

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.