



5 MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS *about* **GENEROSITY**



HELLO!

Over the past few months, we've been collecting your most frequently asked questions about generosity. Over time, we noticed that five questions were asked more often than any others. We've compiled them all here, along with answers from some incredible UMC pastors.

Generosity is a little different than stewardship, isn't it? While stewardship focuses on obligation, generosity focuses on intent and relationship. We are so excited to have this conversation together and bring you new resources to help cultivate generosity within your congregations.

I hope you will find encouragement and new ideas among these pages.

God bless you!

Your Partner in Ministry,
Connectional Giving Team
United Methodist Communications



How do I best educate my congregation about how fundraising across the church helps to express our unique United Methodist approach to generosity?

Preaching and teaching that generosity is a by-product of being a faithful follower of Christ. Having a time of sharing where congregants witness their experience of generosity and the blessings which come from being faithful in this way. Finally, in small groups and business meetings, relaying the missional impact apportionments make to the world.



**The Rev.
Jonathan Brown**

We stress that it is not what the church wants from you but what the church wants for you. We teach good financial stewardship that results in greater generosity.



**The Rev.
Clayton Smith**

Fundraising, or any financial contribution that people make to the church, creates opportunity for the people of our community that would not otherwise exist. Giving is how we create opportunities that the kingdom is made real to those who are seeking after Jesus and his work of redeeming the broken things of our communities and world.



**The Rev.
Gregory Smith**

Consistently mention the generosity of God, who calls us to be transformed into godly character. Transfer application of sermon topics to the grace of God to give us more than we deserve. Our call is to respond in generosity to God's grace with grateful hearts. The New Testament giving models beyond the tithe and generosity above the minimum. We can't out-give God.



**The Rev.
Ginny Allen**

***How often should I talk to my congregation
about giving and generosity?
Should I do it throughout the year or
save it for a year-end push?***

Both. We also conduct an annual stewardship campaign. Year-end giving is focused on mission.



**The Rev.
Clayton Smith**

While we may have special week-ends where we emphasize giving and generosity, the idea of giving and generosity should be a theme to everything we do. It's in our doing that our congregations become what God intends.



**The Rev.
Gregory Smith**

A year-end push might be beneficial for capital campaigns, but consistent conversation about generosity, where weekly emphasis can showcase a different project or ministry and the investment can be clearly articulated, is very beneficial.



**The Rev.
Phil Hodson**

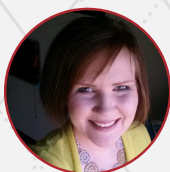
I feel that we should focus more on Jesus' words in Mark. "I have come so that you may have life and have it more abundantly." What does it mean to live life abundantly, generously, really large? That seems like a theme that touches on many issues and can become a vision and mission goal of an entire congregation and of every Christian.



**The Rev.
Lydia Muñoz**

How can I make a positive connection between giving/generosity and discipleship rather than approaching it as an obligation?

I believe testimonies from generous givers go a long way. These are people who have experienced firsthand how generous giving positively impacts their attitudes and their lives. These people have concrete stories of how their blessings have multiplied because they give God their firstfruits.



**The Rev.
Kristen Lowe**

Preaching and teaching on generosity at times other than when the church is asking helps. Particularly effective are personal testimonies from generous givers, especially those who are on limited income but give generously.



**The Rev.
Bronwyn Yocum**

Celebrate the joy of generosity by regularly talking about the benefits of giving. Demonstrate through video/narratives of how lives change, mission transforms community and the church is renewed.



**The Rev.
Clayton Smith**

Make that positive connection by showing and telling stories of changed lives. A picture of a dishwasher that needs replacing is an obligation. A picture of a room full of lonely people sharing in a community meal is a glimpse of the kingdom that resonates with hearts and makes a broken dishwasher a vital piece of ministry hardware.



**The Rev.
Dayne Zachrison**

How can a pastor shepherd individuals and families with capacity to follow a path toward deeper generosity?

It is all about relationships. Check out my new book, *Propel—Good Stewardship, Greater Generosity*. It was published by Abingdon, March 2015.



**The Rev.
Clayton Smith**

It's a heart issue, not a money issue. I think when we rethink what giving is about and what it does, we change everything around us. I would suggest a three-month challenge. Try it for three months and document the blessings.



**The Rev.
Kristen Lowe**

Personal thank-you notes affirm the practice of generosity and encourage people to continue it. Learning about an individual or family's passions can enable a pastor to invite them to contribute to something that excited them.



**The Rev.
Bronwyn Yocum**

We shepherd by doing it first and setting the example for others to follow. We also shepherd by linking generosity to the discipleship process and making it a part of everything we do in our life together.



**The Rev.
Gregory Smith**

***Should we consider adopting digital giving methods for receiving offerings and tithes?
What is the experience of congregations that have integrated digital giving options into their services and church life?***

Absolutely! More opportunities to give create greater giving through electronic funds transfer and mobile giving.



**The Rev.
Clayton Smith**

Since giving is a response to God's goodness in our lives, we need to give people every possible means to respond. And in this digital age, it only makes sense. Every church I've served that has adopted online giving has increased its giving. It's never gone down. I tell people it's wonderful to have it taken directly out of my paycheck because then I make sure God gets my firstfruits!



**The Rev.
Kristen Lowe**

We have a number of families that give electronically, and we have a card in the pew rack that they can place in the offering plate indicating that they give electronically. As much as I prefer having people bring their gifts and place them in the offering, I think we have to realize many people today neither carry cash nor use checks. Digital giving is simply a reality we need to accept and find ways to make it meaningful to the giver.



**The Rev.
Bronwyn Yocum**

YES! Remove whatever obstacles might be in the way for individuals to practice generosity. It has only been a positive experience for our congregation as more and more individuals sign up for online giving. It is also something I actively encourage from the "pulpit."



**The Rev.
Matt Lipan**



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I have been a pastor for over 15 years and became
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We are passionate about bringing you free resources on generosity and giving.

Be sure to check out our resource library for training, marketing and lots of other tools for your toolkit.

As we continue to grow our giving initiatives and learn more about cultivating generosity, we'll be curating and distributing resources for you.

<http://www.umcgiving.org/pastors/resources>



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