

CREATING A CULTURE OF GENEROSITY

# Sharing Our Missional Stories



Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.

**The people of The United Methodist Church®**

## **Dear Partner in Ministry,**

Thank you for downloading the “Sharing Our Missional Stories” book. We hope you will find this book helpful as you tell your church members about God’s marvelous work in the world. You can use this comprehensive guide as a small-group Bible study tool or take the Connectional Giving online course at <http://www.umcom.org/learn/connectional-giving>

This course features three sections:

- “Why we give” explores the biblical and theological basis for giving.
- “The United Methodist Connection” explains how The United Methodist Church is a connectional church.
- “Creating a culture of generosity” shares how missional storytelling influences giving and advises how to encourage others to contribute.

You will learn how to be a missional storyteller, describing the difference the church makes in the world through generous giving. You’ll also understand how to “make the ask” in your congregation.

Visit [www.umcsgiving.org](http://www.umcsgiving.org) to learn more about apportioned and designated funds. On this website, you can also:

- Read stories and watch videos about the ministries supported through our United Methodist giving.
- Access free downloads or request brochures or other printed materials to use in your local church, district or conference organization.

We cultivate generous giving every day as we share stories of God’s love, model gratitude and discipleship, and invite others to share their prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness. We pray this will be a helpful resource for you.

Blessings!

**Connectional Giving Team**  
**United Methodist Communications**

# Creating a Culture of Generosity: Sharing Our Missional Stories

“all things come from [God], and of [God’s] own have we given [God]” (1 Chronicles 29:14b, NRSV).

## Module 1: Why We Give



### Biblical and Theological Basis for Giving

Tithe. Offering. Generosity. Gift. Talent. Contribution. Treasure. Apportionment. Giving. Financial Evangelism. Pledge. Charity. Stewardship. Benevolence.

Each of these words describes the act of giving to God. Each also carries positive or negative connotations that encourage or discourage giving to the church. As we study our Christian and United Methodist basis for giving, we will ground this exploration in biblical and theological understandings that empower us to become generous givers and discover the joy that comes from sharing in God’s work.

At the core of our biblical and theological understanding of giving is the truth that

When church members hear the word “stewardship,” they may think of an annual campaign. We base the word “stewardship” on an old concept of a steward. A steward looks after something that belongs to someone else. The word might have come into use to describe a person appointed to watch over a landowner’s pigs – the “sty ward” in charge of the pigsty. The sty ward’s duties were similar to those of a caretaker. Everything in all creation comes from God, who shares everything generously with us. God wants us to share in this generosity by giving ourselves through God’s grace. From this foundation of generosity, God calls us to become stewards of all God has entrusted to us. God desires that all people have the necessities for a full and abundant life. As we mature in our faith, we understand that everything belongs to God. We have the privilege to participate in God’s generosity!

God's economy is one of abundance. Because all creation has its origin and destiny in God, we always have enough when we share resources. When we understand our giving as a means of grace, God multiplies our gifts. As we give what God has entrusted to us, we share in God's mission and express our love for God and neighbor.

Some may view giving as an obligation; however, as Christians and United Methodists, we view giving as a privilege and a profound expression of our faith, hope and love in God's grace. It springs from gratitude toward God and our partnership in caring for God's creation. "We find that giving is a natural outcome of our baptismal and membership commitment to be generous in supporting our church's ministries through our prayers, presence, gifts, service, and Roman witness" (*2012 Book of Discipline* 217.6).

## Scripture Passages on Giving

Many Scripture passages focus on how we should live in relation to money and possessions. In fact, 16 of Jesus' 38 parables are about that topic. The Bible offers about 500 verses on prayer and fewer than 500 on faith, but more than 2,000 on money and possessions.

Major themes in the Bible regarding money, possessions and giving include the following.

- God owns everything and calls us to be stewards of God's creation (Leviticus 25:23; Deuteronomy 8:18; Psalm 24:1; Haggai 2:8; Matthew 25:21; Romans 11:36a; 1 Corinthians 4:2; 6:19–20).
- God is exceedingly generous (Matthew 7:11; John 3:16; Romans 8:32–33; 2 Corinthians 8:9; 1 Timothy 6:17c).
- Wealth is fleeting, and accumulation is dangerous (Deuteronomy 6:10–12; Proverbs 23:4–5; 30:8–9; Ecclesiastes 5:10–15; Mark 10:25; Luke 6:24; 16:25; 1 Timothy 6:9–10).
- Giving is an antidote to greed (Malachi 3:8–10; Mark 10:21; Luke 12:15–17a, 19b–21, 33; 1 Timothy 6:6–7, 17–19).
- Our hearts follow our money (Deuteronomy 17:16–17; Proverbs 18:10–11; Ecclesiastes 5:12; Matthew 6:1–4, 19–21, 24).
- God calls us to raise our standard of giving, not our standard of living (Luke 3:8a, 10–11; Acts 4:32, 34–35; 20:35b; 2 Corinthians 8:7, 13–14; 9:10–11; James 2:14–17).
- God calls us to withhold nothing but to give all we can (Matthew 10:38–39; Mark 1:16–18; 12:43–44; Luke 6:38; 14:33; 21:1–4; Acts 4:32; 2 Corinthians 8:1–3, 9; 9:6–9; 1 John 3:16–19).

- Our giving should reflect God’s priority to serve the poor (Proverbs 19:17; Matthew 25:34–40; Luke 19:8; Acts 10:2–4; Romans 12:13; Galatians 2:9–10; James 1:27).

When we read the Gospels especially and witness Jesus’ concern for the poor, we remember that those of us whom God has greatly blessed in material things cannot ignore the needs of the poor around us.

## **A Culture of Generosity**

The Rev. Ken Sloane, director of stewardship and connectional ministries at Discipleship Ministries, shares these observations of a United Methodist congregation in his booklet *Unleashing the Generosity of Our People*: “I worshipped for a period of time in a church that had signs posted everywhere — doors coming in, doors leaving, entering the fellowship hall, even in the men’s and women’s room: ‘It’s all about relationships.’ It wasn’t the church’s mission statement, but it was a core value, and you couldn’t be in that church facility for more than a minute without realizing it. It was a reference to their relationship with God, with Jesus Christ, with other persons in the church family, with their neighbors and community, and with the global community. This church lived it out; they were all about relationships.”

Stewardship is all about relationships. It is not about what the finance committee does

in August or September in preparation for the pledge campaign in November. It is not about the little box in the Sunday bulletin that tells us how much less last week’s offering was than what we needed to make the budget.

To view this from a biblical perspective, the dominant theme in the Hebrew Scriptures is the covenant God established with our Hebrew ancestors: “I will take you as my people, and I will be your God” (Exodus 6:7a, NRSV). We cannot understand or teach stewardship until we understand the blessings and obligations that undergird this covenantal relationship. Our responsibility is rooted in relationship: acceptance of the good news of redemption offered through a relationship with Jesus, who accepted the cross for us.

How does teaching about stewardship connect and call people into relationships?

As those who know God’s gifts and extraordinary grace, God calls us accountable for how we use the resources God entrusts to us. This leads to an amazing opportunity to practice generosity as we live our faith.

Generosity is finding the joy in giving. One cannot base it solely upon economic status. Rather, it includes a person’s pure intentions

of caring for the common good and giving from the heart. As Christians, we give in direct response to God as the great giver. Our generosity reflects how much God's love for us in Jesus Christ is mirrored in our love for God. Our giving level is more than a test of spiritual maturity. It is also an opportunity to show how much we trust God, love our neighbor and through our generosity, bring joy and justice for God's creation.

Practicing generosity enables us to practice our faith in tangible, life-transforming ways.

- God meets our needs, gives us all things to enjoy and holds us accountable for how we use our resources. How do we use our money to show our gratitude to God?
- In the self-giving of Jesus Christ, we experience God's extraordinary grace to remold our innermost being and release our potential. How willing are we to be truly generous in practice?
- In the gospel, Jesus emphasized love of neighbor as care for those in need. How do we use our financial resources to help relieve the suffering of others and create a more just world?
- Jesus and his followers depended on the hospitality and generosity of others when they engaged in ministry. How do we

resource the household of God today, along with its mission, essential maintenance and full-time workers?

As we practice generosity regularly through giving time, talent and treasure, our love of God and neighbor will be self-evident as will our commitment to God's mission in the world through God's church.

## **John Wesley's Views on Giving**

As United Methodists, our understanding of giving is grounded in Scripture.

The teachings and practices of our denomination's founder, John Wesley, also shape it.

Wesley was always clear that money is a gift from God. He was careful to insist that the love of money, not money itself, is the root of all evil. Wesley became deeply concerned as he saw Methodists, "with few exceptions," growing wealthier and, at the same time, decreasing in grace as they increased in wealth.

To those early Methodists Wesley implored, "The Lord of all will ... inquire, 'How didst thou employ the worldly goods which I lodged in thy hands ...? In what manner didst thou employ that comprehensive talent, money?' [By] first supplying thy own reasonable wants, together with those of the family; then restoring the remainder to me,

through the poor, whom I had appointed to receive” (Thomas Jackson, ed., *The Works of John Wesley, A.M.*, 3rd ed. [London: John Mason, 1829], 1:455–56).

Wesley formulated this philosophy of giving in the following terms: “If those who ‘gain all they can’ and ‘save all they can’ will likewise ‘give all they can’ then, the more they gain the more they will grow in grace, and the more treasure they will lay up in heaven” (Jackson, *Works*, 7:317).

While most of us know the outline of Wesley’s philosophy (gain, save and give), we may only know it as a stereotype. Let us examine it more closely.

## **Gain All You Can**

John Wesley stressed the pursuit of gain by honest industry, diligence, hard work and initiative. However, the overwhelming emphasis in Wesley’s discussion of “gain all you can” was not the pursuit of wealth as much as restrictions on the pursuit of wealth. Wesley said that we should not make money at the expense of life, health or hurting the mind. Nor should we make it in ways that would hurt one’s neighbor financially, bodily or spiritually.

For Wesley, the concept to “gain all you can” emphasized earning through full participation in God’s healing and creative work in the

world. It is a call to vocation that contributes to God’s mission of salvation (healing) of creation. Our labor, vocational choices and practices are part of giving, not a means to personal financial gain. The call to “gain all you can” is one to vocational investment in the common good.

## **Save All You Can**

Wesley noted with indignation the waste in the houses of the wealthy, which he regarded as a significant cause of poverty in his day. As he put it, “Only look in the kitchens of the great, the nobility and the gentry, almost without exception, and when you have observed the amazing waste which is made there you will no longer wonder at the scarcity” (Jackson, *Works*, 6:274, 275–76). Wesley said we should avoid unnecessary spending on such matters as these.

- Do not spend money to gratify the desires of the flesh. He said, “Be content with what plain nature requires.”
- Do not spend money to gratify the desires of the eye. He referred here to expensive apparel, needless ornaments, expensive furniture and so forth. He said, “Let your neighbors buy those things – your neighbors who don’t know any better than to do this kind of thing.”

- Do not spend money to gain admiration or praise. Do not buy applause.
- Do not throw away money on your children, in delicate food or costly apparel. “Why should you purchase for them more pride, vanity, etc.?” said Wesley. “They don’t want any more; they have enough already.”
- Do not save money to leave to your children so they can throw it away (Edward H. Sugden, ed., *Wesley’s Standard Sermons*, 6th ed, [London: Epworth Press, 1966], 2:320–23).

While the slogan “Live simply that others may simply live” is contemporary, the intent is old in the Wesleyan heritage.

## Give All You Can

When Wesley said, “Give all you can,” he meant all. In fact, Wesley did not ask us to “give all you can.” His emphasis was closer to “Give all; you can!” Wesley followed his own advice. As a student, he learned that he could live on a certain amount each week. As his income increased through the years, he continued to live on the same amount and give away the rest.

He told his sister: “Money never stays with me. It would burn me if it did. I throw it out of my hands as soon as possible, lest it should

find its way into my heart.” He told everyone that, if at his death he possessed more than 10 pounds, people could call him a robber.

## Why We Give

What motivates people to give time, money and care? As Christians, we give, first, because everything we have comes from God. We are stewards of what belongs to God. How we care for that which God has given to us will demonstrate the degree to which we can express our faith, hope and love for God’s creation. However, we do not always operate from this fundamental understanding of giving. As you will see below, people give for many other reasons.

- **Compassion** – They believe in the cause.
- **Affiliation** – They belong to the group.
- **Tradition** – They have a history or practice of giving.
- **Recognition** – They want people to recognize their generosity.
- **Inspiration** – The person presenting the need captivates them.
- **Obligation** – They feel it is the dutiful or expected thing to do.



- **Transformation** – They want to make a difference.
- **Invitation** – Someone invites them to give.
- **Completion** – They are fulfilling a commitment.

When disaster strikes, people are eager to give. Often, giving to these needs generates millions of dollars in aid to “individual need.” People give when they see a need or form a mental image of others in need; perceive a connection with those who will benefit from the gift; experience an emotional response, such as compassion or injustice; or recognize financial integrity in the church or add the organization to which they are giving.

These reasons do not explain or justify our need to give. We already have the first and most important reason before all others: “All things come from you, and of your own have we given you” (1 Chronicles 29:14b, NRSV). Reflect upon and acknowledge what might motivate you to give. Allow the great gift of God’s generosity to transform all of these reasons into one: to give because God first gave to you.

## Discussion: Why We Give

How does the covenant we make in baptism or confirmation form us as we decide about giving and being generous toward the church?

## Centering Moment

Read 1 Chronicles 29:10-18, NRSV (David’s praise to God). How does this Scripture passage shape your biblical and theological understanding of giving?

## Prayer

God, of your goodness give me yourself; for you are sufficient for me. I cannot properly ask anything less, to be worthy of you. If I were to ask less, I should always be in want. In you alone do I have all. Amen. —Juliana of Norwich, England, 15th cent. (United Methodist Hymnal, 495)

## Wrap-Up

In this module, we explored the biblical, theological and Wesleyan basis for giving and learned what motivates people to give. We considered God’s call to be generous givers, reflecting God’s nature, and discovered John Wesley’s excellent example to all United Methodists, and Christians, to gain, save and give all you can.

Download your free copy of the Why We Give e-book at <http://www.umcsgiving.org>. Share the link with other leaders in your church.

Watch and share the following United Methodist testimonial videos:

- [Why We Give: Union United Methodist Church](#) (The Rev. Joseph Abrams)
- [Living Simply, Giving Generously](#)

# Module 2:

## The United Methodist Connection



Begin this module with a centering moment based on Paul's celebration of the early Christian's generosity (2 Corinthians 8:1–5). With this foundation, we will recognize the connectional nature of The United Methodist Church. This module concludes with a look at each local church's sharing of "a portion meant for others" to support worldwide ministry and mission.

### Discussion: What Is a Connectional Church?

You have invited someone to attend a worship service with you at your local United Methodist church. After the service, as you walk from the church to your cars, the person asks, "What does it mean when people say The United Methodist Church is a connectional church?"

### Discussion: How Relevant Is the Word "Holiness" in Society Today?

In your personal experience, where have you felt The United Methodist Church calling you to a life of personal holiness? Where have you felt it calling you to a life of social holiness?

### Discussion: Missional Storytelling

Watch the ["Together We Can"](#) video.

#### Choose from discussion options below.

- How is this video an example of missional storytelling? What messages do you hear?
- Google your annual conference and look for a video or a story of how your local church's apportionments or ministry/mission

shares make a difference within your conference boundaries.

**Activity:** ([Watch this video](#))

This is how The United Methodist Church allocates each dollar given to mission and ministry. Which choice below best represents your response to these figures?

- I can see this in my local mission and ministry.
- I see it, but I am not sure I believe it.
- I had no idea, but I will look more closely at my local mission and ministry.

## Prayer

Righteous God, you have taught us that the poor shall have your kingdom, and that the gentle-minded shall inherit the earth. Keep the church poor enough to preach to poor people, and humble enough to walk with the despised. Never weigh us down with property or accumulated funds. Save your church from vain display or lavish comforts, so that we may travel light and move through the world showing your generous love made known in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. — from *Book of Common Worship, Daily Prayer* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993), 424)

## What Is Connectionalism?

John Wesley spoke of preachers being “in connection” with him. For Wesley, there was no religion but social religion, no holiness but social holiness. The communal forms of faith in the Wesleyan tradition promote personal growth. They equip and mobilize us for mission and service to the world. During the early years of The Methodist Episcopal Church in America, people frequently referred to the church as “the connection.”

Today, the word “connectionalism” is basic to United Methodism. It means that loyalties and commitments connect all United Methodists everywhere. The church’s outreach springs from the working of the Spirit. As United Methodists, we respond through our connectionalism based on mutual responsiveness and accountability. Connectional ties bind us in faith and service in our global witness, enabling faith to become active in love.

Being a connectional church is manifest in both our physical structure and organization and in our relationships with one another. The United Methodist Church is a collection of connected bodies. Local churches and charges; annual conferences, jurisdictional and central conferences; general boards and agencies; and the Council of Bishops and Judicial Council all are connected in a network that is best visualized by our

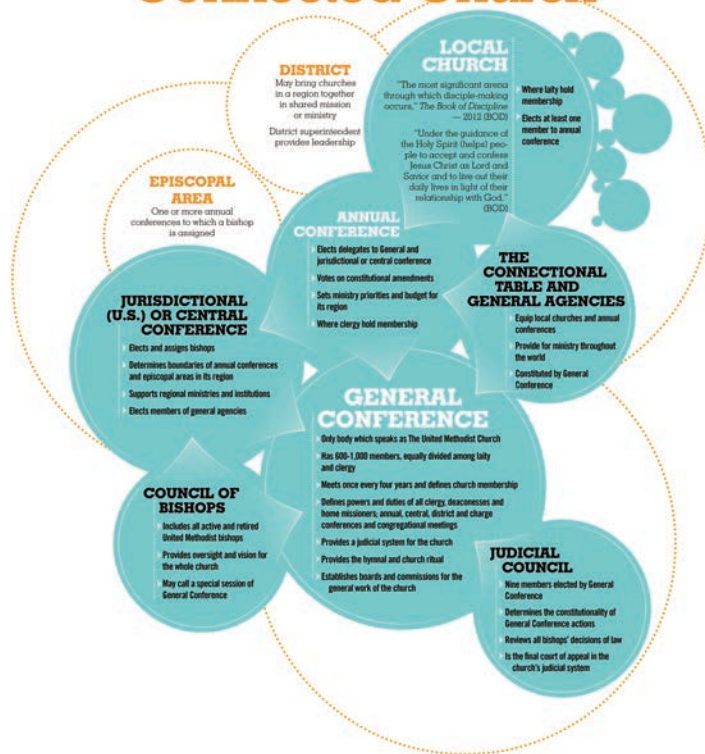
gathering as a General Conference every four years. In striving to be faithful to our roots, we seek to reclaim our history as a holy movement.

The United Methodist connection keeps us in relationship with one another. Bishops appoint our ordained clergy to a local church or a ministry setting, but the only membership they hold is to the annual conference. Laity may hold membership in a local church but also belong to the larger church.

The blessings of this connection are many. Our local church ministry reaches beyond the boundaries of our community and to the farthest corners of our world. When we serve, we have the power and potential of a scale of impact that no single church could have on its own. In times of crisis, we can summon resources in a coordinated way to ease people's suffering and have a worldwide network of churches and mission stations to get help directly to those in need. Even the smallest churches in this connection can claim a ministry that is expansive in its reach! That is a connected church!

As United Methodists, we accept and affirm that the primary task of our church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. We make disciples as we do the following,

## A UNITED METHODISTS: Connected Church



- Proclaim the gospel (good news), offer hospitality to people in our communities and welcome the strangers whom God sends our way.
- Lead people to commit their lives to Christ through baptism by water and the spirit and profession of faith.
- Nurture others in Christian living.
- Send people into the world to live lovingly and justly as servants of Christ.

- Continue the mission of seeking, welcoming and proclaiming Christ to the world, gathering people into the community of the body of Christ.

As the body of Christ, we experience connectedness with one another, within our local churches, with the larger faith community of United Methodists and with followers of Jesus Christ around the world.

Our church celebrates the connectedness between all individuals who embrace the United Methodist faith, its tenets and the church.

## **How Is The United Methodist Church a Connectional Church?**

The United Methodist Church began as a movement and a loose network of local societies with a mission. It grew into one of the most carefully organized and largest denominations in the world. The United Methodist structure and organization was designed to accomplish John Wesley's goal of spreading "scriptural holiness" over the land. As a result, people used the term "Methodist" to refer to the methodical way in which members of John Wesley's movement operated. Today, it is a well-accepted axiom that if you want something done, get the United Methodists to do it.

"Holiness" is a less-familiar term. John Wesley focused on living a holy life that reflected his devotion to a holy God. Two aspects of holiness were important to him: "personal holiness" (where our hearts and consciences are in tune with God through our relationship with Christ) and "social holiness" (how we live in the world, sharing God's love and compassion as Jesus taught and witnessing the risen Christ in the world). Some recall these aspects by comparing them with the image of a cross, where the vertical axis represents our love and devotion to God and the horizontal axis represents the importance of relationship and responsibility for God's children.

Wesley's concept of connectionalism came from his experiences in the Church of England. From these inherited connections, he developed distinctive connectional systems with the Methodist societies and Methodist itinerant preaching, such as annual conferences and circuits.

He considered these connectional systems to be "means of grace" or outward acts through which God conveys prevenient/divine, justifying and sanctifying grace to humanity. The connections of the church are more than institutions; they are the means God uses to convey grace to the world. Can you imagine a United Methodist annual conference as a means of grace?

Shocking as the thought may be, it is how Wesley envisioned the conferences originally for Methodist preachers “conferring” together.

As a connectional church, United Methodists rely on the combined, collective power of the connection to represent and operate as the body of Christ to the world. No local church is the total body of Christ. A common task and a common governance that reaches throughout the world bind them all.

Likewise, our connectionalism comes to life through our process of clergy appointments and the shared financial resources each local congregation gives to the general church, commonly called “shared ministry” or “apportionments.” What no one person or local church could do on its own, we can all accomplish together through our connection as United Methodists. The connection that we seek to uphold, then, is not only our connection with one another. Our connectedness to God, above all, we want to strengthen and demonstrate, as together, we accomplish more than one can do alone.

## **What Is Missional Storytelling?**

Storytelling is as old as humanity. Through it, we pass information, culture and history within and across time and generations. Before anything was written, storytelling

(what biblical scholars call “oral tradition”) passed history from one group or generation to another.

Our Scriptures present God’s work in the world through stories of God’s people and their actions. We remain strong as people of faith by remembering and retelling these stories of God’s presence, action and love to ourselves and with one another, to newcomers and to the world. If you read the early chapters of the Old Testament (which we often refer to as the Hebrew Bible), you see great gatherings of the people that inevitably begin by someone retelling the story of how God chose the people of Israel, covenanted with them and confirmed that relationship in their deliverance from bondage in Egypt.

For United Methodists, missional storytelling verbalizes the connectional ties that bind and makes real the outcomes of our connectional work by putting a face on our mission. Think about an image, a picture that has touched your heart and moved you. Did you wonder about the story behind it? What circumstances surrounded the capturing of this image, and who are the people in the picture? What happened afterward? How did his/her/their life move forward? Was the church involved, and how did we make a difference?

Reflect in that way on this image below. Are you intrigued to learn more of the story?



Missional storytelling helps people connect with the difference they make by generously offering their time, talents and money. By working together as a connectional church, we can be present as we were in eastern Ukraine helping with disaster relief. Read the story here: <http://www.umcgiving.org/impact-articles/umcor-aids-those-displaced-by-war-in-ukraine>.

## **The Cross and Flame: A Symbol of Our Connection**

The history and significance of the Cross and Flame emblem are as rich and diverse as The United Methodist Church. The insignia's birth quickly followed the union of two denominations in 1968: The Methodist Church and The Evangelical United Brethren Church.

Following more than two dozen conceptualizations, the artist linked a

traditional symbol – the cross – with a single flame with dual tongues of fire. The resulting insignia is rich in meaning. It relates The United Methodist Church to God through Christ (cross) and the Holy Spirit (flame). The flame is a reminder of Pentecost, when witnesses were unified by the power of the Holy Spirit and saw “tongues, as of fire” (Acts 2:3, NRSV).

The elements of the emblem also remind us of a transforming moment in the life of Methodism's founder, John Wesley, when he sensed God's presence and felt his heart “strangely warmed.” The two tongues of a single flame might also represent the union of two denominations.

The insignia, one with lettering and one without, was formally adopted by the General Conference in 1968 and registered in 1971 with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. Since 1996, the General Council on Finance and Administration ([www.umc.org/gcfa](http://www.umc.org/gcfa)) of The United Methodist Church has supervised the emblem's use.

The strength of our connection, under the banner of the Cross and Flame, is evidenced in the impact of United Methodists all over the world. Learn more about what the church is doing at <http://www.umcgiving.org/your-impact>.



Wherever you go throughout the world, you can be certain that the connection of The United Methodist Church is strong. You can feel the strength of that connection every time you see the Cross and Flame.

## **The United Methodist Giving Process Demonstrates Our Connection**

If you have attended a local United Methodist church for a while, you probably have heard the term “apportionments.” Our connection as United Methodists rests firmly on our sharing “a portion meant for others” through giving through the annual conference and the general church in order to be a global church in mission.

The word “apportionment” actually describes the process we use to determine fair shares. Each annual conference is apportioned a share of the general church’s global budget. The annual conference then includes that amount in its plans for mission and ministry, and makes it a part of the annual conference budget. To meet that budget, the conference then apportions local churches for a fair share. Each annual conference has the authority to determine the formula it will use (and what factors will be a part of that formula) to determine that fair share, and the agreed-upon formula applies to each local church.

While the word “apportionment” describes where the fair-share numbers come from, that term does not say how the church uses the money, where it goes and how it makes a difference. For this reason, many conferences instead talk about “mission shares,” “ministry shares” or “shared ministry” as ways to move the focus away from the calculation process and more toward where the money goes!

Each local church has a voice in this process when it sends lay and clergy delegates to the annual conference and elects lay and clergy delegates to the General Conference. At annual conference and General Conference sessions, we establish our connectional ministries and mission, along with the budgetary implications, for our shared ministry to the world.

## **Discussion: Where the Money Goes**

To learn more about why we apportion and how apportionments are determined, download and read pages 5-9 and page 14 of the [Why We Apportion](#) book.

Read more about apportionments at <http://www.umcgiving.org/how-we-give#umc>  
How would you explain this to someone else?

Where do you see apportionment/mission shares dollars at work in your life?

## **Apportioned Giving Is Connectional Giving**

Approximately 85 cents of every dollar placed in the local church offering plate stays in the local church for local ministry and mission. About 7 cents of every dollar goes to districts, annual conferences and jurisdictions, and that leaves 2 cents of each dollar to fund the global ministry and mission of the church through apportionment giving and another 6 cents for other benevolent (second-mile) giving. In the spirit of John Wesley, we do all the good we can, in all the places we can, to all the people we can. Through our prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness, we make a difference in the world and glorify God.

As United Methodists, our connection enables us to support much more than 309 hospitals, clinics and health center/posts; more than 300 missionaries (see map here: <http://www.umcmmission.org/Explore-Our-Work/mission-map>); 159 colleges, universities and seminaries; and so much more. Apportionments provide avenues for giving so that we can be strong local churches,

annual conferences and a strong connection throughout the world as we seek to be in mission and ministry together.

Apportionments demonstrate our connectedness to one another, to God and to the body of Christ.

## **To learn more**

Watch the [Rust College Mission Moments](#) video.

To learn more about the strength of our connection as United Methodists, watch the following [Mission Moments](#) videos on Youtube.com.

Visit the <http://www.umc.org/gcfa> website to find more statistical information.

## **Wrap-Up**

In this module, you discovered how our United Methodist connectionalism multiplies our individual capacity to give as we work together to meet the global needs of all God's creation. You also learned about our connectional system of apportionments and how sharing "a portion meant for others" makes a difference.

# Module 3:

## Creating a Culture of Generosity: Sharing Our Missional Stories



We begin this third module with a centering moment based on Paul's admonition to exercise generosity and give abundantly to multiply blessings both to ourselves and others (2 Corinthians 9:6-15). With this foundation, you will learn about the apportioned and designated funds of The United Methodist Church.

### **Activity: Identify a Fund or Project That Inspires You**

Here are a few ideas.

- Visit <http://www.umcsgiving.org/how-we-give> to learn about funds and projects your local church supports through connectional giving.
- Visit [www.umcsgiving.org](http://www.umcsgiving.org) to read impact stories at <http://www.umcsgiving.org/your-impact>.

- Visit [umc.org](http://umc.org) and see what headlines are scrolling today. You will most likely connect them to one of the apportioned or designated funds.
- Check the social media feeds of your local church or annual conference. Follow umcsgiving social media channels at [www.Facebook.com/umcsgiving](http://www.Facebook.com/umcsgiving), <https://twitter.com/umcsgiving> and <https://www.youtube.com/user/umcsgiving>.

Write a short paragraph answering the following.

1. What draws you to this story or fund?
2. How do you see your choice as an example of generosity?

## Centering Moment

As you begin this module, meditate on this Scripture passage: 2 Corinthians 9:6–15 (NRSV). Allow it to frame your thoughts and prayers as you explore the concept of generosity. How does this Scripture passage provide insight for the concept of generosity that can transform the world for God’s glory?

## Prayer

Make us worthy, Lord, to serve those throughout the world who live and die in poverty or hunger. Give then, through our hands, this day their daily bread; and by our understanding love, give peace and joy. Amen. —Mother Teresa of Calcutta, 20th century (United Methodist Hymnal, 446)

## Connectional Giving and John Wesley

In the last module, you began thinking about the terms “connectionalism” and “connectional” giving. You read about Wesley using the term “connectional” when he spoke of preachers being “in connection” with him, and explored how he considered these connectional systems to be “means of grace,” evidence of God’s work in the world. You also began examining how the United Methodist way of connectional giving results in a lifestyle of generosity that keeps the connection strong and available for God’s work in the world.

John Wesley sought to address the financial needs of the growing Methodist movement at the “class meeting level.” Wesley recognized that classes, rather than individuals, could together be responsible for projects such as building new preaching houses, supporting traveling preachers and providing other collective needs.

Note that while the class meetings centered on studying God’s word, praying, fasting and sharing the sacraments, an important mark of discipleship was giving to mission. Giving was much more than fundraising to create and perpetuate an institution; it spread scriptural holiness across England and eventually around the world.

Since our earliest days, Methodist generosity has been both local and connectional. Mission at the local level was not optional. It was personal, relational and face-to-face. People understood connectional giving as a corporate responsibility, a method of systematic support for a broader mission, which allowed every member of whatever level of financial means to participate through the class meeting. This giving, too, was assumed, as a means of undergirding organizational needs in ministry, church expansion and later in the establishment of pension support for “worn-out preachers” and widows.

## **Connectional Giving as Shared Ministry**

As you discovered in the last module, apportionments or ministry/mission shares are the process by which United Methodists perform shared ministry locally and around the globe. Through this giving, district, annual conference and general church ministry and mission thrive. In addition, local churches receive support through resources, grants and expertise to start new ministries in their communities.

This process enables each local United Methodist church to extend its ministry and mission beyond its church walls and community boundaries. Through ministry/mission shares (apportionments), local churches faithfully send “a portion” of the offerings they receive to their annual conference, which supports work done on conference and district levels. Each annual conference, in turn, gives a portion of what it receives from the local churches to the general church.

The general church lives up to its responsibility to General Conference to be in ministry and mission to the world. In 2014, that amounted to roughly \$150 million. While this may seem like a lot of money, consider that United Methodists gave more than \$6 billion through all avenues of giving. You can begin to see the tremendous abundance of

God’s blessings on United Methodists. Our connectional giving can do far more than any one of us can do alone.

Our ministry/mission shares (apportionments) are only one part of our connectional giving. While they support the seven “general funds” of our collective ministry and mission, the “designated funds” provide United Methodists an additional opportunity to give to specific projects and ministries that extend our connection throughout the world. Therefore, we live out our connectional giving in two ways: the general funds, or first-mile giving (apportioned to each annual conference) and the designated funds or second-mile giving (with no apportioned amount assigned).

## **Seven General Funds**

The seven general funds of The United Methodist Church support our collective ministry and mission as a general church. By paying apportionments (or mission/ministry shares) and supporting the general funds, United Methodists participate in the church’s first mile of giving.

Every four years at General Conference, delegates from across the global church decide on a vision for mission and ministry for the succeeding four years. Then the General Conference determines a budget to empower this mission and ministry. That

four-year budget, which totals \$603 million for the 2013–16 quadrennium, supports seven funds to carry out our collective work on the Four Areas of Focus: Developing Principled Christian Leaders for the Church and the World, Creating New Churches for New People (and Revitalizing Existing Churches), Partnering with the Poor and Combating the Killer Diseases of Poverty.

### **Seven funds support this work:**

- World Service Fund  
<http://www.umcgiving.org/ministry-articles/the-world-service-fund>
- Africa University Fund  
<http://www.umcgiving.org/ministry-articles/the-africa-university-fund>
- Black College Fund  
<http://www.umcgiving.org/ministry-articles/the-black-college-fund>
- Episcopal Fund  
<http://www.umcgiving.org/ministry-articles/the-episcopal-fund>
- General Administration Fund  
<http://www.umcgiving.org/ministry-articles/the-general-administration-fund>
- Interdenominational Cooperation Fund  
<http://www.umcgiving.org/ministry-articles/the-interdenominational-cooperation-fund>

- Ministerial Education Fund  
<http://www.umcgiving.org/ministry-articles/the-ministerial-education-fund>

Every year, many annual conferences and local churches receive recognition for giving 100 percent to these funds. This strong commitment to connectional giving makes it possible for the church to fulfill its call to make disciples of Jesus Christ and transform the world with God's love.

Let us take a closer look at each of these general funds to see how our connectional giving makes a difference in the world.

### **World Service Fund**

When United Methodist congregations pay their mission/ministry shares (apportionments), they participate in God's work around the world and in their own parish. The World Service Fund is the heart of our church's ministry together. Through this fund, each of us becomes a partner with the church's agencies to be in mission and ministry at home and around the world. The full payment of the World Service Fund is each congregation's first benevolent responsibility.

Through the World Service Fund, United Methodists:

- Undergird a network of missionaries and others who serve in the name of Christ and The United Methodist Church around the world;
- Strengthen evangelism efforts, stimulate church growth, expand Bible studies and nurture spiritual development;
- Support specific local church work with children, youth, singles, students, persons who are mentally and physically challenged, adults and older people;
- Enrich our congregational life with worship, retreat and camping resources, leader training and stewardship development;
- Provide leadership and coordination for denominational ministry with youth;
- Continue nearly 200 years of commitment to quality college and graduate education;
- Certify United Methodist professional Christian educators, communicators and musicians;
- Assure that United Methodists speak and work to help build a more ethical, just and humane world;
- Continue a proud tradition of cooperation and dialogue with other faith traditions through interdenominational and ecumenical work;
- Give our denomination a presence in the mass media and make new communications technologies accessible to the church; and
- Express our commitment to God's reign through ministries of peace and justice, and efforts to build a church and society truly inclusive of all people regardless of race, ethnicity, gender or handicapping condition.

To learn more about the World Service Fund and our apportioned giving, visit <http://www.umcsgiving.org/ministry-articles/the-world-service-fund>

## **Africa University Fund**

The 1988 General Conference approved a report of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry providing for the establishment of a United Methodist university on the continent of Africa. By the time the 1992 General Conference convened, Africa University was a reality, following the granting of a charter by the government of Zimbabwe. On March 23, 1992, the College of Theology and the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources

opened on a site near Old Mutare to 40 students from Burundi, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Congo and Zimbabwe.

Each successive General Conference has affirmed reports on the continuing development of this international university, as evidenced by the creation of additional schools, increases in the number of faculty members and students and growth of the physical plant. In 2015, the student body numbered almost 1,500 students from 25 African nations. Significantly for this continent, that student population is 53 percent female and 46.5 percent male. Grants from governments, foundations, annual conferences and individuals now fund capital improvements, with the apportioned funds used to support the operating budget.

To learn more about the Africa University Fund and other giving opportunities, visit <http://www.umcgiving.org/ministry-articles/the-africa-university-fund>

## **Black College Fund**

The 1972 General Conference established the Black College Fund as an apportioned general church fund. The objective is to provide financial support for institutions of higher education that have historically served the needs of African-American students. Today, the Black College Fund enables us to support 11 United Methodist-related

historically black colleges and universities, which prepare ethical and value-centered leaders of all racial/ethnic backgrounds:

- [Bennett College](#), Greensboro, North Carolina
- [Bethune-Cookman University](#), Daytona Beach, Florida
- [Claflin University](#), Orangeburg, South Carolina
- [Clark Atlanta University](#), Atlanta
- [Dillard University](#), New Orleans
- [Huston-Tillotson University](#), Austin, Texas
- [Meharry Medical College](#), Nashville, Tennessee
- [Paine College](#), Augusta, Georgia
- [Philander Smith College](#), Little Rock, Arkansas
- [Rust College](#), Holly Springs, Mississippi
- [Wiley College](#), Marshall, Texas



To learn more about the Black College Fund and our apportioned giving, visit <http://www.umcgiving.org/ministry-articles/the-black-college-fund>.

## **Episcopal Fund**

The Episcopal Fund provides for the salary and expenses of active and retired bishops of The United Methodist Church around the globe. Since every active bishop is in service over an episcopal area (one or more annual conferences), these funds serve annual conferences and local churches in a real and tangible way.

The number of bishops fluctuates over the years, but as of this writing, the Episcopal Fund supports 45 active bishops and 71 retired bishops in the five U.S. jurisdictions, one retired bishop serving as an interim bishop in a U.S. episcopal area, and 20 active bishops and 22 retired bishops in the central conferences (Source: 2015 information from GCFA—[www.umc.org/gcfa](http://www.umc.org/gcfa)).

To learn more about the Episcopal Fund and our apportioned giving, visit <http://www.umcgiving.org/ministry-articles/the-episcopal-fund>.

## **General Administration Fund**

The General Administration Fund finances general church activities that are specifically administrative as contrasted with

programmatic, missional or ecumenical. In particular, this fund provides financial resources to operate the General Council on Finance and Administration, the Commission on the General Conference, the General Commission on Archives and History and the Judicial Council.

Through the General Administration Fund, United Methodists implement a trustworthy system of administrative oversight and fiscal accountability. They underwrite the expense of the General Conference and its important work of setting missional goals, budgeting for the church and making legislative changes to the *Book of Discipline* and *Book of Resolutions*. The fund also pays for the work of the Judicial Council to adjudicate questions of church law, maintains United Methodism's official documents and historical artifacts, and designates historical shrines, landmarks and sites.

To learn more about the General Administration Fund and our apportioned giving, visit <http://www.umcgiving.org/ministry-articles/the-general-administration-fund>.

## **Interdenominational Cooperation Fund**

The Interdenominational Cooperation Fund provides support for the ecumenical and interfaith work through which The United

Methodist Church participates in God's mission in cooperation with the wider Christian community and with those of different faith traditions.

Through the Interdenominational Cooperation Fund, United Methodists enable the church to have an effective presence in the activities of ecumenical and interreligious organizations such as the National Council of Churches, World Methodist Council, Pan-Methodist Commission, World Council of Churches and other bodies. It also provides financial support to organizations that relate to the ecumenical and interreligious responsibilities of the Council of Bishops, including its Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships.

To learn more about the Interdenominational Cooperation Fund visit <http://www.umcgv-ing.org/ministry-articles/the-interdenominational-cooperation-fund>.

## **Ministerial Education Fund**

The 1968 General Conference established the Ministerial Education Fund to engage the denomination in recruiting and training clergy leaders for the church. Throughout the years, these funds have equipped annual conferences, theological schools and the Division of Ordained Ministry of the General

Board of Higher Education and Ministry to meet the changing needs and realities of The United Methodist Church.

We provide significant support to the 13 United Methodist seminaries in the United States and global initiatives through the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, as well as local pastor courses of study, continuing education and other programs that strengthen the ministry of every local church.

Through the Ministerial Education Fund, United Methodists support these seminaries:

- [Boston University School of Theology](#), Boston
- [Candler School of Theology](#), Atlanta
- [Claremont School of Theology](#), Claremont, California
- [Drew Theological School](#), Madison, New Jersey
- [Duke Divinity School](#), Durham, North Carolina
- [Gammon Theological Seminary](#), Atlanta
- [Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary](#), Evanston, Illinois

- [Liff School of Theology](#), Denver
- [Methodist Theological School](#), Delaware, Ohio
- [Perkins School of Theology](#), Dallas
- [Saint Paul School of Theology](#), Kansas City, Missouri
- [United Theological Seminary](#), Dayton, Ohio
- [Wesley Theological Seminary](#), Washington, D.C.

To learn more about the Ministerial Education Fund and our apportioned giving, visit <http://www.umcsgiving.org/ministry-articles/the-ministerial-education-fund>.

## Designated Funds

Our connectional giving includes the opportunity to give beyond the general funds apportioned to annual conferences and our local churches. These designated gifts allow our church to go the second mile toward fulfilling our United Methodist discipleship by demonstrating “extravagant generosity.” Individuals, local churches, districts and annual conferences are encouraged to give generously to these designated funds, only when they are confident in being able to meet their commitments to undergird the

general fund “first-mile” askings. It is in the completion of this “first mile” giving that our “second-mile” giving has real power!

Three overarching avenues for giving to designated funds include churchwide Special Sundays, The Advance and World Service Special Gifts.

## Six Churchwide Special Sundays with Offerings

General Conference has approved six churchwide Special Sundays with offerings. Each provides an opportunity for United Methodists to give beyond their apportioned funds to support ministries directly with their gift.

**Human Relations Day**, the Sunday before Martin Luther King Jr.’s birthday observance, provides healing to communities. The offering supports neighborhood ministries through Community Developers, community advocacy in the United States and Puerto Rico through United Methodist Voluntary Services and work with at-risk youth through the Youth Offender Rehabilitation Program. See the impact of your gifts to Human Relations Day at [www.umcsgiving.org/your-impact/P0/2745](http://www.umcsgiving.org/your-impact/P0/2745).

**UMCOR Sunday**, (formally One Great Hour of Sharing) the fourth Sunday in Lent, comforts survivors of disasters. Gifts lay the foundation for all United Methodist

Committee on Relief (UMCOR) work by covering the costs of doing business. This means all contributions designated to specific programs or disasters can go 100 percent to those programs because UMCOR's basic expenses are paid. In times of disasters in the United States and around the world, UMCOR is ready to respond because of the support received yearly through the UMCOR Sunday (formally One Great Hour of Sharing) offering.

See the impact of your gifts to UMCOR Sunday at <http://www.umcsgiving.org/your-impact/P0/2747>.

**Native American Ministries Sunday**, the third Sunday of Easter, offers hope. The offering develops and strengthens Native American ministries within the annual conference, rural and urban Native American ministries and educates Native American seminarians. Half of the gifts received in an annual conference may support local Native American ministries within the conference boundaries.

See the impact of your gifts to Native American Ministries at <http://www.umcsgiving.org/your-impact/P0/2746>

**Peace with Justice Sunday**, the first Sunday after Pentecost, helps support

United Methodists as peacemakers. Gifts fund programs that advocate for peace and justice in the United States and around the world. These programs empower United Methodists to speak out for removing structures and systems that harm God's children globally and locally. The annual conference may designate half of the offering for local work in Peace with Justice ministries.

See the impact of your gifts to Peace with Justice ministries at <http://www.umcsgiving.org/your-impact/P0/2748>.

**World Communion Sunday**, the first Sunday of October, helps our church be a global, inclusive family. The offering funds racial-ethnic World Communion Scholarships, with at least one-half of the annual amount reserved for ministries beyond the United States. Donations also provide for U.S. Ethnic Scholarships and Ethnic In-Service Training.

See the impact of your gifts to racial-ethnic scholarships at <http://www.umcsgiving.org/your-impact/P0/2750>.

**United Methodist Student Day**, the last Sunday in November, empowers future leaders for the church and the world. Gifts on

United Methodist Student Day support  
United Methodist scholarships.  
See the impact of your gifts to scholarships  
to United Methodist students at  
[http://www.umcgiving.org/your-  
impact/P0/2749](http://www.umcgiving.org/your-impact/P0/2749).

## **The Advance**

The Advance, the accountable, designated mission-giving arm of The United Methodist Church, ensures 100 percent of each gift goes to its intended mission or ministry. World Service and other sources fund administrative costs for The Advance. Advance giving is voluntary and in addition to apportioned funds giving. The Advance gifts from individuals and local churches support a wide variety of projects in the U.S. and many other countries.

For more information about The Advance, how to give and how to track gifts, visit <http://www.umcmmission.org/Give-to-Mission/The-Advance>.

## **World Service Special Gifts**

A World Service Special Gift is a designated financial contribution made by an individual, local church, organization, district or annual conference to a project authorized as a World Service Special project by the Connectional Table. World Service Special Gifts are voluntary.

The four designated World Service Special Gifts projects for the 2013–16 quadrennium are Africa University Endowment Fund, Perryman Communications Scholarship for Ethnic Minority Students, Global Education Fund and Lay Missionary Planting Network.

To learn more about World Service Special Gifts, visit <http://www.umc.org/how-we-serve/designated-giving>.

## **Promote Giving: Your Action Plan**

Going forward, you will find that topics focus on preparing you to tell the stories of The United Methodist Church. To ensure you have the tools to do this, you will complete a personal action plan that you can implement in your ministry context.

What is an action plan? For our purpose, a course of actionable steps will help you focus ideas, gather needed information or identify needed resources to achieve an outcome. In this course, you will develop your action plan through a series of activities that will put together needed elements for you to create your story, and invite your listeners to join you in making a difference through our connectional strength!

## Create and Tell Your Story

1. Identify a fund or offering that excites, interests or inspires you.
2. Identify at least one audience within your church context.
3. Develop your missional story.
4. Create a call to action for that audience.
5. Identify the context, media or activity you will use to share your story (e.g., one-to-one, group or class, pulpit, video or social media).
6. What is one audience you can address with your story?
7. What kind of givers do you think this audience will include? (Refer to Module 1, "Why We Give.")
8. How will you learn what this audience may already know about your fund or story?  
How can you determine what they need to know in order to become as passionate and committed as you are?

## Wrap-Up

In this module, you explored how we turn connectional giving into generosity through the general and designated funds of the church. In particular, you learned about the generous giving of United Methodists to the World Service Fund and all the ministries performed throughout the world in Jesus' name. You saw just how far our individual giving reaches when added to all the gifts of other United Methodists. Finally, you discovered many ways you can share in second-mile giving to the designated funds of the church, and you started your action plan to promote connectional generosity.

# Module 4:

## Making a Difference in the World



We begin this fourth and final module with a centering moment based upon God's insistence that Israel share with others the wealth God has shared with them. With this foundation, you will learn to use storytelling and asking to help others experience generosity in their own lives. This module encourages you to build skills and a plan to use them with others.

### **Discussion: Fundraising and Connectional Giving**

Why would you apply the skills of professional fundraising to meeting connectional giving goals? How do you feel about applying the techniques of the ask to members of our connection? To a seeker exploring our denomination? Why would you use secular techniques with your spiritual mission?

### **Discussion: Celebrate and Dream**

You have just completed a lot of thinking, skill building and planning to equip you to promote generosity in your local church, community and the world. It is time to celebrate and share realizations and hopes with the other learners who have persevered with you.

Choose one or two of the items below that apply to you. Tell how you gained confidence in this area and dream about how you plan to apply that knowledge, passion or skill to your ministry context:

I can now:

- Describe biblical and theological foundations for the way we give.

- Describe a connectional church and tell how it makes a difference in lives and transforms the world.
- Identify opportunities for members and others to give.
- Use the tools of a “missional storyteller” to engage individuals in their congregational and denominational ministries and missions.
- Facilitate individual abilities to fund congregational and denominational ministries and missions using connectional fundraising techniques.
- Identify resources available for leading congregations into full connectional giving support.

### **Activity: Create a Call to Action for Your Audience**

So far you have identified a fund or project that excites, interests or inspires you and identified an audience whom you can inform and inspire by telling the story of your fund or project.

What “call to action” will motivate this audience to give money to this fund or project? What details should you include after the call so people can follow through?

### **Activity: Create Your Missional Story**

Create your missional story. You have chosen a fund or project, identified an audience with whom you can share your passion and created a call to action for that audience. Now it’s time to make sure you can tell the story of this fund or project to inform and inspire your audience, while also engaging them in giving to this particular fund or project.

Respond to each of the following questions.

#### **Section 1: Introduction**

What is your motivating sentence, anecdote or question? What is your purpose for speaking? What will you talk about and why?

#### **Section 2: First Focus/Idea/Issue**

Write at least one focus point, idea or issue you will include at the beginning of your story.

#### **Section 3: Second Focus/Idea/Issue**

Write the second focus point, idea or issue.

#### **Section 4: Third Focus/Idea/Issue**

Write at least one focus point, idea or issue you will include before you close your story.

#### **Section 5: Conclusion**

Write a summary of Sections 2 through 5.



## **Activity: Choose Your Delivery Method**

So far, you have chosen a fund or project that interests or excites you, identified an audience with whom you can share your passion, created a call to action for that audience and prepared a missional story to inform, inspire and engage your audience in giving.

Now choose how you will share this missional story with your audience. Have you written a story that is best to tell one-on-one? Is this something to share in a small group? As a mission moment during worship? At a meeting of a community organization?

Is this story well suited for your local church newsletter? Webpage? Podcast? Facebook post or other social media? The choice is yours. Choose two possible ways you will share your customized missional story.

## **Activity: Identify an Individual**

We hear that people do not give because no one asks them to do so. The kind of “asking” we will prepare for here is specific and effective. Answer this anonymous question: Have you ever “made an ask”?

## **Activity: Collaborate with Leaders**

Discuss with appropriate local church representatives the individuals in your congregation who could provide significant resources or funds from which others might take inspiration.

Each of us has a circle of influence. Most are people with whom we have consciously facilitated or developed relationships, often because we have given or received assistance. We affiliate these friends, family, co-workers or groups with us through our proactive desire to connect with them. Who are the people in your circle of influence? Identify those with whom you would feel comfortable sharing your story and asking to contribute.

Who outside your circle would willingly give if asked?

## **Activity: Coordinate a Meeting**

Arrange a meeting with that individual; determine if you will need someone to provide introductions before calling for a meeting. Then answer the following questions.

1. Which individual will you approach first?
2. Do you need an introduction to him or her?  
If so, how will you make that happen?

3. How will you contact the person to arrange the meeting?

## **Activity: Research and Prepare a Call to Action**

Learn about that individual's interest in the church and congregational activities; then prepare a call to action for that individual.

1. How will you learn more about this individual's passion for the people or work of the fund or project, or both, that you have chosen?
2. How will you fashion what you have learned into a call to action that is part of your ask?

## **Activity: Create a Time line to Deliver an Ask**

When do you apply your newfound asking skills? That depends upon your ministry context. However, we want you to be ready when your local church and your connectional church need you.

Consider the following questions:

- When will your missional story be ready to share in 11 minutes or as a 5/60 pitch? (Remember, to tailor the call to action to the individual.)

- When will you connect with a congregational leader (or leaders) to brainstorm about individuals who might make a significant contribution to the project or fund for which you are raising my?
- When will you be introduced to the identified individual? When is it reasonable to think you can get on his or her calendar?

## **Become a Storyteller to Celebrate Our Connectional Impact**

In Module 2, we explored how missional storytelling can verbalize the connectional power that United Methodists wield when we work as one, and how these stories can call others to act in support of our shared missions and ministries. As a missional storyteller, you will connect with your listeners and inspire them to be joyful, generous supporters of Christ's work in the world. You will invite people to invest in the transformation of the world. You will be a bridge builder to help connect people to work that will remind them that they can make a difference in the world.

The purpose of this module is to provide tools to help your church see its support of general and designated funds of the church as an opportunity to expand its ministry reach. Because we have developed this way

of working together, we can proudly claim our successes in the Four Areas of Focus we adopted at General Conference in 2008:

1. Combating the killer diseases of poverty by improving health globally,
2. Engaging in ministry with the poor,
3. Creating new places for new people and revitalizing existing congregations, and
4. Developing principled Christian leaders for the church and the world.

## **Tips from Storytellers on How to Tell a Story**

Have you heard someone tell a story so well that you remember it almost word for word? Did their story touch your heart, your spirit? Perhaps they were natural storytellers. You can learn storytelling and create your own story. Your passion for helping others is your story, one only you can tell. Find it and learn how to write it so that others will listen, learn and become inspired. We have taken tips, thoughts and techniques from storytellers and compiled them into a four-step process for you to share witness of connectional giving:

### **1. Find Your Story**

Find a story that illustrates connectional giving. Not just any story. Find a story that is

real to you and that will be real to your audience. You will share it often, and you want to enjoy the story and storytelling experience every time.

Your story should be a personal one that connects you to what you want the audience to feel, do and discuss. You might not have “been there,” but you can still find three to five good reasons others should feel as you do about the story and its message. This helps the audience know how much you care about the subject — and about them as well.

In Module 3, you chose the fund or project from which you want to develop your missional story. Find more stories and examples of connectional giving at [www.umcsgiving.org](http://www.umcsgiving.org) and follow UMCGiving on [Facebook](#) for the latest illustrations, stories and information.

### **2. Prepare Your Story**

To prepare your story, ask yourself these questions:

- a. What point do I want to make? What is the goal of my missional storytelling? Identify your intended outcomes first and determine how you will know whether you achieved those outcomes.

- b. Who is your audience? Repeatedly, presenters, storytellers and facilitators stress two points: Know your audience and write your story to engage them by addressing their reasons for being where you are. Know their varying perspectives so you can plan your message to engage your audience and address their needs, interests, concerns and goals.
- c. What is in it for them? Provide this answer for your audience and attend to the “What part of my life and experience does this touch?” question.
- d. How will I share it? Stories are powerful whether told in person, heard through podcasts and videos or read in print. What storytelling medium appeals to you? What delivery methods are available to you? What kind of media does your audience prefer? Could you use visuals with your story?

### 3. Create a Call to Action

A call to action prompts your audience to do (or feel) something that you want them to do/feel. It is intentional and directs your conversation or presentation. At the conclusion of a thought, story, presentation, essay or blog, you ask your audience to do something.

Specify the action you want your listener(s) to take because of hearing your message. Do you want them to feel, discuss, contribute time or money or tell others? A call to action can be as simple as a sentence that begins with word(s) like Do, Give, Call, Tell or Consider.

Your call will not always be to act by giving money. For example, if your church does not participate in the UMCOR Sunday (formally One Great Hour of Sharing) special offering, the call to action might be to ask your audience to read about the work UMCOR does and see if God might lead them to support this work. A call might also be to volunteer to be part of a team trained in disaster preparedness — a key component of UMCOR’s effectiveness when a disaster touches a local area.

### 4. Tell the Stories— Your Personal Call to Action

I love to tell the story,  
'twill be my theme in glory,  
to tell the old, old story  
of Jesus and his love.  
—“I Love to Tell the Story”  
(*United Methodist Hymnal*, 156)

Even though we know that our giving is first an offering of what already belongs to God and that we are returning a portion to share with others and further God’s mission, we

often give when a need touches our hearts. Examples of this include our collective responses to hurricanes Katrina and Rita in the United States, the earthquakes in Haiti and the tsunami in Japan. When United Methodists heard the stories of the devastation in these areas, they gave more than \$100 million plus thousands of cleaning buckets and health kits to ease the suffering.

It is easy to see how something as destructive as a hurricane, earthquake or tsunami can capture our attention and compel us to give to those affected by these tragedies. Yet, hundreds of “silent tsunamis and hurricanes” do not command headlines in newspapers or on television. That is why we must tell people the rest of the story about how our connectional giving is at work every day to heal and provide hope to thousands of people whose stories of poverty, injustice, racism, illiteracy, hunger, disease, loneliness, alienation or marginalization we must tell.

A missional storyteller tells others of examples and opportunities and demonstrates the power of our presence in the world. People do incredible work every day through the connectional giving of United Methodists that brings God’s love to the world. We must tell these stories to our friends, family, church members and seekers so that they, too, can know of God’s love and

respond generously and with joy. We invite and challenge you to tell these and other stories in words, pictures, video and personal testimony; your local church bulletin, newsletter, prayer chains and email lists; and your web pages and social-media platforms.

Try to touch as many people as possible with the message of our connectional giving in response to God’s call to be good stewards and cheerful givers. By witnessing, you turn connectional living into connectional giving and make a difference in the world.

**You can. Together, we can do what no one can do alone.**

## **Start at Home**

Now think about sharing your story or stories. Where to start? The best advice for encouraging contributions through connectional giving is to start at home. Consider the ways you and other members already offer your prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness in your local United Methodist church. You are preparing to encourage others to participate fully. In particular, you have learned and will continue to learn about and support your church’s missional giving, and can invite others to learn more about turning connectional living into connectional giving.

Consider these suggestions for turning connectional living into connectional giving:

- Access and use the information, stories and testimonials available online at [www.umcgiving.org](http://www.umcgiving.org).
- Use all communications avenues (such as bulletins, e-newsletters, websites, social media) to share information, stories and resources about connectional giving.
- Emphasize, in worship and at church gatherings, ways your local church participates in connectional giving. Celebrate these evidences of God's grace in action.
- Find hands-on ways to be involved, individually and with your local church, in mission so you can develop a deeper understanding and appreciation for the needs of others and witness to God's love in the world.

Without the support of your missional giving to these shared ministries, The United Methodist Church cannot realize the full impact of your second-mile gifts. You can have the most impact in the world, through your giving and the giving of your local church, when you start at home.

## **Tell Your Story Person-to-Person and to Groups**

Sharing a story with others does not come easily for many individuals. Your pastor prepares a Sunday morning sermon, and United Methodist News Service writers prepare many drafts of their final pieces. You will need to know your audience and plan a strategy that will appeal to people directly. Preparation includes many things, and below are some tips to help prepare you to communicate to audiences of one to 1 million. Find the tips that will make you confident and comfortable speaking person to person or to small and large groups.

- Practice to get the storyline. Your first version will not convey everything from the story you have visualized, but it must convey enough to make sense. Once the story is straight in your mind, focus on how you tell it. Ask someone you trust to listen to you tell your story and give feedback.
- Know that you will get better every time you share your story. This is not a one-time thing! When you love your story and prepare it reasonably well, you will surely please your listeners and yourself. Each time you share the story, you and your story will improve.

- Develop your own voice and style. Storytellers differ widely. If a suggestion does not fit your idea of how you want to tell stories, ignore it. Try something different, if it feels right for you, your mission and your audience.
- Open your story well. Your first line should not only pique interest but also make it clear that you are no longer getting ready to tell a story — this is it!
- Build interest, covering background information early so that each subsequent sentence builds a stronger bond with your listener. You want the listener eager to hear what comes next! Does your story have a surprise or a twist? Make sure you deliver it clearly, and give your listeners a moment to let it sink in before continuing.
- Practice telling your story to a small group of friends before presenting to a larger group. As you gain confidence, perform for larger, less intimate groups. Before long, you will think nothing of presenting to a roomful of strangers.
- Converse with your audience. You can memorize some parts of the story word for word — beautiful beginnings and endings, important dialogue, colorful expressions, rhymes and repeated phrases. Do not try to memorize an entire story presentation that way. Rote reading creates a distance from your listeners that is hard to bridge.
- Picture the story. See the scenes in your mind, as clearly as you can. Later, these pictures will help you re-create your story as you tell it.
- Master your demeanor and tone. People respond to you first, then your message. The more you project empathy, energy and enthusiasm, the greater positive response you will get. When you show you care, your audience will listen.
- Focus on the mission first, then giving opportunities to support the mission. Prepare for feedback. In our digital age, sharing stories both in person and in writing invites people to respond, give and take information, and pose questions. Feedback only makes you better. List the questions you are most likely to get from your audience. Whether on-site or online, answer questions as fully as possible; if you do not know an answer, say so. Then find a way to answer the individual or group after you have consulted with an expert who has the correct information.

People do not care how much you know, until they know how much you care. This is the axiom for all who wish to influence how others feel, see or do. Make sure your delivery conveys the passion you feel about your story.

In short, use your time wisely. Spend your time telling your story to answer your audience's particular interests and needs. You must know your audience and plan a strategy that will appeal to them directly.

## **Use Traditional and Social Media to Broadcast Your Call to Action**

We live in a digital age. You have as many opportunities to share your story online and in print as you do face-to-face. We have discussed how to write your story in a five-paragraph format. Write your story and your call to action and broadcast them in your local church and beyond. Once you have written your story, you have the basics for communication using both traditional and social media to transmit your message.

- Does your congregation have a newsletter? Offer your story as a first-person witness to share with others.

- What is your congregation's online presence? Share the print version of your story on your church's website. Record yourself telling your story and have your church upload the podcast.
- Use social media (Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, etc.) to link to your story. These platforms also encourage others to join you in discussion and conversation.
- Consider using such resources as web banners, Twitter skins, educational materials, worship resources and advocacy action alerts/support on congregational websites.

When you engage others in dialogue, they tell their stories to you as well. We build and nurture our relationships as brothers and sisters in Christ, walking together in discipleship and discovery. Sharing our stories reminds us of God's work we have done and encourages us to continue participating in God's work to come.

Did you know that many annual conferences have a conference communicator? That person handles media distribution of that conference's news and information. Be sure to tell your conference communicator of your storytelling efforts! He or she will want to help



you reach a wider audience with your missional story. If you do not know how to reach your conference communicator, click [here](#) to search for your annual conference information.

## **Become a Disciple Who Asks**

As you have seen, you must put a great deal of thought into telling your story. The other side to missional storytelling is your direct request for others to contribute financially to the church and its good works. Fundraisers often call this “the ask.” When you tell a story to many people, the ask is for an audience of one.

- What is an ask? It is a well-prepared, person-to-person presentation to ask for funds, often large contributions. How is it different from missional storytelling? You invite an individual to contribute money to an institution or cause you consider worthy of financial support. Here are examples of opportunities in the connection for you to make an ask.
- A specific fund, which your church wants to support in a special way, needs someone to start the ball rolling.
- Your neighbor, who recently joined your church, is seeking a way to contribute to United Methodist missions and ministries.

- You have been introduced to an individual identified as someone who has been generous in the past.

Connectional giving in the Wesleyan tradition encourages us to recognize and nurture these relationships. Asking United Methodists to contribute what they can allows us to encourage individuals to contribute as an act of faith and support.

Extending the ask into the community allows seekers to contribute to ministries and missions.

Your role as a member of the United Methodist connection is not as a professional fundraiser. However, you can learn to use professional techniques and tips that will make you comfortable asking for financial contributions.

It is both art and science to raise funds for worthy causes. In doing so, you become part of the work of Christ on earth, the worthiest cause ever.

## **What We Can Learn From Professional Fundraisers**

Professional fundraisers agree, first, you must give. When you can give testimony that you are asking others to join you in financially supporting the connectional church, your request rings true.

You really are asking for more than money; you are asking others to join in a noble, worthy cause. No one likes asking for money. Believing in your cause directs your inner voice to guide your dialogue with others who share the baptismal commitment to prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness in the world.

Begin by knowing everything possible about the following topics so that you can paint a true and compelling vision of a deserving church and its ministries and missions:

- John Wesley's vision of connectionalism
- How our church is connectional
- How we are connected as United Methodists
- How apportioned and designated funds demonstrate God's presence in the world.

## The Ask Approach

The ask is simple, direct and specific. Below are tips from professionals about how to do it.

- Use phrases such as "I would like you to consider a gift of ..."
- Be thoughtful as to how you will express the amount of your request. Say it aloud several times before the invitation visit.

- Ask for a specific amount. Learn everything you can about the prospect(s) and their giving history.
- Practice, practice, practice. Write what you will say when you call.
- Realize that people will not automatically say yes. They will have objections. Think of objections as good input and do not let them rattle you. In response, ask questions; probe for concerns. If you do not probe, you will never know how your prospect really feels. Once you know that person's real feelings, you can respond to his or her objections.

Objections are not personal. They are about an individual's lack of knowledge, experience or personal situation. Try to understand the basis of the objections: Is it the institution? The project? The amount? The timing? The more you learn and practice your story as a means to ask others to contribute, the more you will make it possible for others to feel connected with the good deeds of their church.

## How Long Does It Take to Ask? 11 Minutes!

According to Jerold Panas in *Asking: A 59-Minute Guide to Everything Board Members, Volunteers and Staff Must Know to Secure the Gift*, your ask presentation should take

no more than 11 minutes! This is about the maximum time a person can truly focus without tuning you out. Here are tips from Panas on the best way to use your short time:

- **Convey benefits** of giving relevant to the potential donor, not just information about the institution or those served.
- **Make the size of the gift** secondary to helping the potential donor make an investment that will bring joy and satisfaction to him or her while helping others.
- **Convey a sense of urgency.** People are dying, children will never grow up and we must ensure the future of these church programs now.
- **Put a face on the numbers.** Keep big, abstract numbers in the brochures. Panas uses what he calls the “Anne Frank Concept.” It is hard to comprehend the loss of 3 million children who died in the Holocaust. It is easier for us to connect with Anne Frank’s story and feel the pain of her losses.
- **Have fun.** In the sense that, no matter what happens, as Maya Angelou said, “You knew what you knew how to do, and when you knew better, you did better.” Not every

person you speak with offers time or money, but you will have told your story to the best of your ability.

## **If You Don’t Have 11 Minutes, Use the 5/60 Pitch**

You may find yourself in a situation where you have an opportunity to speak briefly face to face with an individual you would like to involve.

You probably have heard of an “elevator speech.” It is the one you give when you are in an elevator and have only the time it takes to go from the lobby to the top of the building to tell your story.

In this age of social media, our time to digest information is drastically limited. Your elevator must hold not just a speech, but also clearly identifiable components of what you want your listener to know, say or do. Say you have 60 seconds to make the top-five points that you want your listener to consider. That is the 5/60 pitch. By the way, he or she will probably only truly remember one or two of your five!

A good 5/60 pitch should be:

**Concise** – Keep conversational clutter to a minimum; provide just enough information.

**Clear** – Use language that everyone understands.

**Crisp** – Use action words that command attention.

**Visual** – Add specific visual images to make your story memorable.

**Targeted** – Know your listener; use different pitches for different groups.

**Action oriented** – Include what you want your listener to do with the information.

**Compelling** – Create a “hook line” that snags your listener’s attention.

## **More than Money: Give Time and Skills**

Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?

I have heard you calling in the night.

I will go, Lord, if you lead me.

I will hold your people in my heart.

—“Here I Am, Lord”

*(United Methodist Hymnal, 593)*

It is not just money. Money is one of the outcomes of each member’s commitment to prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness.

You may have little money to give or you desire to give more of yourself than financial support. Your generosity makes a difference in the world when you offer yourself in service to others.

You can find dozens of opportunities each year to join United Methodists around the globe in hands-on mission. Your personal experience in mission can become a strong testimony of God’s work in the world and inspire others to give.

Hands-on mission is an excellent way to introduce generosity to children and youth. While they may lack monetary resources to share, they can use their hearts and hands to spread the love of God to others. These experiences will lay a strong foundation on which to build as they grow in their faith and ability to give.

Contact your district superintendent or your annual conference staff to ask about opportunities to be a mission volunteer. Check out the Global Ministries agency’s website for ways you can give time and talent!

If hands-on mission is not the best match for you, consider being a prayer volunteer at the Upper Room Living Prayer Center at Discipleship Ministries. Learn more about this way to serve with love.

## **Pray without Ceasing**

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”—1 Thessalonians 5:16–18, NRSV

Your first and constant offering to God is your prayers. As a part of the United Methodist connection, you make a difference in the world by praying. Select some of the ministries supported through the apportioned and designated funds and pray for them. Suggest that your local church add these ministries to the church's prayer list and pray for them during worship.

As you consider the role of prayer in your life, pray this Covenant Prayer in the Wesleyan Tradition (*United Methodist Hymnal*, 607):

I am no longer my own, but thine.  
Put me to what thou wilt, rank me  
with whom thou wilt.  
Put me to doing, put me to suffering.  
Let me be employed by thee or  
laid aside for thee,  
exalted for thee or brought low for thee.  
Let me be full, let me be empty.  
Let me have all things, let me have nothing.  
I freely and heartily yield all things  
to thy pleasure and disposal.  
And now, O glorious and blessed God,  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
thou art mine, and I am thine. So be it.  
And the covenant which I have  
made on earth,  
let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.

Your prayers and your commitment to sharing what God has entrusted to you will strengthen our United Methodist connection and increase the effects of our generosity. Visit the Living Prayer Center through the Upper Room at Discipleship Ministries and submit your prayer requests for the ministries supported through our connectional giving.

## **You Make Connectional Giving Possible**

**Will you be loyal to The United Methodist Church, and uphold it by your prayers, your presence, your gifts, your service and your witness?**

As a member or frequent visitor to The United Methodist Church, you hear these words when someone joins the church. Perhaps you remember uttering an "I will" upon your own reception into the church. These words point to five actions we can take to make a difference in the world: our prayers, our presence, our gifts, our service and our witness. Each is critical to sustaining a vital connection as United Methodists and as God's stewards of vast resources. As the body of Christ, and individually members thereof, each person contributes according to his or her means so that, together, we can accomplish far more than one person could do alone. This is how we turn connectional living into connectional giving and make a difference in the world.

It all begins with you. The decisions you make about offering your prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness will influence and affect the decisions others make and determine the degree to which we, as a church, can transform this world by God's grace and love. Jesus commands, "Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16b, NRSV). Dare to beam brightly for God as you offer your prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness to make a difference in the world.

## Wrap-Up

In this last module, you learned how you could apply missional storytelling and asking skills to increase connectional giving and make a difference in the world. You discovered how you could use these skills in conjunction with service and prayer to grow as a disciple and share your Christian witness and presence in the world. You planned to move forward as an individual disciple of Christ who can lead other United Methodists and seekers in strengthening the United Methodist connection, growing disciples and alleviating suffering in the world.

## Digging Deeper

Find more where this came from! Discover resources to help you and your local church expand its capacity to gain, save and give all it can. We recommend visiting the Discipleship Ministries at [www.umcdiscipleship.org/leadership-resources/stewardship](http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/leadership-resources/stewardship) and <http://www.umcgiving.org/pastors/resources> to learn more about generosity and raising the level of giving for your local church's ministry and mission.

There are also opportunities to invite missionaries and Volunteers in Mission to speak at your local church. To learn more, visit [www.umcmmission.org](http://www.umcmmission.org).

We are here for you.

The Connectional Giving Team at United Methodist Communications is available to provide workshops on connectional giving to your district or conference. To learn more about scheduling a workshop, contact the Communications Ministry Training Team at [training@umcom.org](mailto:training@umcom.org), or by telephone, 888-278-4862.





# COMMUNICATIONS

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THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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