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly" (<https://youtu.be/cCLDizXB4nY>).

Offering Moment: When we can connect our giving to life change and see how our dollars are making an impact on God's Kingdom, we are more likely to give more or even for the first time. Most churches have some kind of offering, whether plates are passed, strategically placed, or brought to the altar for prayer. Our friends at Generis have emphasized an offering moment as a best practice to grow a church's culture of

generosity. It is a chance to add another element to this part of worship by featuring a ministry area where your congregation's giving is making an impact. This is an opportunity for pastors, staff members, or ministry leaders/volunteers to share impact once a week, once a month, or at a pace that works for your church.

Example: Because of your generosity, we reached over 200 kids and families in our community at our back to school event at the beginning of August. Families enjoyed games, a free meal, and heard the message of Jesus, some for the first time! Your giving made this event possible and is truly making a difference in the lives of those both within and outside the walls of our church!

Mail a Stewardship Packet: Send a mailed packet to each member in your congregation announcing the beginning of the annual stewardship emphasis. This packet should include:

- A letter from the pastor or stewardship/financial leader that reflects and celebrates the impact of your church's ministry over the past year and sets the table for what is to come by sharing your vision and the ministry plan for the coming year. Use this letter to focus on the church and its growth, how God has moved and is moving in your church and community, and to thank those who currently give. Be sure to invite everyone to your commitment Sunday service and include any scripture for your church family to pray over throughout the stewardship emphasis.
- Financial Pledge Card

Worship: Be strategic about different areas of worship. For example:

- Choose music that goes along with the theme/sermon series
- Choose a Commitment Sunday where church members can bring their pledge cards up to the altar.
- Give a take home item the on first Sunday of the series (a card, cross, magnet, or small item that fits in a pocket) that will remind your church to be thinking and praying throughout the stewardship emphasis.

Ministry Fair: Choose a Sunday during the stewardship emphasis to promote the different ministries within your church and the impact they are having in your church and community. Provide each ministry with a table, chairs, tablecloth, and let each ministry decorate their table with photos, information, and things related to their ministry. Consider pairing the ministry fair with a fellowship meal where people can enjoy time together and walk around to each table to learn more about how their giving is making an impact in each of the church's ministries.

Thank Your Congregation: At the close of the annual stewardship emphasis, be sure to thank your congregation both in the worship service and individually through personal letters. When someone decides to give for the first time, increase their giving, or even continue their giving, it is a chance to celebrate! A personal note from the pastor or stewardship/finance leader thanking people for giving goes a long way.

Game Changing Leadership Webinar Replays:

The following Game Changing Leadership webinar replays, hosted by the UM Foundation, contain valuable information from our speakers, Chris Stovall, Broderick Santiago, and Ken Sloane, about giving, generosity, and stewardship.

- Strategies for Capital Campaigns: Raising Funds for Your Church's God-inspired Vision (Chris Stovall): <https://youtu.be/RSwD0GvNA1Y>
- Developing a Year-Round Stewardship Strategy (Ken Sloane): https://youtu.be/q2FDyBIRH_8
- Preaching on Giving: The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly (Chris Stovall and Broderick Santiago): <https://youtu.be/cCLDizXB4nY>
- Creating a Narrative Budget (Ken Sloane): <https://youtu.be/BFf2nmKkzqo>

Other Ideas and Resources:

- **Game Changing Leadership Webinars** are offered on a regular basis throughout the year and cover a variety of topics that are helpful for an overall view of stewardship, accepting and managing planned gifts, financial basics, and more. To learn more about these free webinars, visit: <https://alwfumf.org/events/>
- 50 Ways to Encourage Faithful Giving (article): <https://www.churchleadership.com/50-ways/50-ways-to-encourage-faithful-giving/>
- Why Pledging Still Matters (article) <https://www.churchleadership.com/leading-ideas/why-pledging-still-matters/>
- Generosity, Stewardship, and Abundance (book): <https://www.amazon.com/Generosity-Stewardship-Abundance-Transformational-Finance/dp/1538135337/>
- **Create an annual stewardship calendar** and emphasize different stewardship concerns at different times of the year through your church bulletin and newsletter. This is a chance to develop stewardship themes that fall within church events or the liturgical calendar. For example:
 - Annual stewardship in the fall (October/November)
 - Year-end giving and giving Tuesday (November/December)
 - Planned giving at All Saint's Day (October)
 - Stewardship of Service: Annually host a ministry fair (see page 2) and have a sermon series based on the importance of serving and offer ways to volunteer to be part of the mission and ministry of the church. Invite your church family to participate in at least one ministry.
- **Incorporate Planned Gifts:** Annual Stewardship is a great chance to suggest planned gifts to your congregation. The UM Foundation provides services to accept many planned gift options as pledges such as gifts of stocks and other appreciated assets, IRA QCD gifts, and various windfall gifts. For more information, contact Terri Turner at foundation@alwfumf.org, 334-793-6820, or visit www.alwfumf.org/ways-to-give.
- **Discipleship Ministries** provides many free, and inexpensive resources about stewardship. To learn more, visit <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/equipping-leaders/stewardship> or contact Ken Sloane at ksloane@umcdiscipleship.org.
- **Partner with Generis:** Chris Stovall and Broderick Santiago provide extensive insight, strategies, and tips in each of our Game-Changing Leadership webinars.

Their main focus and expertise comes in the form of Capital Campaigns and Annual Stewardship Campaigns where they meet with church leadership teams one on one over the course of several months to develop and implement a custom plan for your church. If you would like to learn more or talk to Chris or Broderick about how they can help your church, contact Chris at chris.stovall@generis.com or Broderick at broderick.santiago@generis.com.

- **Partner with the UM Foundation:** Since 1979, the Foundation has been providing faith-based financial solutions that help churches live into their God-given vision. We provide financial services, planned giving, investment management, donor development, and more. We view everything we do as a ministry of generosity, and our goal is to see lives changed, generosity increased, churches grow, and ministries expand. To learn more, contact Terri Turner at foundation@alwfumf.org, 334-793-6820, or visit www.alwfumf.org.