



giving
our thanks & praise

A Faithful Response to God's Mission

Parish Giving Program



The
Diocese of Huron



Pages with the heading **RESOURCES** in the top right hand corner are meant to be photocopied. All elements of the Giving Our Thanks & Praise Giving Program and additional resources for download can be found at anglican.ca/gtp. These include liturgical resources, bulletin covers, prayer cards, bookmarks (in colour and black and white versions) and additional logos and communication tools.

Also, you will want to sign up to receive a package of 20 Thank You cards that you can use in the program (anglican.ca/gtp).

If you have questions or comments, please don't hesitate to contact:

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Giving Our Thanks & Praise

A faithful response to God's mission

Stewardship is a core Christian practice rooted in Scripture. The Bible offers a commentary on human stewardship that begins with God's purpose in setting our first ancestor in the garden "to till and keep it," and ends in the new creation, in a recurring pattern of crisis and resolution. That pattern of human crisis and divine resolution flows through the Bible — in the creation, in the covenant with Abraham, in the law, the prophets and the writings of the Hebrew Scriptures, in the life of Jesus, and in the continuing life of his disciples after the resurrection.

The first crisis of human stewardship came with our first ancestors' decision to test the sovereignty of God by consuming the only fruit in the garden reserved exclusively to the Creator. Rejecting stewardship and embracing the illusory promise of sovereign possession of the garden, they initiate a continuing pattern of exploitation, entitlement, violence, and destruction that plagues human participation in the life of the earth. There is only one essential stewardship question:

Will we make use of resources entrusted to us to serve God's mission, or for purposes that we ourselves devise or that are thrust upon us by an economy that depends absolutely on growing consumption to sustain it?

Stewardship is our response to the mission of God. When we invite persons into discipleship and baptism, we also invite them into the practices of faithful living, which the church has called stewardship. Those practices are properly framed in terms of whether or not they contribute to what God desires in and for the life of the world.

The parable of the two sons opens up a stewardship crisis for leaders among the baptized. When we have turned inward to focus on our wants and needs, when we have used the language of stewardship to address our own religious agenda instead of God's mission, when we have reduced the challenge of stewardship to servicing the existence, program, and practices of the church, then we have squandered the treasure of God in a far country.

For Canadian Anglicans, no faithful conversation about stewardship should be undertaken without consideration of the Baptismal Covenant and the Marks of Mission of the Anglican Communion. The former is, like the "Rule of Life" that preceded it in the Catechism of the *Book of Common Prayer*, a framework for faithful personal participation in the mission of God. And the Marks of Mission form a framework for faithful corporate participation in that mission.

The Baptismal Covenant offers an expansive vision for the life of faith, including commitments to the community and its common life; to resisting evil and turning away from our participation in it; to offering the world the gospel of Jesus Christ as an alternative to its story of entitlement, consumption,

and conflict, to embody that gospel in acts of service and to work for justice, peace, and the dignity of persons, and to care responsibly for the creation in which we live.

The Marks of Mission complement and support the principles and practices of the Baptismal Covenant with a commitment to shape our common life in alignment with the mission of God. Beginning with “the Good News of the Kingdom,” they offer a set of shared practices that include inviting people to inhabit that Kingdom through baptism, and to enact the Kingdom’s ethos in response to human need, in a commitment to justice, in care for creation, and in reconciliation and peace-making.

God sets out in mission to make all things new. It is God’s mission to transform persons, to redeem us and restore us to joyful and useful participation in God’s work. It is God’s mission to transform the church as well, to redeem and restore our common life so that we might live as stewards of God’s abundant gifts, and invite others into that stewardship — for the sake of the world God loves.

Giving Our Thanks & Praise Giving Program

This theological rationale, adopted by the Resources for Mission Co-ordinating Committee, forms the basis for the development of Giving Our Thanks & Praise – a giving program for parish leadership in the Anglican Church of Canada. This resource aims to shift the conversation from funding budgets (which may be serving something other than the mission of God) to focusing on how we inspire people to the life of faith and invite them to participate meaningfully in God’s mission, and to acknowledge and thank them for being part of this Jesus movement.

Giving Our Thanks & Praise is a guide to increasing generosity and giving in your congregation to support God’s mission.

You can start anywhere – or any time

Begin by inspiring people through sharing “Why I give”; create a culture of thankfulness by modelling gratitude; invite others to join you in support of God’s mission in your parish.

Build on what is in place in your parish

Take the opportunity to preach about gratitude; share tools to help people make an informed and meaningful contribution to the ministry in your community;

Do whatever you can

Take any first step and take it boldly; do something to inspire, something to invite, and something to thank the people in your parish. You know your community best and will decide what things will work. Try it, take small first steps and see how you can to build capacity to serve God’s mission in your community.



Giving Our Thanks & Praise is written for you by clergy and lay people in the Anglican Church of Canada. It is scalable to whatever size and location of your parish. This Program Guide and accompanying Planning Workbook are the start. Additional resources are found at www.anglican.ca/gtp.

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A guiding reference group has provided invaluable expertise:

Jeff Pym, Evangelical Church in Canada

The Rev. Richard Bott, United Church of Canada

The Rev. Cheryl Toth, Diocese of Qu'Appelle

The Rev. Dr. Neil Mancor, Diocese of Montreal

Bob Baker, Diocese of Calgary

Heather Moller, Diocese of Huron

The Rev. Lisa Vaughn, Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island

Jane Scanlon, Diocese of Ottawa

The Rev. Dr. Jay Koyle, Diocese of Algoma

Staffing for this project by Susan Graham Walker is facilitated through a partnership between the Philanthropy Unit of the United Church of Canada and The General Synod of The Anglican Church of Canada.



The Diocese of Huron

Dear friends in Christ,

In Genesis we hear that God has entrusted us with the stewardship of creation. In the Gospels we hear Jesus entrusting the disciples, and us as their heirs, with the Good News of God's love, forgiveness and mercy. So we have a primary responsibility as 'stewards' — as those who manage and care for God's world and God's Word so that every generation will be able to live in the fullness of God's purpose. We are called to do that with energy, passion and abundance.

To do that well we need to pay attention and learn what that stewardship requires of us in every aspect of our life as congregations and as a diocese. The resources in this package have been collected to offer you inspiration and guidance to grow as stewards. Read, learn, practice and share the ideas offered here — and then tell the story of the blessings you discover as you grow as stewards of the greatest gifts God has given us.

Yours in Christ,

The Rt. Rev. Linda Nicholls
Bishop of Huron

Table of Contents

- Getting Started9**
 - Gathering the Giving Team
 - Role description: Giving Team co-leads
 - Five things to know about Giving Our Thanks & Praise
 - Giving Team kickoff

- Introducing the Giving Program21**
 - Announcing the program
 - Introductory letter
 - Writing a prayer for your giving program
 - Resources for communication

- Implementation31**
 - Inspire, Invite, Thank
 - Inspire
 - Telling our story
 - Spoken inspiration: Gathering “Why I give” stories
 - Written inspiration: The narrative budget
 - Invite
 - Invite generosity
 - Face-to-face and peer-to-peer invitation
 - Invitation by letter
 - Letter-writing guidelines
 - A sample letter
 - Decision-making tools
 - Proportional giving chart
 - Step chart
 - Intention card

- Additional resources for inviting.55**
 - How much should I give?
 - Components of an invitation
 - The six i’s of inviting
 - Thank

- Wrapping up65**
 - Wrap-up gathering agenda

- Appendix69**
 - Questions ministry leaders ask
 - Why be part of our Giving Team?



Getting Started

Taking the first step may be challenging. This section helps you dive in, explore the resource, and begin planning a giving program designed for your parish. This includes step-by-step instructions for:

Gathering the Giving Team and getting familiar with this giving program guide, including –

- Role description: Giving Team co-leads
- Five things to know about Giving Our Thanks & Praise
- Giving Team kickoff and meeting agenda

Introducing the Giving Program including –

- Announcing the program
- Introductory letter & template
- Writing a prayer for your giving program
- Resources for communication

Planning Workbook

Use the Planning Workbook alongside this Program Guide to put the elements of your giving program together. Pull the ideas out of the Program Guide and make them your own to suit the specifics of your congregation.

The workbook helps you decide what you want to achieve and easily measure your success. Hard work and focus in this planning stage will likely lead to celebration in one or more areas later on.

Begin with determining the general shape of the program, use the data tables to assist with setting goals; review the outlines for a one-, three- or five-week program and then use the checklists that are provided for each of the ways of inviting.

We suggest that each member of the Giving Team have a copy. It is a way of keeping track.

Appendix

In the Appendix, there are additional handouts that might be useful at this stage:

- Questions ministry leaders ask
- Why be part of our Giving Team?



Gathering the Giving Team

The annual parish giving program is an opportunity for those who join the Giving Team to:

- **inspire** people by telling how your parish makes a difference, how it is responding to God's mission in their lives as people of faith and the ministry of the parish as well as making an impact in the wider world
- **invite** people to share their gifts to help ensure that the ministry and God's mission in your community continue to thrive
- **thank** people for everything they contribute to your mission and ministry

It's a time for learning, reflection, prayer, and generosity. What an important ministry in the life of your parish!

Not only will a giving program help to shape and strengthen the future ministry of your parish and the Anglican Church, but it is also an opportunity for the people in your parish to deepen their faith. It will create fertile ground for future mission and for seeing generosity and gratitude as a way of life and a spiritual practice in the lives of many.

Like most other important ministries, a giving program is most effective if the commitment and leadership are shared between the clergy and respected lay people. And whether the Giving Team is fully lay-led or led by a clergy and lay team, having co-leads is always beneficial for the program; to support one another and increase mutual accountability, to say nothing of following how Jesus sent out the disciples two by two.

One requirement for all Giving Team members should be non-negotiable: that every member of the Giving Team (and every volunteer who invites, talks to, or writes to members of the parish) makes a commitment of financial support to mission of the parish. The amount will be different for each person, but the gift should be meaningful and intentional.

Recruitment

While a large team is possible in some situations, we also know that parishes with different experiences and resources will need to organize the program differently. We have included a Role Description for the Giving Team Co-Leads and in the online resources there are additional Role Descriptions for you to use to adapt for what will work in *your* parish.

Once you have crafted your roles, discern who is best suited to be part of the Giving Team and invite them to be part of the team. The handout *Why be part of Our Giving Team?*, in the Appendix, can be shared as an additional encouragement.



What does a Giving Team look like?

Your Giving Team should look like your parish and include people who are:

- younger and older
- female and male
- long-time and new
- introverts and extroverts
- keen on the ministry of the congregation
- wise and respected in the community
- willing to speak about why they give

Role description: Giving Team co-leads

The co-leads are needed throughout the giving program to champion the program with the congregation.

Role

- Co-lead the program: All members of the Giving Team work under the direction of the co-leads.
- Recruit the rest of the Giving Team: This is best done face to face.
- Guide the congregation in its understanding of how the spiritual practice of giving and stewardship contributes to God's mission for the transformation of the world.
- Increase understanding of the spiritual practice of giving and generosity, through preaching and personal example.
- Encourage all to live faithfully at all ages and in all stages of faith.

Benefits to you and the congregation

- Contributing to a ministry that is vital for the health and well-being of the faith community

Skills and gifts

- Teaching, giving, encouragement
- Project management
- Leadership, compassion, faith

Tasks

- Recruit team members, coordinate the overall program, and be the program's visible leaders
- Coordinate the development or updating of the narrative budget
- Coordinate and develop the plan for inviting people to support the mission of the church and the resources needed to implement it—through a letter and supporting information, inviting groups or individuals face to face and peer to peer
- Encourage and assist other members of the team
- Coordinate all worship and learning opportunities employing the resources provided
- Encourage and assist other team members
- Preach, teach, and share your own “Why I give”



Five things to know about Giving Our Thanks & Praise

1. It was created by and for the Anglican Church of Canada

This program is a project of the General Synod Resources for Mission with the support of a Ministry Investment Fund grant. A team of Anglican clergy and lay leaders are adapting and writing resources for this parish giving program. The program and its materials will be revised and improved, based on ongoing evaluation.

2. It is based on three actions: inspiring, inviting, and thanking

The program has resources for each action. The important thing is to do something that inspires, something that invites, and something that offers thanks.

3. It is adaptable to your context

This program can be scaled to the size and setting of your congregation. The theme makes it easy to adapt to any time of the church year: Thanksgiving, Advent, Epiphany, Lent, or Easter. Designed as a five-week program, Giving Our Thanks & Praise can be adapted as a shorter program to suit your congregation's needs.

4. It has five steps

Get started: Recruit leadership, set goals, and plan implementation

Inspire: Resources to develop “Why I give” testimonies, resources to develop a narrative budget to share the story of your ministry, and worship and learning resources to anchor the program in sound theology in our Anglican tradition

Invite: Step-by-step support for a face-to-face and peer-to-peer invitation to everyone in your community, and ideas for a leadership letter

Thank: Ideas and encouragement for showing and modelling gratitude that is timely, personal, and sincere, and ways to develop a culture of gratitude in your parish

Wrap up: Evaluation and preparation for next year's program

5. Support is provided

We are developing peer support for implementing this program.

The website will add resources as they are available (anglican.ca/gtp).

Giving Team kickoff

Once you have the Giving Team recruited—even if it is just you!—the first step is to meet and get started.

You may find that you prefer to cover this agenda over two sessions, not one.

This is an important meeting with the purposes of:

- increasing our understanding of giving, generosity, and gratitude as a way of living our faith
- getting familiar with the Giving Our Thanks & Praise giving program
- making decisions on how you will carry out the program, including preparing to introduce the giving program to the parish, planning the implementation of the program

The Planning Workbook is where you will record your decisions and map out the program. It will also refer you back to the sections in the Program Guide for you to consult when needed.

- introducing “Why I give” stories and inviting team members to start crafting their own “Why I give” story
- inviting the Giving Team members to take the lead in making an appropriate, intentional, and meaningful gift to the mission of your church. Each will be given a response card to fill in and return as soon as possible

It’s a great idea for whoever is leading the meeting to have their “Why I give” story developed and ready to share with the team, plus their response card filled in and sealed in an envelope.

Ahead of Time

Make copies of the following for everyone:

- Planning Workbook with current data filled in by the treasurer
- Inspire! Invite! Thank!
- Questions ministry leaders ask
- Decision-making tool – one of the giving charts and an intention card with return envelope

It may help to have a calendar of events for your community of faith handy so you can choose the best dates for your program and set a timeline.

Agenda

Beginning

Open with prayer. Use the following or one created by you for this program (p. 25) or something from the Liturgical Resources section of the web resources.

Gracious and generous God,
Creator and giver of all that is good,
we thank you for our many blessings.
We acknowledge that all that we have is from you.
We offer you thanks and praise
for the beauty of the earth, our work, our family, our loved ones,
and all the gifts we have been given.

Help us to hear your call to be good stewards, caretakers, and managers
of all your gifts by sharing them for your purposes.
Help us plan to serve our church, our community, and our world with your gifts.
May we serve you and pray with a joyful spirit of mind and heart.
We remain your faithful stewards.

Amen

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

Opening exercise

This exercise helps the Giving Team members start to develop their own “Why I give” story or testimony to share with others.

- In pairs, discuss one of the following questions:
 1. What brought you to the Anglican church or to this parish? Why do you stay?
 2. Share a memorable experience of either giving a gift or receiving a gift. Why do you give? (“Why,” not “how” or “what.”)
 3. Why do you give to God’s mission as lived out in our parish?

- Giving Team co-leads share their own story of “Why I give.”

Your team may feel comfortable discussing the above questions together, or they could take time to jot down some notes to think about after the meeting.

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

Invite everyone to write out their story after the meeting. People might practise telling it to fellow team members in the coming days or at future Giving Team Meeting. Do what you can to help one another improve your stories and give them even more impact.

Co-leads then invite the other Giving Team members to join in living out God's mission in this parish. Distribute intention cards and decision-making tools. Request that each person give the invitation prayerful consideration and determine an intentional and meaningful gift. Ask that they fill in the intention card and return it in a sealed envelope as soon as possible. (You have just made your first "ask," or invitation!)

Introducing Giving Our Thanks & Praise

- Hand out Five things to know about Giving Our Thanks & Praise, plus Inspire, Invite, Thanks and Questions Leaders ask

These handouts put the program into perspective and answers some basic questions people have been asking.

Middle

Setting goals

Using the Planning Workbook, get a start on identifying your goals.

You may need more time to complete the worksheet and bring it back to a later meeting of the Giving Team.

What method of invitation will you use:

- Face-to-face individuals
- Face-to-face small groups
- Letter

What additional resources need to be developed:

- "Why I give" stories
- Narrative budget

Setting a timeline

Review the calendar of events for the coming months in your parish, and determine the best time to launch the giving program.

- When is the best season in your community?
 - Advent
 - Epiphany Lent
 - Easter/Pentecost
 - Thanksgiving

- Will the Sundays coincide with any other important dates?

How long will the program be?

Five weeks

Three weeks

One week

Consecutive weeks

Once a month

End

- Identify what needs to be accomplished immediately – who will do what by when.
- Set the next meeting date.
- Close with prayer from the Liturgical Resources.





Introducing the Giving Program

Communication is important for any program's success, and this giving program is certainly no exception. It is important that all communication be clear, simple, and direct. Let people know what is being planned in order to build support and encourage participation. Let everyone know that your parish is undertaking this Anglican giving program to encourage generosity, giving, and gratitude.

In this section, you will find resources for introducing the program in the weeks before it is launched:

- Sample announcements for church bulletins, emails, and Sunday announcements
- Sample text for a letter to the whole community
- A liturgy for commissioning the Giving Team and introducing the program in the online resources

On line there are bulletin covers and other resources.

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

- **What:** This is our giving program to invite everyone to join in supporting our ministry.
- **Why:** Our parish carries out God's mission, which is important and makes a difference. We are inviting everyone in our community to learn more about how we do this and to make their own informed and intentional gift so we can continue this good work.
- **When:** We will begin our program on _____ (date).
- **How:** We will be inviting participation through _____ (a leadership letter, or face-to-face and peer-to-peer conversations with individuals or small groups).





Announcing the program

Sample announcement

Ideally, this text will be both spoken during the service, as an announcement, and written in a bulletin or circulated by email. This is a jumping-off point; edit or rewrite to suit your community.

Giving Our Thanks & Praise

Our worship is filled with Scripture, song, and story about God's generosity to us and our response—thanksgiving. In our worship we regularly say what we believe, and on celebration we affirm our baptismal vows. We believe that we are called as individuals, families, congregations, and a denomination to follow in the way of Jesus to bring about a world of justice and peace.

- Invite a member of the parish to offer their testimony using something like the following:

Parish member: I respond to God's call and give to the ministry of *(name of your parish)* because *(include personal "Why I give" paragraph)*.

Over the coming weeks, we will focus on how we give our thanks and praise by supporting God's mission. We will share more stories about why we give, how our generosity makes a difference here at *(name of parish)*, and how we have an impact on the community around us.

Giving Our Thanks & Praise is the theme of the program and will be highlighted in our worship and learning opportunities for all ages. *(Include details about the worship and learning that are planned.)* Also, we will invite you to join us in giving an intentional and meaningful gift to this ministry.

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



Introductory letter

Create and deliver a letter to each individual or family in the parish announcing the giving program and explaining the focus and process. The letter should be timed to arrive two weeks before Sunday 1. On the next page is a template with some suggested wording for you to adapt.

Why five weeks?

A five-week giving program

- **builds a deeper understanding** of the ministry of the congregation and our church
- **reaches everyone**—including irregular attenders of worship
- **helps to form and educate people** about their faith and increase engagement over time
- allows the community to **deepen our understanding of our faith**, our church, and our life as stewards

However, the Planning Workbook also offers suggestions for a single-Sunday and three-week program.

Introductory Letter: A Template

Opening

Dear (*handwritten salutation using first name*),

Our worship is filled with Scripture, song, and story about God's generosity to us and our response—thanksgiving. In our worship we regularly affirm our commitment to God's mission when we repeat our baptismal vows. We believe that we are called as individuals, families, congregations, and a denomination to follow in the way of Jesus to bring about a world of justice and peace.

Our thanksgiving and gratitude takes many forms. Here at (*name of your parish*), we give our thanks and praise in all we do to fulfill God's mission here in this place:

(you can list some of your key ministry and mission –
how you serve (outreach),
worship,
learn,
and provide pastoral care).

Over the coming weeks, we will share stories about why we give, how our generosity makes a difference here at (*name of your parish*), how we have an impact on the community around us, and how through our ministry we serve God's mission.

Join us week by week to hear the stories of how we are called—in our worship and through a variety of learning opportunities. (*Include notice of any other learning events you are hosting that are related to this program.*)

Body: What will happen

Explain the Inviting Every Person option you have chosen. See more detail on these options in the Invite section.

<p>If you are doing a <i>Face-to-Face</i> and <i>Peer-to-Peer</i> invitation, use these words:</p>	<p>If you are doing a <i>Letter of Invitation</i>, use these words:</p>
<p>Individuals or families: You will be contacted by a member of our Giving Team to arrange a face-to-face conversation at a convenient location and time between <i>(date)</i> and <i>(date)</i> to discuss our ministry in more detail and to invite you to make a contribution that is intentional and meaningful to you.</p>	<p>In the middle of our giving program, you will receive another letter from us. After hearing and learning more about how we give our thanks and praise, we will invite you to make a contribution that is intentional and meaningful to you.</p>
<p>Small group: You will receive an invitation to attend a small gathering with other members of the community to be held at a convenient location on <i>(date)</i> at <i>(time)</i>. This will be an opportunity to discuss our ministry in more detail and invite you to make a contribution that is intentional and meaningful to you.</p>	

Closing

Between now and then, we encourage you and all members of your family to give prayerful consideration to how you will give your thanks and praise. We hope this will be a rich opportunity for you to reflect on the blessings of your life and respond with gratitude and generosity.

With thanks and blessings,

Giving Team co-leads

(hand-signed)

(Leave room to add a personal message.)

Note: The online resources include a book mark and prayer card, which you could include.

Writing a prayer for your giving program

There is a prayer for the Giving Our Thanks & Praise Giving Program, found on the Prayer Card, Book Mark etc. (available for download – anglican.ca/gtp). However, drafting a parish stewardship prayer can have many advantages:

Living our faith is a practice that is constantly with us—sometimes a joy, sometimes a challenge. It is appropriate that we regularly take time to bring that experience to God in prayer, either as a worshipping community or in our time of personal prayer and reflection.

Prayer helps us place that practice before God.

A prayer that has been written with your own community and context in mind can help unify the congregation's prayer life around common goals. A prayer can remind us that even though we all have different needs and backgrounds, God calls us to be “One Church” and to share our gifts faithfully and generously for the healing of God's world as well as for one community and a specific need.

A prayer, employing elements of the baptismal covenant, the Anglican Marks of Mission, or the giving program theme of Giving Our Thanks & Praise, places the giving program within the larger life of faith, drawing all people around our common mission regardless of what gifts of time, talent, and treasure we have to offer. A prayer is also a simple way for some to take their first steps on the journey of being a follower of Jesus. All of us can offer prayer. Prayer also introduces the spiritual dimension that is critical in making generosity and giving a way of life rather than just a response to another request for money.

Drafting your prayer

Writing a prayer for the giving program is really not difficult. One individual can do it, or a group of people can come together to compose the prayer.

Begin with gratitude. Include thoughts and phrases from the baptismal covenant, the Anglican Marks of Mission, or the giving program theme of Giving Our Thanks & Praise. For ministries and outreach of particular significance to your community of faith, include an appropriate biblical quote.

Be sure to include prayers of thanksgiving for the many blessings bestowed on your congregation in general and on individual people.

Using your prayer

Once you have crafted the prayer, be creative in using it in as many ways as possible.

- Introduce it as you begin your Giving Our Thanks & Praise giving program.
- Include it in any bulletins and inserts for the program.

- Use it each week in worship.
- Request that leaders use it to open all meetings parish meetings and gatherings during the weeks of the giving program.
- Ask families to pray the prayer together before or after meals.
- Distribute it to members of any prayer groups in the congregation.
- Publish it in your newsletter.



Resources for communication

Communication is so important to the success of any program. Here are some resources to get the juices flowing and to get you started talking about Giving Our Thanks & Praise in your parish. Add your own, and make them more specific. Use all your communication channels—congregational announcements, bulletin inserts, church email lists, and social media—to stay connected throughout the program to build interest, enthusiasm, and commitment.

Find the specific tools and samples in the Communication Resources section of Anglican.ca/gtp. This area has specific sections (Giving Team, Church Secretary, Social Media Team) with appropriate resources and suggestions for each group. It will be regularly updated, including with new ideas for the ever-changing world of digital communication. There will be items for use in bulletins, in announcements, on screens during worship if you use them, in email communications, in social media posts, and on your website, including the following:

For the Giving Team and other congregational leaders and staff

- Sample email signature with setup instructions for Outlook and Gmail for all Giving Team members and congregational staff to use when you are implementing this program

For the church secretary

- Downloadable bulletin covers and inserts

For your website

- Sample tag for your church's website

For your social media team

- Suggestions and samples for at least five social media posts with artwork for each week





Implementation

Now that you have made some initial decisions about the program and have begun to use the Planning Workbook, this section will give you the tools you need to implement each of the three steps:

Inspire, Invite, Thank – introduction to these three key activities

Inspire

Spoken inspiration: Gathering “Why I give” stories

Written inspiration: The narrative budget

Invite

Inviting generosity

- Face-to-face and peer-to-peer invitation

- Invitation by letter

Decision-making tools

- Giving charts –

 - Proportional giving chart

 - Step chart

- Intention card

Additional resources for Inviting:

- The six i's of inviting

- How much should I give?

Thank





Inspire, Invite, Thank

Inspire, invite, and thank are the foundations of our congregational giving program.

These three vital activities will build generosity within your community and support for the mission of the church as well as help to grow generosity into a regular spiritual practice.

Inspire

Inspire generosity. Inspire giving. Inspire gratitude. Inspire ways of living our faith.

Our generosity is our response to God's vast generosity in our own lives. Our generosity contributes to God's mission in our world. It is how we make a positive difference as individuals and families, in our own community through the mission of our parish, as part of our diocese and the Anglican Church of Canada. In inspiring, we share the story of the impact of our generosity on God's mission.

In order to inspire, we ask ourselves,

- What is God's mission for me in my daily life?
- How am I a follower of Jesus?
- What is our mission here in our community?
- How do we model compassion, provide community, and offer hope?
- How do we serve God's mission in the wider world?

Helping you to inspire

Resources that inspire have an emotional impact. We inspire through writing, speaking, worshipping, and learning. We inspire by telling stories—including our own "Why I give" stories—and by showing images of faith in action.

Giving Our Thanks & Praise provides

- help on how to write "Why I give" stories
- step-by step instructions to create a narrative budget
- worship resources
- additional online learning programs
- communication tools: bulletin covers and inserts

Invite

We invite others to join us in support of God's mission. The ultimate goal is to invite every person annually to contribute an appropriate and meaningful gift.

The invitation is most effective when it is clear, direct, and personal. We encourage a conversation. We invite people to prayerfully consider how they will respond to God's generosity in their lives.

Ideally, every person feels they have been invited

- to join us and others in God's mission
- to participate in supporting God's mission
- to make an appropriate and meaningful gift of treasure as well as time and talent

Helping you to invite

Giving Our Thanks & Praise provides

- step-by-step instructions on how to have a face-to-face and peer-to-peer conversation that invites people to give
- ideas for creating an inviting letter to send to everyone in the congregation

Thank

A culture of generosity is built on a foundation of gratitude. We thank God for the blessings in our lives. God is generous again and again and again, and we can find time to say thank you again and again and again—and in many different ways. We cannot thank enough.

Helping you to thank

Giving Our Thanks & Praise emphasizes how to ensure that our gratitude and thanks are

- **timely:** A message of thanks is provided soon after we receive a gift.
- **sincere:** The message communicates what a difference a person's gift will make.
- **personal:** The thank-you is delivered face to face or in a handwritten note.

In this part of the guide, you will find assistance in how to **inspire**, how to **invite**, and how to **thank**. We hope that you will feel inspired in the process.



Inspire

Telling our story: Our generosity making a difference

To *inspire* means to fill someone with the urge or ability to do or feel something. The Bible inspires us to follow God's way and to model ourselves on the life of Jesus. We come together as a church community to be inspired to live that life of discipleship as companions and co-creators with God.

Many in our communities are inspired by their faith to take action to bring God's love and justice to light. They are inspired and committed to the task of sharing that love and healing the world.

Their stories inspire us to join them. We are inspired to join them in giving of our time, talent, and treasure, as the familiar alliterative phrase puts it. In joining others, we are making a prayerful intention to carry out God's mission in our lives and in our community.

How do we inspire? What tools do we use?

In this giving program guide, we provide resources for inspiring others

- through people **sharing their own stories** of what inspired them to give, telling about why they give (not how or what)
- through a **narrative budget**, which tells what generosity has accomplished in your parish: what the money does (to change people's lives), not just where the money goes (to pay the hydro bill)
- through our **worship and learning** more about the life of faith: building a life of intentional generosity and support of God's mission in our life and in the world

Spoken inspiration: Gathering "Why I give" stories

Many of us have not yet articulated our "Why I give" stories. The agenda that follows is for a short gathering to help you and others discover and express your motivation for giving, your "Why I give" story. It could be used at a board or council meeting, as a workshop, or on another occasion.



Agenda

Beginning (5 min.)

Opening prayer

Blessed are you, Lord our God, creator of heaven and earth,
 You create the fruit of the land to sustain our families and neighbours,
 You nurture the church, loving communities of faith,
 deepening our relationship with you and with one another,
 You offer us the gift of baptism and the sacrament of Christ's body and blood
 so that we may be fed and filled with your Holy Spirit,
 You bless us with generous hearts so that we may support the outcast,
 the hungry, the sick and all those who long for intimacy with Jesus.
 You fill us with determination to be mindful of the ministry and mission to which we are called,
 And you call us to generous support of our parishes, diocese and the wider church,
 Blessed are you o God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

Amen

(Or use one from the Liturgical Resources, online at www.anglican.ca/gtp.)

Introduction

Share the purpose of this gathering:

- to learn more about Giving Our Thanks & Praise giving program
- to discover and articulate each individual's "Why I give" story to share with others

Middle (44 min.)

- **Why "Why I Give"?** (1 min.)
 - Sharing "Why I give" is an important element in the Inspire part of our giving program. We can all be inspired by one another when we share stories from the heart—in this case, exploring why each of us gives to God's mission.
- In pairs, discuss one of the following:
 - What brought you to the Anglican church or to this parish?
Why do you stay?
 - Share a memorable experience of either giving a gift or receiving a gift. Why do you give? ("Why," not "how" or "what.")
 - Why do you give to God's mission as lived out in our parish?

- **Discovering your “Why I give” story: Getting started (15 min.)**
 - Distribute paper and pens. Have participants work through this exercise in pairs, with the co-leads keeping time and moving things along.

Round 1 (5 min.)

- Listen and share with each other:
- What brought you into the Anglican church or to this congregation? Why do you stay?
- Share a memorable experience of either giving or receiving a gift.

Round 2 (15 min.)

- Listen as your partner answers the questions. Write down notes so your partner can use them to remember their “Why I give” story.

Person 1 (4 min.)

- Why do you give? (“Why,” not “how” or “what.”)
- Why do you give to God’s mission in our parish?

Person 2 (3 min.)

- **Share your responses:**
 - What did you, as the listener, find compelling or want to know more about?
 - How would this story invite others to join you in supporting our parish’s mission?

At 7 minutes, switch and repeat.

End (10 min.)

- Take time to reflect on your story and add more notes. Consider how to share your story with a friend, with a group in the congregation, or in worship.
- Later, write out your story or make notes. Seek out opportunities to practise your “Why I give” story with others. Do what you can to help one another improve the story and make it even more impactful.
- Now you have a story to tell when someone asks why you support God’s mission.
- Close with a prayer of thanksgiving. See additional prayers online at www.anglican.ca/gtp.

Written inspiration: The narrative budget

The **narrative budget** shows how the generosity of the people of your parish makes a difference. It is a story of the life of the community in service to God's mission.

It recognizes that we do not give money TO the church so much as we give money THROUGH the church to translate God's mission into action.

It tells the story of what the money **DOES**, rather than where the money **GOES**.

A very effective tool for inspiring congregational giving, the narrative budget (called a "mission budget" or "ministry-based budget" in other circles), which is renewed and improved annually, tells the story of your ministry through words and pictures. It shows how generosity impacts your community and empowers your people to work for God's mission in our world.

The time it takes to produce this critical resource is a real investment. (We estimate up to 20 hours for the initial version.) Once you have produced your first narrative budget, you can update it annually with stories of the most recent year's accomplishments. It is important to commit to preparing and updating your narrative budget annually for five years. We are seeking to change behaviour, and we know from life experience that changing behaviour takes time and repetition. Making the narrative budget a multi-year project also means that if it isn't as polished or detailed you want in year one, there is time to improve it for the next edition.

What is a narrative budget?

A narrative budget is primarily a communication tool. It does not replace a line-item budget, but rather

- communicates complex financial information for a broader audience
- links your vision, values, and ministry with your financial priorities
- helps develop a deeper understanding of how the parish stewards the generous gifts that are given by members
- inspires generosity and giving because people can see how their gifts make a difference and change lives
- encourages people to discuss the needs of the ministry more deeply, tell others about the mission and ministry of the congregation, and see their own giving and stewardship as an expression of their faith

Creating your first narrative budget

If this is a new concept for you, or if you do not yet have the time and people to help with this, it may be more realistic to create a one-page narrative budget.

Just tell the story

The story of the ministry is the important element here. If the task of allocating the line-item budget into the ministry categories is daunting, **don't give up**. Just tell the story of what the money does in the areas of worship, learning, caring, and outreach. Use as few words as possible and as many pictures or visuals as possible.

The story of our ministry this year

This year, because of the generous giving of people in our parish, we lived God's mission in many ways.

This is what your generosity accomplished:

- Through **Service**
Within the congregation:
All the pastoral care and support of the people of God so they can in turn serve others in their daily lives.
Beyond the congregation:
All the ways the congregation serves the needs of the wider community (e.g., providing affordable space for community groups such as a daycare centre, AA, or Guides and Scouts).
- Through **Worship**
Include how many people contribute to your community worship. Think of everything that goes into it.
- Through **Learning**
Include all the ways people of all ages grow in understanding of their faith.

Present the narrative budget attractively

Once you have collected the information, create an attractive one- or two-page document (two sides of one page, or bulletin size). Find quotes, illustrations, and photos to increase the impact of the story. Samples from other parishes are found in the online resources.

Enhance your narrative budget

1. Add letters from clergy and/or lay leaders setting the theme for the coming year.
2. Include a prayer written especially for your congregation's ministry areas and used regularly throughout the year. (See "Writing a prayer for your giving program," p. 25.)
3. Track the gift of time: volunteer opportunities and impact in each area.
4. Include more information on how to make an informed and intentional gift, such as giving charts or a Q&A about the giving and generosity in your congregation.
5. If you are putting the narrative budget on your website, add short video testimonials, such as "Why I come and why I stay" or videos highlighting the impact of a ministry area.

Samples of narrative budgets can be found on line: anglican.ca/gtp



Invite

Invite generosity

We know the reason many people don't give is because they have not been asked. Sadly, this is very true in the church. The Anglican church, like other mainline denominations, has largely abandoned the practice of annually inviting everyone in the community to pledge support of their mission by making an intentional and meaningful gift.

Instead, we have turned to event-based fundraising. Event-based fundraising has its place: ideally, it merely supplements the generosity of members as an opportunity to build fellowship among them or encourages the involvement of people beyond the community of faith in the church's outreach work.

It is time to return to the practice of inviting everyone in our parish to contribute to God's mission.

To revive this leading practice, the Giving Our Thanks & Praise giving program provides all the resources needed to invite every person to make an informed, intentional, and meaningful gift to support the ministry of parish.

We are an inclusive community

Whichever method of invitation you choose, make sure everyone in your community of faith is included. Sharing the story with everyone is important and allows everyone to make their own decision in response to the invitation. Beginning with thanks allows the opportunity to acknowledge all gifts. It also allows for clear communication that ALL gifts make a difference and are welcome.

The desired outcome is for each person to make a prayerful, intentional, and meaningful gift—whatever the amount might be.

Checklists for all these methods of inviting are found in the Planning Workbook.

Face-to-face and peer-to-peer invitation

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

This is the tried and true method employed by other successful charitable organizations. However, there is a more compelling precedent for us as people of faith: The individual invitation is how Jesus

called people to follow his way of life and become disciples. Jesus invited people to join him and live like him.

A face-to-face invitation is a chance to

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

For the giver, it is an opportunity to

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

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

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

Individual or family

This is a face-to-face and peer-to-peer conversation with each person or family in the parish inviting them to contribute to the ministry of the congregation. The conversation is held in an agreed-upon location, such as a coffee shop or church meeting room. One person shares why they support the ministry (“Why I give”) and invites the other to join them.

Small group

This face-to-face and peer-to-peer conversation takes place in small non-family groups. Every person or family in the parish is invited to attend a conversation. Each conversation is with 10 to 20 people and is held in a community member’s home or in a meeting room of the church. The group convener or conveners (an individual or a couple of hosts) make the invitation. Conveners share their own “Why I give” story and invite the others to join them in making an intentional gift to support the ministry of the church.

Invitation by letter

If a face-to-face invitation is new to your community, or if you suspect there would be significant resistance to a face-to-face and peer-to-peer conversation, you can begin the first year with a **letter** (and hint that in a subsequent program you will be making a face-to-face and peer-to-peer invitation for support).

A leadership letter, also called “direct mail,” has been a good starting point for many parishes and a fallback for others. Letters do affect giving, or you wouldn’t be receiving them from many charitable organizations, including churches.

In the end, the important thing is to issue the invitation.

Find the right kind of letter for *your* parish

A single letter

Each member of the community receives a letter written by the Giving Team leaders (clergy and/or lay people) inviting them to support the ministry of the parish. The objective is to write an inspiring letter that is also personal—for example, hand-sign each one and include a specific note of encouragement.

The letter *always* begins with thanks and gratitude, tells the story of the impact of generosity (not the need to pay the heating bill), and contains additional information and decision-making tools, such as the narrative budget and an intention card with a reply envelope.

Multiple letters

In this approach, each member of the community receives a letter written by one of a number of parish leaders. Each person in the congregation receives a letter and an invitation from someone they are like to particularly respect or admire. Each leader writes their “Why I give” story, speaking personally of their reasons for giving and supporting God’s mission. This introductory section is followed by a common text with more information.

Each of these letters *always* begins with thanks and gratitude, tells the story of the impact of generosity (not the need to pay the heating bill), and contains additional information and decision-making tools, such as the narrative budget and an intention card with a reply envelope.

Take the letter as an opportunity

Whichever option you choose, a letter is an opportunity to

- offer gratitude for the specific generosity of the person and that of other members of the parish
- tell the story of the parish and how it makes a difference in the lives of individuals in your parish and your community.
- mutually share how people think and feel about the ministry of the parish
- affirm past and present involvement and a chance to discover new gifts, talents, and needs
- renew participation in the mission of the parish and how they grow as followers of Jesus

Five reasons for inviting every person annually

1. To model the regular and consistent spiritual practice of giving
2. To provide an opportunity to inform everyone about the ministry we undertake and how it changes lives
3. To open an opportunity to listen to people in our community
4. To create the basis for all other giving—legacy and major project giving
5. To model the regular and consistent spiritual practice of giving (Yes, this is worth repeating!)

Letter-writing guidelines

In preparing the text of your leadership letter, you will invest a great deal of prayer, thought, and energy. Your letter needs to sound authentic, natural, and true to the culture of your particular community. Nevertheless, certain basic principles apply. The following points are ideal guidelines, and the degree of detail you add to them will depend on the resources available.

Format

Strive to be concise, and to have a letter that is no more than one letter-sized page. Additional information can be included on the second side or as enclosures, but the less there is to read, the better.

Make the document easy to read. This means using a clear font in a type size no smaller than 10 points. Justify only the left-hand margin, not both sides.

Structure

Open with gratitude

Give thanks for past and current gifts as often as possible (with the total amount of gifts if appropriate). Include a biblical quotation on the theme of Giving Our Thanks & Praise.

Tell a story

Tell one that tells of the impact of generosity in your parish; connect the theme with your ministry.

Point to enclosures

Consider enclosing other documents that add more detail about the program, about what they might give, and about how that can be done. These might include

- plans and opportunities for the coming year
- testimonials about the impact of your ministry and the results of people's past generosity
- your narrative budget
- different methods of making the gift: cheque, Pre-Authorized Remittance, online giving, weekly or monthly envelopes

Invite

Invite them to give of their time and talent as well as of their treasure. Request that they make an informed and prayerful decision and return the enclosed intention card with whatever gift they choose to make by a particular date.

Conclude with gratitude

Celebrate all the good ways God has blessed the parish. Tell your readers to watch for more stories to come. Create some anticipation of more to come that is worthy of celebrating and being thankful for.

Hand-sign

Have two key individuals hand-sign the letter. Include contact details, such as a phone number and an email address.

Customize

Remind your readers that God is the provider of an abundance of resources for ministry and mission. Your parish is rich in faith, service, love, talent, life experience, care for one another, and financial capability. Communities of faith have many assets, including financial ones, with which to carry out their mission. Remind them of their “wealth.”

Include some financial facts and goals. Tell people what their generosity will do. Use positive language:

- Avoid language around “campaigning.” Instead, use terms like mission plan, annual ministry plan, and personal giving plan.
- Avoid any language that sounds like begging, using guilt as a strategy, or suggesting that it is the church’s need for money to pay the bills.

Adjust your letter to each recipient. If you are writing to people who fit different categories, such as regular givers and occasional givers, customize the different letters but keep the main elements the same.



A sample letter

Opening paragraphs to those who already give regularly

Open with a personal note from one or both of the Giving Team co-leads:

Dear Bob,

Thanks so much for all the skills you brought to us this year by your work in the garden and your welcoming of new attendees. I trust that your holiday in Florida was memorable and that you enjoyed seeing your new grandchild.

Continue with a sincere and personal thank-you.

[YOUR TEXT]

Highlight some of the ways you are called to be the church.

[YOUR TEXT]

Tie the concept of giving to what the recipient already does:

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

Opening paragraphs to those who do not yet give

After opening with a personal note from one or both of the Giving Team co-leads, welcome these people into being part of your community, however they choose to contribute time and talent.

Dear Linda,

Thanks so much for all the skills you brought to us this year by volunteering at the Christmas pageant. I trust that your holiday out west was memorable and that you enjoyed your post-Christmas rest.

Highlight some of the ways you are called to be the church.

[YOUR TEXT]





Invite them to consider deepening their relationship with God's mission by becoming a regular giver to the ministry of your congregation.

[YOUR TEXT]

Encourage them to return the intention card, whatever the amount they choose to give. Include a giving chart to aid in their decision-making. Point to how they can sign up for Pre-Authorized Remittance (PAR), for which you can include a sign-up sheet, or use a weekly or monthly church envelope.

[YOUR TEXT]

The rest of the letter, for all recipients

Thank you for your previous contributions to the ministry and mission of our parish.

Invite the recipient to increase their gift (and to sign up for PAR if they are not already on it). Be clear what ministry is possible with more support. Use wording such as this:

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

We cannot say thank you enough for all you do to make our ministry possible here at Midtown Anglican. You consistently and generously support God's mission with your time and talents, as well as treasure.

As a faith community, we have responded to the call to be the church in the past year by [NEW TEXT]

And we have plans for the coming year, such as [NEW TEXT]

This year, we want to encourage you to try/continue pledging (knowing that this is an intention that may change due to future circumstances). We firmly believe the spiritual discipline of pledging and giving strengthens our relationship with God's mission and how we embody that through the ministry of our parish.

To assist you in making an informed and prayerful decision we include...

End with a list of the enclosures, and with a well-meant closing:

[YOUR TEXT]



Decision-making tools

While people may know the amount they currently give to support the mission of the church, they are often unaware of the generosity of others or of what might be expected of them. These tools will help people make informed and intentional decisions based on concrete information.

We recommend providing the following for each person or household:

- One of the giving charts
 - Proportional Giving Chart
 - Step Chart (you will have to create your own version based on the giving patterns in your parish)
- Intention card with return envelope

Two kinds of giving charts

1. Proportional Giving Chart

A Proportional Giving Chart gives a clear picture of what a percentage of income means as a weekly or monthly offering to the mission of the church. It can be used by someone either to set a personal goal or to identify where their giving is at the moment (after looking at a year-end charitable tax receipt). Then they can give prayerful consideration to their future giving.

Here, you'll find a sample Proportional Giving Chart. You could use this one, or a version that aligns only with the giving pattern of your people—weekly, monthly, or yearly. This chart also helps identify what the weekly or monthly donation would need to be if people wished to make a specific proportional gift—2 percent or 10 percent (a biblical tithe).

2. Step Chart

A Step Chart shows where a gift level fits within the giving pattern of the congregation—how many people are giving at various levels. This can help a person see where they are in relation to others in the congregation. The Step Guide challenges people to “step up” to the next level. You will need to prepare this for your own parish, giving the information to show how many households give at each level. On page 51 is a sample Step Chart. You can use this version and fill in the number of households in your parish who give at each level OR you can use it as a template to create your own version.

Intention card

The benefit of the intention card for the donor is that it encourages people to make an informed and meaningful gift to the ministry of the parish. It is helpful to make it clear that that circumstances might mean that they need to change that gift.

The benefit of the intention card to the giving program is to keep track of the response to the program. This effort will be more successful if returning the intention card is positioned as a means of including and honouring everyone's gifts.

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

This is a pastoral matter, and will be more readily received if it is approached that way. Successful programs have a person with strong pastoral skills who calls those who have not yet returned their intention card to give them a gentle reminder and the rationale.

Proportional Giving Chart sample:

Identify your current level of giving as a percentage of your annual resources.

Please, prayerfully consider how you will contribute to God's mission and fill in the intention card.

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

Step Chart sample

This is a breakdown of our congregation's giving patterns in 2016. Identify your current level of giving. Where are you on the chart? Can you move up one or more steps this year?

_____ households gave	over \$200.01/week or over \$10,400/year
_____ households gave	\$150.01 to \$200/week or up to \$10,400/year
_____ households gave	\$100.01 to \$150/week or up to \$7,800/year
_____ households gave	\$50.01 to \$100/week or up to \$5,200/year
_____ households gave	\$40.01 to \$50/week or up to \$2,600/year
_____ households gave	\$30.01 to \$40/week or up to \$2,080/year
_____ households gave	\$20.01 to \$30/week or up to \$1,560/year
_____ households gave	10.01 to \$20/week or up to \$1,040/year
_____ households gave	\$5.01 to \$10/week or up to \$520/year
_____ households gave	up to \$5/week or up to \$260/year
_____ households gave	\$0 per week



Intention Card sample

I/We intend to contribute:

\$ _____ for the year 20____ toward God's mission at

Parish Name: _____

My/Our gift will be paid:

Weekly \$ _____

Monthly \$ _____

One-time \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

I/We select the following commitment payment option for 2017:

Continue Pre-Authorized Remittance

Convert to Pre-Authorized Remittance

Automatic Withdrawal (please attach void cheque)

Credit card

Visa MasterCard

(Please note that the bank service charge on credit cards reduces the total received.)

Name (as it appears on card): _____

Card #: _____ Expiry: _____

Signature: _____

Continue to use Weekly Offering Envelopes

Online at CanadaHelps.org

All information is for the parish's ministry planning and is held in a confidential manner. Tax receipts are issued for all gifts.

Thank you.





Additional Resources for Inviting

How much should I give?

Components of an invitation

The six i's of inviting







How much should I give?

One of the questions people often ask is “How much should I give?” This challenging question is too often avoided, deflected, or left unanswered.

In the church, we are often vague on the topic of “how much.” This is in contrast with other charity appeals we all receive, which are usually very specific and often include amounts the charity is challenging us to consider.

People don’t ask how much they should give to be difficult. They ask this when we haven’t communicated expectations or haven’t spent enough time teaching about giving, generosity, and gratitude. They genuinely hope for guidance.

How do we learn what we are expected to give?

Sunday after Sunday, the offering plate is passed. It collects coins, bills—\$5s and \$10s and even greater—envelopes with undisclosed amounts, and PAR cards as proxies for gifts. Some people put something on it and others don’t. If this is the only way we learn what is expected, what are we asking of people?

It might be more helpful to open up a conversation to help and encourage people to make an informed and intentional decision about how they will give to support the ministry of your parish.

Lately, the pattern in the church has been to not ask for gifts at all. Or the answer has been either “Give what you can” (huh?) or the biblical expectation of the tithe: 10 percent (gasp!). For a new person, neither of these may be very helpful. And for people who have been members for a long time, these answers don’t encourage regular reflection on their practice of giving and generosity or toward determining what they are called to give.

“What should I give?” is an honest question that deserves to be explored. As leaders of this giving program, you will want to consider how you will respond to it.

How you might answer the question

Always begin with thanks. Be personal and sincere in your gratitude. Mention how, specifically, the person or family gives in many ways, including money. It may also be appropriate to acknowledge that they might be at their limit of generosity at this time for any number of reasons.

Acknowledge that there is biblical teaching, of giving 10 percent to God from your “first fruits” (and that in these Scripture passages, this tithing is regarded as the beginning of giving, not the end). However, times have changed, and there are now many ways we “give” to accomplish what the Bible expects. We pay taxes, for example, which in turn pay for health care. We support other worthy organizations as well as the church.

Give until it feels good. Suggest that whatever the decision, they need to feel comfortable or ideally, cheerful with it. Remind them that their decision isn’t permanent: the amount of their gift can change—in either direction—should their circumstances change.

Share what the impact of generosity is for the parish. In doing so, talk about what the money will accomplish (feeding the hungry), not what it will pay for (heating the parish hall).

Share your story of how you go about making the giving decision, and even how much!

Offer decision-making tools to help people make an informed and intentional choice based on concrete information.

Be bold and give a suggestion

There are many ways to do this. You could share how you make your own decision: “We give 5 percent to our church and then give another 2 percent to other charities.”

Or you could describe your own experience in decision-making about giving: “We started out giving a fixed amount. Then we decided to figure out what percentage that was of our total income. It was lower than we thought, so now we are on a path to increase it by X percent a year.”

Other suggestions:

- Start with the equivalent of an hour’s salary in a week or a day’s salary in a month.
- Give what you would normally spend on (coffee, fast food, etc.) a week. (“Try that out and see how it feels.”)

In each of these cases, the result is a mindful and intentional decision about what to give. That in itself is a great first step.



Components of an invitation

Thanking

1. Begin with thanks for contributions to the life and ministry of the parish and church. Be as specific, personal, and sincere as possible.

Inspiring

2. Share your own “Why I give” story, basing it in a response to God’s generosity in your own life and indicating that you have already made your own intentional gift.
3. Describe the impact of the ministry of the congregation (refer to the narrative budget—showing what the money does).

Inviting generosity

4. Be clear and direct – “I want to talk to you about supporting the mission of our parish.”
5. Make the invitation to contribute, and share the decision-making resources and intention card. Emphasize that the goal is to have all cards returned in their sealed envelope, whatever the contribution.

Thanking

6. Conclude with thanks. You can never thank someone too many times.



The six I's of inviting

Identification: Think and pray

We want to touch everyone in the parish with the message. People who are not included may feel neglected or left out. This is really important: Never leave someone out because you assume they don't have the capacity to give money. You could be wrong!

This is also an opportunity to build community. Community is relationships. Being church together is about *loving* relationships. All kinds of people make up our communities of faith. Thanks be to God!

Storytelling and testimony are powerful tools for informing people about your ministry. They can also be used in your Inspire pieces. It is important to offer people volunteer opportunities and to illustrate the impact of generosity through all your communication vehicles: bulletin, website, slide presentations, and more.

Information: You have a powerful story of mission to tell!

We used to have static communications: a brochure, a flat website, a business card, an annual report. Today, however, how and where we present information to generate interest has changed. There are many ways to inform people about the great work that is being accomplished. Use everything you can!

Websites need to move from static to interactive. Post polls and calls to action; make them truly interactive with games and simulations. Make your brochures interactive, too: put them on your website, and send them via email. Use videos instead of photos to tell stories. Albums and movies that engage can be posted instantly.

Inspiration: People want to know how your community is advancing God's mission and making a difference

Be compelling, exciting, and worthy of people's investment. Proactively push your story as a part of communications and marketing plans that engage, inform, and inspire. And when you get feedback, respond to keep the conversation going. Make sure you attend to your social media. Enhance how you identify new volunteers and donors. In many cases, they will identify themselves by joining a fan page or following on Twitter.



Ask your friends and followers to send in their thoughts about your mission and ministry via video, and then upload the best. Interview volunteers, donors, and clients on video and upload the interviews to Facebook, YouTube, and your website. People engage with people—so get their interest with other people's thoughts, ideas, and experiences with your parish.

Involvement: Today, involvement can be episodic or virtual

Invite people to prayerfully consider their involvement in the work of the church. Although attending or serving at an event, volunteering, and serving on the board are important, maybe there are other ways you can connect with people and have them be involved.

For example, would your youth group like to present a ministry they are working on as a sermon? Would a Guide, Brownie, or Scout group that meets at your church like to do some specific tasks? Serve at a tea? Bake pies? Decorate for the season?

Those who have challenges coming to church can help with social media, be your voice on Twitter, engage others through their own social media network, or contribute to an online newsletter. People between jobs or job searches could volunteer their skills instead of general assistance, with short-term or long-term commitments in the church office, for long- or short-term commitments

People want to be part of something important, and many like to be social and have fun doing it. Sounds like the best kind of party!

Investment: Help people get personal with the mission of your parish

People who are engaged and involved are more likely to support God's mission when they have come to know it more personally. This investment can be in the form of time, talent, or treasure. A person's investment is a natural outgrowth of their involvement.

Investment used to be about writing a cheque in response to an annual appeal, paying at the door to attend an event, or volunteering regularly. Today, more donors are making their gifts online.

This means via your website's DONATE NOW button, Facebook causes page, or a link in an email solicitation. More donors are even making gifts via text and mobile phones. These numbers will increase, so we need to be prepared.



Impact: People want to know what their donation DOES—its accomplishments and impact

Donors want to make sure their gifts are truly making a difference, and they want to see the impact of their generosity. Letting people know what their gift has accomplished isn't about singling out those people for special recognition, but about creating meaningful ways of thanking people and keeping everyone updated on the work in a transparent and compelling way.

Finally: This ministry is ongoing and important to the health, growth, happiness, and sustainability of your community of faith. Create a culture of giving in your parish all year long.

—Jane Harding, Regional Development Officer for British Columbia Conference,
United Church of Canada *(used with permission)*



Thank

A culture of generosity is built on a foundation of gratitude.

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

We thank individuals and groups for all of their generous support of the ministry in their community.

We cannot thank enough. We give thanks for every gift.

Timely, sincere, personal

We make sure our gratitude and thanks are timely, sincere, and personal.

- **Timely:** Closely connected to when each gift is received
- **Sincere:** Communicating what a difference the gift makes
- **Personal:** Face to face, or in a handwritten note

Find opportunities to say thank you directly. Find opportunities to write it personally. Thanking needs to be planned if it is to become a habit in your congregation and so that everyone who gives will be thanked.

Make it timely

- Don't wait until the end of the program.
- Thank donors as soon as the intention card arrives. Phone to say we received the gift and are grateful for their contribution.
- Thank every new donor as soon as possible with a phone call or handwritten note.

Make it sincere

- Adding appreciation to thanks builds sincerity. Acknowledgment is thanks. Think about ways of adding appreciation—affirming the qualities of the donor, their motivation, or their hopes.
- Show yourself in the thanks, and connect yourself with your donor. Wear your heart on your sleeve.

Add a simple homemade gift—cookies or some bags of special tea, for example. “Remember that we are grateful for your generosity the next time you enjoy your cup of tea.”



Make it personal

- Formal and generalized expressions of gratitude are necessary, but your thanks can be even more personal. Use “I,” “we,” and “you” language to make the tone warm rather than distant.
- Be specific about why you are grateful—the effect of the gift or your personal reaction to the person’s generosity.
- The person who did the asking is most likely to be the best person to do the thanking.
Handwritten notes and face-to-face conversation are the most personal, or speak face to face.

There’s a maxim that says, “Thank every donor seven times, in seven different ways.” We could start with two or three.



Wrapping up

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

Gather the Giving Team and take time to debrief together: to evaluate the program's planning, introduction, and implementation, and to plan for its future. This gathering can be informal, over refreshments, with someone other than you taking notes that will help next year's Giving Team and keep track of any next steps. Hold your wrap-up get-together within a week or two of Sunday 5, so that the experience is fresh for everyone involved.

On the next page, you'll find an agenda that you can use or adapt for this evaluation and future-planning meeting.



Wrap-up gathering agenda

Beginning

Open with prayer. Allow sufficient time to share all the blessings of this experience and all the things to be thankful for.

Middle

Review your experience:

- Revisit the goals and objectives you established when you were getting started. What were the results? What has changed?
- Use the evaluation in the Planning Workbook.

Think about the whole process and review notes of conversations with your volunteers:

- What went well?
- What would you do differently?
- What did you learn?
- What did you hear?

Consider who needs to know this information:

- Ministry personnel: To inform them of pastoral issues
- Envelope secretary: To provide updated information
- Christian educators or others: To provide program ideas

Plan further communication now and over the year:

- How will you report the final results?
- How will you update people about the impact of their generosity?

Deepening the discipleship and stewardship journey

You may well discover that people are yearning to know more about the ministry of the congregation and about living as a follower of Jesus. Some may want to delve more deeply into generosity, giving, and gratitude as a spiritual practice or learn more about lifelong stewardship. Consider offering the I Intend program (www.iintend.org) that gives individuals, groups or the whole parish an opportunity to grow in their capacity to be disciples and followers of Jesus. The resources help people make practical choices in five areas of their lives to help them live generously, faithfully, and intentionally as followers of Jesus.



End

- Report to your leadership and advisory board.
- Identify when to get started for next year.
- Wrap up any other loose ends.
- Close with one of the stewardship prayers (online at www.anglican.ca/gtp).



Appendix

Questions ministry leaders ask

Why be part of our Giving Team







Questions ministry leaders ask

Open it; explore it; share it! Why?

Here are just some of the reasons:

- This is a program developed by people from the Anglican church. It is a giving program designed to support your work as clergy and lay leaders in your parish.
- It will make your life easier. The step-by-step guide includes many ideas to try. We are confident that one or more of those will be right for you, your parishioners, and your parish.
- It is based on three activities—**inspire, invite, thank**—that are at the heart of all giving programs. Find ways to inspire generosity, ways to invite involvement and contribution, and ways to thank and show gratitude that suit your community.

Inspire! Invite! Thank! What does that mean?

Any successful giving program—whether for a community group, a hospital, or a church—does a great job of inspiring passion and commitment in people. It is also specific in asking for their support. Showing gratitude for your involvement is always an important element, one that can come at the beginning or the end of the program. Giving Our Thanks & Praise gives you the tools for all three.

We help you *inspire*—through stories and examples

- by helping you uncover the stories of why we give and what it means
- by articulating and sharing, in the narrative budget, what generosity accomplishes in your community
- through resources to include in worship and education programs

We help you *invite*—with step-by-step guides

- by giving you the tools to develop the skills and courage to invite others to join you in supporting God's mission in your parish, whether in an individual or group setting or through a personal letter

We help you *thank*—immediately and sincerely

- by offering suggestions and ideas that will deepen the practice of gratitude in your congregation

How will this make my life easier?

Giving Our Thanks & Praise provides you with everything you need to get a giving program off the ground. It offers choices and a very flexible set of tools. *You* pick and choose what will work to **inspire**, to **invite**, and to **thank** in your context. The program is developed with you and your parish in mind. It encourages whatever level and kind of support your faith community can give at this time. It provides a wealth of resources created for different kinds of parishes. You make decisions about how the program will be implemented, choosing from leading practices that encourage generosity and gratitude.

How involved am I expected to be?

It is always helpful to be supportive of generosity! Jesus calls us all to be followers and disciples, and giving of ourselves is one of the ways we follow. Giving Our Thanks & Praise encourages a team approach shared among clergy and lay leaders in your parish. You may find *your* leadership gifts best expressed through the Christian education or worship components of the program, allowing others to develop and exercise their own leadership gifts in areas of volunteer coordination, hospitality, or communication. You are not expected to be the sole member of the Giving Team; however, your support and gifts are crucial to a successful and positive experience.

Am I expected to share my own giving practice?

By first sharing your own passion for God's mission and following Jesus in your daily life, you will inspire others. Start by sharing your own "Why I give" story. You may have the courage to go on and talk about your own giving practice. You might share what you give, how you decide what you give to God's mission in your parish, or both.

Sharing your story gives permission for others to consider their giving and make their own decision. We have examples to help you discover your own story.



Will this help my church grow or become more healthy, or more externally focused, or more missional?

Good things happen when a church focuses time, energy, and money on others: it stimulates extravagant generosity and creative thinking that enliven and energize your parish. It lets everyone—old-timers and newcomers—know that your church has a vision bigger than just keeping the doors open. It is about God's mission and our gifts. All things are possible!

Okay. You have my attention. Now what?

Crack it open. Start with the **Quick Start Guide**. Maybe you begin by **thanking**. Maybe the first step is to **inspire**. Wherever you begin, be sure to find the best way to **invite** that includes everyone.



Why be part of our Giving Team?

You are being invited to take part in an important ministry in your congregation. Giving Our Thanks & Praise is a parish giving program that inspires, invites, and thanks. It **inspires** people with stories of the impact of the ministry of our congregation, how we respond to God's mission and make a difference in our world. It **invites** people to make a prayerful and intentional gift to support this ministry. And it **thanks** everyone for all they contribute to the life and mission of our church.

Belonging to the Giving Team is an opportunity to help shape the future of ministry in your congregation. The program is designed to be adapted to your congregation's needs. It provides all the resources you need to **inspire, invite, and thank**, so that you can encourage generosity in your community. These resources include worship and learning programs, orientation materials, and templates for all the parts of the program.

As part of the Giving Team, you have the opportunity to apply the gifts God has given you to help fulfill the mission of your congregation. It's a team effort, whether you are half of a team of two or part of a much larger one.

In addition, you can expect to

- learn more about the vital impact ministry accomplishes locally: people fed, faith shared, and justice promoted
- learn more about your faith: how we are blessed and called to live and serve as taught by Jesus
- discover your own reason for giving
- get to know others in your community
- contribute to the long-term health and vitality of your faith community Join in this important ministry!

Say yes.





giving
our thanks & praise

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