

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