

Equipping Faithful Stewards

A close-up photograph of two hands against a dark background. The upper hand is positioned to drop a single coin into the palm of the lower hand, which is already holding a small pile of coins. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the textures of the skin and the metallic surfaces of the coins.

A Stewardship Grant Program
for the Tennessee-Western KY Conference

United Methodist Foundation for the Tennessee-Western KY Conference
304 S. Perimeter Park Drive ★ Suite 3 ★ Nashville, TN 37211
Office: 615-259-2008 ★ www.umftwk.org

THE STEWARDSHIP GRANT PROGRAM APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT FORM

Church Name _____

Church Address _____

Contact Person _____

Telephone Number _____ Email address _____

Directions: Fill out the following table indicating ☒ which activities your church plans to complete to fulfill the requirements of the grant. Use the next column to indicate how you will document each completed activity. Half of the money will be sent upon completion and approval of this application. To receive the second half, complete a report as outlined on the next page.

Section	Activity	Check if planning to do	Indicate what Documentation will be submitted to demonstrate the completion of an activity
Leadership for Stewardship	1. Stewardship Taskforce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Required	Roster of members of committee or minutes of task force meeting
	2. Line-item Budget	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Required	Copy of line item budget
	3. Stewardship Sermons	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Required	Copy of sermon/sermon outline/bulletin
	4. Endowment Fund		
	5. Attend Training Event		
	6. Mission Centered Budgeting		
	7. Quarterly Congregation updates		
Praise and Thanksgiving	8. Individual Quarterly updates		
	9. Personal Thanks to Donors	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Required	Description of system
	10. Guest Speaker		
	11. Thank New Givers		
	12. Celebrate What You Have		
	13. "Joy in Giving" Testimonies	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Required	Names and dates
Creating a Culture for Giving	14. Annual Financial Campaign	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Required	Timeline or description of campaign
	15. Apportionment Giving Plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Required	Description of plan
	16. Written Theology of Stewardship	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Required	Copy of stewardship pamphlet
	17. Mission Project Fundraiser		
	18. Child/Youth Stewards Project		
	19. Electronic Funds Transfer		
Principles and Concepts	20. Congregation-wide Study		
	21. Planned Giving Presentation		
	22. Narrative Budget	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Required	Copy of narrative budget
	23. Personal Finance Education		
	24. List of 52 Ministries		
	25. Small Group Study		

WHAT: The **Stewardship Grant Program** is a tool for United Methodist churches in the Tennessee-Western KY Conference to develop an appropriate, intentional stewardship plan for their congregation. By providing a cash incentive, the Stewardship Grant Program is intended to **encourage** churches to **develop a comprehensive stewardship program** to help achieve the goals of the congregation in the area of stewardship.

When your congregation's application and plan is submitted you will receive half of the money. When the final report has been received and approved by the Foundation, the other half of the money will be sent.

WHY: The Foundation exists to be a primary resource for lifelong financial stewardship for United Methodist Churches in the Tennessee-Western KY Conference. We encourage congregations to ask what God is calling them to do in the area of stewardship. This Stewardship Grant Program is meant to help encourage faithful practices. It is our hope that through this Stewardship Grant Program your congregation will make strides in understanding stewardship and the positive impact that giving and growing generosity will have for the people in your congregation and the ministries of the church.

WHEN: There is no designated start date to this program. After your initial plan has been submitted and approved, the activities should be completed and the final report submitted all within 12 months. A church may apply once a year in three different years before December 31, 2026.

HOW TO: There are four different categories of tasks with several options in each category listed on the following pages. Note that **some are required**. ® Decide which tasks you will complete. Indicate those with a check mark on the application form on the front cover. In the documentation column indicate what you will be submitting to show that the activity has been completed. **Twelve activities must be completed.** Keep a copy of the application form and return one to the UMFMTTC. Call the Foundation with any questions.

After completing the activities you have chosen, summarize the experience for your church in 500–1,000 words on a separate sheet. Consider these questions as you reflect on the year's activities. *What worked? What did not work? How was this emphasis on stewardship received? How were attitudes toward stewardship and church finances changed? In what areas did income to the church increase?* Be open to conversation with a UMFTWK staff. Send this summary, along with the documentation of the activities, to be eligible for the remainder of that year's grant funds. This summary is **required**.

Leadership for Stewardship

1. ® Have an active *stewardship task force* that is separate from the finance committee (although it may be a subcommittee). This committee should coordinate the stewardship efforts throughout the year including planning the Annual Financial campaign and developing the plan for this Stewardship Grant Program. Having or establishing this task force is **required**.
2. ® Develop a comprehensive, *line-item budget* to use in the financial management of the church. Include a line for stewardship and an amount for funding and resourcing stewardship ministries. This is not meant for distribution to the congregation, but rather as a tool to help budget and plan.
3. ® The pastor or other speaker(s) will deliver several *stewardship sermons* throughout the year. At least two should be during an Annual Financial Campaign. At least two other sermons should have a stewardship component in them. This activity is **required**.
4. □ Establish an *Endowment Fund*, even if it is unfunded. Develop an endowment policy and an undesignated or planned gift acceptance policy. If you already have these policies in place, review them to make sure they are still current. Develop a plan to regularly advertise this fund. Samples and consultations are available from the Foundation at no charge.
5. □ Church leader(s) will *attend at least one training event* that has a stewardship component. This may include district leadership training, Annual Conference workshops, Foundation events or other opportunities.
6. □ Develop a *mission-centered form of budgeting*. This is a way to make a better connection between the budget process and your congregation's participation in God's mission. Contact the Foundation for samples.
7. □ Provide a *quarterly update to the congregation* of the Year-to-Date giving summary of the congregation and the ministries that are happening because of these gifts. This could be sent with individual quarterly giving statements. Report things in a POSITIVE manner. Example: *Thank you. Through your generosity we have paid one third of our conference apportionments. These gifts, combined with others from around the world, are being used to help build the framework for the rest of our connectional ministry and mission.*

“Moreover, it is required of stewards that they should be found trustworthy.”

(I Corinthians 4:2)

In Praise and Thanksgiving

8. ☐ Send out quarterly individual *giving statements* to all members and other regular worship attendees of their Year-to-Date gifts, including those who have not given to date.
9. ® Establish and carry out a system to offer *personal thanks* to givers for financial gifts or gifts of time and talent at least twice a year. This is not just standing up on a Sunday morning and saying a general thank you, but rather a personal note, phone call or message from the pastor or someone else. This is **required**.
10. ☐ Have a *speaker* from a mission, ministry or organization which is financially supported by your church speak at worship or a congregation-wide event such as a special dinner. This should not be an appeal for additional funding but a thank you and an interpretation of how these gifts change lives.
11. ☐ Establish and carry out a plan to *thank new givers*. A new giver is someone who is not on record as having given before.
12. ☐ Develop and carry out a plan to *celebrate what you DO have* (and refrain from dwelling on what you DON'T have.)
13. ® Schedule monthly "Joy in Giving" *testimonies* about giving or volunteering. These will occur during the worship service and are offered by laity. This is **required**.

"I thank my God every time I remember you,"
(Philippians 1:3)

® = REQUIRED

Opportunities for Giving – Creating a Culture for Giving

14. ® Have a congregation-wide *Annual Financial Campaign*. This must include at least two weeks of stewardship sermons, pledge/commitment/estimate of giving cards distributed to all members and regular attendees, targeted follow-up with those who have not returned cards and a report to the congregation about the results. This activity is **required**.
15. ® Commit to a plan to *pay 100% shared ministry* (apportionment) funding to the Annual Conference. If you cannot pay 100% develop a plan to make a commitment to increase the congregation's giving with an ultimate goal of 100%. Educate the congregation about apportionments. This activity is **required**.
16. ® Write and share throughout the congregation a brief *theology of stewardship*. This document should lift up the importance of giving and generosity in the life of the congregation and the individual Christian. This activity is **required**.
17. □ Organize an event designed to raise funds for a *mission project*. This project can be local, in the Annual Conference or around the world. Make sure the emphasis is on how lives will be changed through financial support.
18. □ Help the *children and/or youth* of your church plan a stewardship project. Invite them to set a goal to help a ministry or mission project and determine an action plan. Celebrate the results with the congregation.
19. □ Provide opportunity for *Electronic Funds Transfer* and/or online giving. Visit <http://www.gcfa.org/electronic-giving-vanco-services-um-eft> for assistance.

“They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share, thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that really is life.”

(I Timothy 6:18-19)

Education about Stewardship Principles and Concepts

20. ☐ Plan an opportunity for a *congregation-wide study* with a stewardship or generosity component. This is not the same as your Annual Financial Campaign but may lead into it or be a part of it.
21. ☐ Schedule and conduct a *planned giving education opportunity or a presentation about wills, gifts, and memorials*. You may have an expert in your congregation or community who may present this. Staff from the Foundation can do this free of charge. There are helpful materials at the Foundation.
22. ☒ Develop a *narrative budget* to help members understand how their money is used in the church. For instance, the line item budget will indicate the pastor's salary but the narrative budget will indicate how the pastor's salary is attributed to pastoral care, worship, education, etc. **This is required.**
23. ☐ Offer Financial Peace University, Freed Up Financial Living, Freed Up from Debt, or another similar *personal financial education program* to your congregation. Call the Foundation for assistance.
24. ☐ Create a *list of 52 ministries* of your church through which lives are being changed. Lift up one each week at worship.
25. ☐ Annually, offer a small group study on stewardship or generosity in the Christian life.

“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved by him, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly explaining the word of truth.”
(II Timothy 2:15)

For more information and answers to some FAQ's about this Stewardship Grant Program visit our website at: www.umftwk.org. Click on the Stewardship tab. Or call the Foundation at (615) 259-2008.