

Your Congregational Stewardship Committee Guide

Introduction

The Stewardship Committee encourages people to give time, talents, and dollars to God's mission through the work of the church at home and abroad. The Committee keeps people aware of what their gifts are doing and invites members and adherents of all ages to live a stewardship lifestyle. It informs the congregation about the **Mission and Service Fund** and may be involved in other forms of mission education and outreach.

What Is Stewardship?

Christian stewardship is based on the belief that God is the Creator and all things belong to God. We are trustees of God's gifts, accountable to God and one another for their use.

Christian stewards set their priorities on the basis of their faith and on an understanding of what God would have them do. Gratitude is the motivating factor. Our actions and the way we use what has been entrusted to us are the ways we respond to God's grace. Care of creation and compassion for others are part of our stewardship response.

The word "steward" comes from the English word "styward," the keeper of the enclosure for livestock, the caretaker of another's property. It is also a translation of the Greek word *oikonomos*, which means the manager of the household.

In the Bible, the steward is overseer, caretaker, and household manager—but not owner. Jesus saw the steward as the willing custodian of all that God has entrusted to us: all life, the earth, and the gospel news of God's love.

Some Definitions of Stewardship

"Stewardship is what I do with everything I have, because it is all a gift from God."

"Stewardship is all I do after I realize how much God loves me."

"Stewardship is identifying and using the gifts God gives me as clues to what God is calling me to do."

"Stewardship is living in gratitude and generosity, as ways to love God with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength and to love my neighbour as myself."

The Work of the Stewardship Committee

The Stewardship Committee is a standing committee, not a time-limited task group. It may be a small group that can call on additional help for specific tasks at particular times. The Committee works throughout the year, not just at high-profile times. It is responsible for developing and implementing a year-round, ongoing stewardship program with all ages in the congregation. Within this year-round program there may be particular times of special focus.

The Stewardship Committee works in conjunction with other committees, such as the Finance Committee and the Mission or Outreach Committee, to solicit financial and other support and to tell the story of ministry being done.

Committee Membership

Length of membership terms is the same as that for other committee positions. For continuity, overlap membership terms so some members on the committee have experience and can mentor newer members.



Stewardship Committee members are

- generous in their giving of time, talents, and money
- committed to God's mission through the church
- active in the life and work of the congregation
- enthusiastic and creative
- growing in their faith life as disciples of Jesus
- supporters of the Mission and Service Fund

Include

- a member of the church board or council
- the Mission and Service Fund Enthusiast
- a member of the UCW and of the AOTS (As One That Serves)
- youth

Committee Responsibilities

- Schedule regular meetings and include stewardship education and mission awareness as part of each meeting.
- Establish or continue a year-round stewardship program in the congregation.
- Work closely with the minister(s) to make stewardship a thread through all of the congregation's worship and work.
- Keep informed of and promote the use of stewardship resources in the congregation.
- Monitor giving, analyze trends, and inform the Church Board/Council.
- Promote the Mission and Service Fund as our primary way of giving beyond the congregation.
- Engage the congregation in the M&S goal-setting process, and ensure the goal is sent to presbytery on time.
- Promote the Pre-Authorized Remittance program (PAR) and other ways of giving.
- Promote giving from accumulated resources (wills, life insurance, stocks, etc.), and maintain contact with the Regional Gift Planning Staff for assistance in this work.
- Maintain good communication with all other parts of the local congregation.
- Plan for and organize special stewardship emphasis/giving initiatives such as the *Opening Doors: Inviting Generosity* or *Celebrate Stewardship!* programs.
- Encourage biblical study of stewardship.
- Work with the Christian Education Committee, youth, and Sunday school to provide stewardship education and special giving programs.

Seasonal Action Plan

At Each Stewardship Committee Meeting

- Begin with prayer and study time.
- Provide an update on the Mission and Service Fund givings. Check www.united-church.ca/funding/msfund/sheets for the latest information for your presbytery.
- Check with the church office in advance for the latest mailings about stewardship resources.

- Get an update from the Treasurer or Finance Committee about local church givings.
- Review and evaluate your Committee's work plan.
- Receive and prepare reports as necessary.
- Deal with funding appeals, prioritizing the M&S Fund as the United Church's primary response.
- Ensure M&S money is remitted to General Council monthly.

Fall

- Check for mailings about new resources such as bulletin inserts, brochures, stewardship educational materials, and educational events.
- Watch for the arrival of the *Mandate Mission and Service Fund Special Edition*.
- Carry out and evaluate an annual giving program.
- Be involved in your congregation's budget process.
- Make sure you watch for your M&S Response Form mailed directly from the General Council Office.
- Design and carry out the process for setting your church's M&S goal for the coming year.
- Plan for any winter programs (studies, Mission Theme, KAIROS educational campaign, etc., or check with other committees to encourage this).
- Have a special offering for M&S at Thanksgiving.
- Thank people for giving their time, talents, and money.
- Provide educational and promotional material for the envelope steward to include with the quarterly statements.
- Look for the *Minutes for Mission* for next year.
- Work with the Christian Development Committee in sponsoring a White Gift Sunday in Advent. See www.united-church.ca/planning/theme/whitegift.



Winter

- Welcome new members after the annual meeting.
- Express thanks to those who have left the Committee.
- Respond to matters directed to the Committee from the annual meeting.
- Use *Minutes for Mission* every Sunday.
- Prepare for Lent/Easter emphasis, and order resources for special offerings or projects.



- Carry out special programs on the Mission Theme, KAIROS educational campaign, etc., or work closely with other committees who may be heading this up.
- Make sure your congregation's M&S Response Form for the coming year is discussed, brought to the annual meeting, and entered electronically to the General Council Office or mailed in to that office on time.
- Ensure all M&S givings for the past year are forwarded to the General Council Office before the end of January.

Spring



- Begin plans for the fall stewardship program and order resources as needed (PAR pamphlets, M&S theme material, stewardship bulletin inserts, etc.; book audiovisual resources with AVEL well in advance).
- Prepare a narrative budget to tell your congregation's story of ministry. See *The Narrative Budget: Telling Your Congregation's Mission Story*.
- Review various financial response (giving) programs. Choose one and order for fall.
- Order copies of *Mandate Mission and Service Fund Special Edition* for use in the fall.
- Carry out Lent/Easter programs as planned.
- Arrange for a visit to or from a local Mission and Service-funded project if possible.
- Explore ways of working with the church school and youth on stewardship/M&S themes and field trips.
- Make plans for a fall mission festival about global partnerships or volunteer ministry opportunities in the congregation.
- Check with presbytery or Conference about the availability of overseas personnel or partner visitors as guest speakers for the summer or fall.
- Organize a promotion to encourage people to use PAR.
- Design a reminder for those not using PAR to keep up to date on their weekly offerings over the summer.
- Make sure visitor offering envelopes are available in each pew.

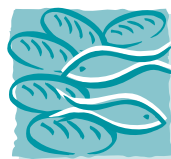
- Order envelopes and cards for giving United Church "In Memoriam" gifts at funerals, and check to see if you can place some in local funeral homes as well as at the church.
- Watch for the catalogue of Sunday service bulletins and worship guide, and place your order before the deadline.

Summer



- Decide, in your context, how to lift up stewardship in your summer work.
- In these slower days, invite people to create posters, logos, and displays about the church's ministries for use throughout the rest of the year.
- Visit Mission and Service Fund projects during your holidays, and take pictures for later use.
- Read at least one new book on stewardship over the summer.
- Contact AVEL and borrow some videos to preview for fall or to show during worship while the minister is away.

Thank You!



Thanks for your part in this important and exciting work. You are a partner with many others in your congregation, and beyond, who seek to respond faithfully to the generosity of God. May you be blessed in this ministry.

If you have questions about stewardship or the role of the Stewardship Committee, please contact your Conference office or the national Congregational Stewardship Development Program Coordinator at 1-800-268-3781 ext. 4161, or steward@united-church.ca. See also www.united-church.ca/local/congfinance for more stewardship information.

Download the "Year-Round Congregational Stewardship Plan" at www.united-church.ca/exploring/stewardship. It will help you integrate stewardship into worship/planning and stewardship education all through the year.

Appendix I: Role of the Stewardship Committee (in any pastoral charge structure of Official Board, Unified Board, or Council)

The Manual, 2004, section 245

245 Stewardship Committee.

- (a) Membership. The size of the Committee will be governed to some extent by the size of the Pastoral Charge. In view of the importance of the Committee to the Pastoral Charge, it is suggested that in smaller Pastoral Charges the minimum number of members should be ten (10). The membership should be generally representative of the life and work of the Pastoral Charge. There should be, as ex officio members of the Committee, the following: the Chairperson(s) of the Committee(s) of Stewards or equivalent, the Treasurer of the Pastoral Charge, the Treasurer of the Mission and Service Fund, two (2) representatives of the Women's Ministries Network, and a representative of the Committee to address the faith formation and Christian education needs of the Pastoral Charge. Of the total number of members, at least one-third (1/3) should be from the Committee(s) of Stewards or equivalent.
- (b) Duties. The Stewardship Committee shall have the following duties:
 - i. to be responsible for the overall stewardship level of the Pastoral Charge so that its full financial potential may be realized. To this end the Committee shall review annually the total financial objective of the Pastoral Charge, that is, the needs at local, regional, and national levels;
 - ii. to interpret to the Pastoral Charge why the funds are needed and how they will be expended;
 - iii. to keep in perspective and under review the proportions of money spent locally and regionally in relation to the amount provided for the wider work of the United Church through the Mission and Service Fund;
 - iv. to cultivate knowledge and conviction concerning the mission of the church in all its aspects, among all age groups and by all media available;
 - v. to make available to the Pastoral Charge the materials issued through the relevant General Council working units;
 - vi. through the use of approved methods of church finance, to secure commitment and participation in the mission of the church by the Pastoral Charge. To this end the Committee shall organize periodic visitations for stewardship purposes; and
 - vii. to report regularly to the Official Board or Church Board or Church Council and to prepare an annual report for the Pastoral Charge.
- (c) Assumption of Duties by Stewards. When the duties of the Stewardship Committee are assumed by the Committee(s) of Stewards or equivalent, the Committee(s) of Stewards or equivalent should for this purpose be enlarged to be generally representative of the life and work of the Pastoral Charge and in any event should include the ex officio members suggested above.

Appendix II: Stewardship Role of the Official Board, Church Board, or Church Council

The polity of the United Church provides for three alternative organizational models: (1) Session and Stewards in an Official Board, (2) a unified Church Board, (3) a Church Council.

Official Board

The **Official Board**, through its Committee of Stewards, is responsible for the temporal and financial affairs of the pastoral charge. The Stewards are chosen by the local church, and, wherever practical, should be full members. It is the duty of the Committee of Stewards to secure contributions for the purposes of the local church and to disburse the monies received for these purposes. It is the duty of the Official Board: to secure contributions for missionary and other general objects of the church, and to submit to the pastoral charge or local church for its consideration reports on life and work, including a full statement of receipts and expenditures, of indebtedness, and of estimates for the ensuing year. (*The Manual*, The Basis of Union, sections 5.8.4, 5.11, 5.12)

The Official Board includes the members of the Committee of Stewards and the Chairperson of the Stewardship Committee, one of three standing committees, and a Treasurer of the Mission and Service Fund. Stewards are to be elected for their Christian character and ability to transact the temporal and financial business of the pastoral charge or congregation.

The Committee of Stewards works with the Stewardship Committee to assist in securing contributions. *The Manual* suggests this be by weekly envelope, with an annual every-person canvas. The money is for salaries of ministry personnel, pension and benefits, presbytery and Conference assessments, salaries of other congregational staff, and the capital and current expenses of the pastoral charge.

The Committee of Stewards is responsible for disbursing the money received for these purposes, in order of priority as listed above. The Committee of Stewards presents to the annual congregational meeting a detailed statement of its receipts and expenditures, duly audited or subject to review, the same for the Board of Trustees, and a statement showing the estimated amounts required to carry on the work for the ensuing year, with suggestions as to methods of securing the necessary money.

The Official Board also has a duty to secure contributions for the support of the total work of the United Church, including the necessary budget for the work of the pastoral charge and givings for the Mission and Service Fund. *The Manual* indicates that contributions for the Mission and Service Fund shall, if possible, be at least the amount suggested by the presbytery. The Official Board also authorizes borrowing funds for the day-to-day operations of the pastoral charge, or for any indebtedness that is normally discharged during the calendar year. (*The Manual*, "The Committee of Stewards," sections 160–170, 183, 184(e), 184(f))

Church Board or Church Council

In either a unified **Church Board** or **Church Council** structure, the Stewardship Committee is one of at least four standing committees carefully selected and appointed by the Board. The Church Board/Council functions include those specified for the Committee of Stewards (above), as outlined in *The Manual, 2004*, sections 165–167, 170, and 184, and must be clearly assigned either to the Church Board or Council as a whole or to the committees. (*The Manual*, sections 165–167, 170, 184, 200–213, 215–228, 245)

For More Information

For more information on how the Stewardship Committee relates to the Board or Council, see the *Congregation Organization Handbook*, pages 28–29: www.united-church.ca/files/handbooks/congregationorg.pdf.