



Indiana-Kentucky Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

RESOURCE GUIDE

Stewardship & Generosity

Rooted in God's Generosity

Sharing God's Abundance for the Good of All Creation



*And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance ...
so that ... you may share abundantly in every good work.*

2 Corinthians 9:8



Resources • Learning Opportunities • Practical Tools

for cultivating generosity, sustaining ministry, and faithfully stewarding all
God has entrusted to us

A Word of Welcome

Stewardship is about far more than raising enough money to meet a congregational budget. It is a way of life rooted in gratitude for what God has first given us. As disciples of Jesus, we are invited to consider how we faithfully use all that has been entrusted to us - our money, gifts, time, relationships, buildings, land, and opportunities - for the sake of God's mission and our neighbor.

This guide is designed to help congregations strengthen year-round stewardship, nurture generosity as a spiritual practice, tell the story of God's work through their ministries, and explore sustainable ways of supporting ministry in a changing church. You do not need to use every resource. Begin with the question your congregation is asking now, choose one or two resources that fit your context, and allow stewardship to become an ongoing part of discipleship rather than a once-a-year campaign.

Melissa Schroeder

Director for Evangelical Mission
Indiana-Kentucky Synod, ELCA

Where Should We Begin?

If your congregation is asking...	Start here
How do we move beyond an annual pledge drive?	<i>See the resources listed under #1 -Building a Culture of Generosity</i> Ask, Thank, Tell Embracing Stewardship The Joy of Generosity
How do we help people connect faith and money?	<i>See the resources listed in #2- Stewardship as a Spiritual Practice</i> A Spirituality of Fundraising The Generosity Project
How can our ministry become more financially sustainable?	<i>See resources listed in #3- Exploring Sustainable Models for Ministry</i> Funding Forward We Aren't Broke
What could we do with our building or land?	<i>See the resources listed in #4- Stewarding Buildings and Property</i> Gone for Good? Church Property Resource Hub
How do we develop a deeper culture of generosity?	<i>See the resources listed in #5- Learning, Training and Ongoing Support</i> Cultivating Generous Congregations ELCA stewardship webinars

How can we make giving easier?	See the resources listed in #6-Practical Giving Tools Electronic giving tools, paired with strong stewardship formation and storytelling
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1. Building a Culture of Generosity

Ask, Thank, Tell: Improving Stewardship Ministry in Your Congregation

Charles R. Lane

A practical and theological guide for congregations that want to rescue stewardship from being primarily about “paying the bills.” Lane connects stewardship with discipleship and organizes congregational practice around three memorable actions: ask people to give, thank them meaningfully and often, and tell the story of how generosity participates in God’s work.

Best for: Stewardship teams, councils, pastors and congregations ready to strengthen their annual response while building year-round habits.

[Learn more about Ask, Thank, Tell](#)

Embracing Stewardship: How to Put Stewardship at the Heart of Your Congregation’s Life

Charles R. Lane and Grace Duddy Pomroy

This book offers eight pathways for strengthening stewardship while attending to generational perspectives and the realities congregations face today. Its central invitation is to place stewardship at the heart of congregational life, rather than treating it as a seasonal financial program.

Best for: Leadership teams seeking a broader, year-round approach to stewardship and generosity.

[Explore Embracing Stewardship](#)

The Joy of Generosity

ELCA Stewardship Office • written by Chick Lane in collaboration with Tim Brown

A free, four-week stewardship series created for congregations of any size. The materials are customizable and include scriptural and story helps, social media content and projection slides, making this a strong option for congregations that want a thoughtful stewardship emphasis without creating everything from scratch.

Best for: Congregations looking for a ready-to-use, accessible stewardship emphasis.

[The Joy of Generosity - ELCA](#)

2. Stewardship as a Spiritual Practice

A Spirituality of Fundraising

Henri J. M. Nouwen

Nouwen reframes fundraising as ministry rather than begging for money. Fundraising becomes an invitation to participate in a shared vision and mission. This brief book is especially helpful for leaders who feel uncomfortable talking about money or making an invitation to give.

Best for: Pastors, stewardship leaders, nonprofit leaders and anyone who wants a more spiritual and relational understanding of fundraising.

[A Spirituality of Fundraising - Henri Nouwen Society](#)

The Generosity Project

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

An intergenerational, household-centered approach that connects generations and equips people of all ages to practice generosity. The project encourages honest conversations about faith and money and helps congregations move from seasonal stewardship appeals toward generosity as a lifelong faith practice.

Best for: Intergenerational ministry, households, confirmation, small groups, stewardship seasons and congregations wanting to connect generosity with faith formation.

[Explore The Generosity Project](#)

3. Exploring Sustainable Models for Ministry

Funding Forward: A Pathway to More Sustainable Models for Ministry

Grace Duddy Pomroy

Funding Forward begins with two realities many congregations are experiencing: Sunday morning offerings may no longer be enough to sustain ministry, and congregations can become disconnected from the communities they are called to serve. Pomroy offers a discernment process that connects God's mission, the congregation's neighborhood and a sustainable economic model. The book explores tools such as property reuse, social enterprise, impact investing, grants, and multivocational ministry while emphasizing that there is no one-size-fits-all solution.

Best for: Congregations discerning their future, exploring new funding models or seeking to reconnect financial sustainability with mission and community.

[Funding Forward - Grace Pomroy](#)

We Aren't Broke: Uncovering Hidden Resources for Mission and Ministry

Mark Elsdon

Elsdon invites churches and ministries to look beyond scarcity and recognize resources they may already possess. Drawing from his experience at Pres House on the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus and broader work at the intersection of money and mission, he explores property, investments, social enterprise and impact investing as tools for creative and sustainable ministry.

Best for: Congregations that have assets but are unsure how those assets might be aligned more intentionally with mission.

[We Aren't Broke - Eerdmans](#)

4. Stewarding Buildings & Property

Gone for Good? Negotiating the Coming Wave of Church Property Transition

Edited by Mark Elsdon

This collection brings together pastors, scholars, developers and urban planners to consider how church buildings and land can continue serving gospel mission and the common good as traditional uses change. It offers perspectives on property transition and creative reuse, helping congregations imagine possibilities before financial crisis forces a decision.

Best for: Congregations considering selling, sharing, redeveloping or repurposing property - and congregations that want to begin those conversations early.

[Gone for Good? - Eerdmans](#)

Church Property Resource Hub

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

The ELCA Church Property Resource Hub equips congregations and synods to steward buildings and land as a witness to the gospel. Free resources include templates, guides, explainers, courses, webinars, stories and a support forum. Current topics include mission exploration, community engagement, sharing space and property management.

Best for: Any congregation facing property questions - from deferred maintenance and space sharing to rentals, redevelopment and long-term property discernment.

[Visit the ELCA Church Property Resource Hub](#)

5. Learning, Training & Ongoing Support

ELCA Congregational Stewardship Webinars

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

The ELCA Stewardship office offers a collection of webinars focused on congregational stewardship, fostering cultures of generosity and strengthening stewardship within congregational life. The recordings provide practical guidance for leaders engaging people in meaningful conversations about giving, shared responsibility and mission.

Best for: Stewardship teams and leaders who want practical training they can access together and discuss in their own context.

[ELCA Stewardship Resources & Webinars](#)

Cultivating Generous Congregations

Lake Institute on Faith & Giving

An interactive seminar for congregational teams that explores the changing landscape of religious giving and provides tools for creating lasting cultural change. Topics include theology of money, adaptive leadership, fiscal transparency, donor care, fundraising as ministry and implementation planning.

Best for: Congregational teams ready for deeper learning and a sustained effort to strengthen their culture of generosity.

[Cultivating Generous Congregations - Lake Institute](#)

Lake Institute on Faith & Giving

Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy

Lake Institute brings together research, education and practical learning about faith and giving. Its educational offerings, research and Insights newsletter can help church leaders understand changing patterns of generosity and strengthen faithful fundraising and stewardship practices.

Best for: Leaders who want research-informed learning about generosity, philanthropy and faith-based fundraising.

[Visit Lake Institute on Faith & Giving](#)

6. Practical Giving Tools

Electronic and recurring giving options can remove unnecessary barriers to generosity and help households give consistently. Technology works best when it supports - rather than replaces - the deeper work of stewardship: faith formation, invitation, gratitude, storytelling and connecting gifts to God's mission.

Tithely

A church-focused digital platform that offers online and mobile giving, recurring giving and additional church-management tools.

Best for: Congregations comparing options for digital and recurring giving.

[Explore Tithely](#)

Vanco

A provider of electronic giving tools for churches, including online, mobile and recurring giving options and integrations with church-management systems.

Best for: Congregations comparing electronic giving platforms and integrations.

[Explore Vanco](#)

Note: These platforms are included as examples of commonly used electronic giving resources. Inclusion in this guide should not be understood as an endorsement or formal partnership unless specifically identified by the Indiana-Kentucky Synod or ELCA

IK Synod Stewardship Series

The Indiana-Kentucky Synod Stewardship Series provides ongoing opportunities for pastors, deacons, and lay leaders to grow in stewardship practice together. The series moves from generosity and storytelling to practical tools for budgeting, sustainable ministry, small-congregation stewardship, and the faithful use of church property.

Date	Stewardship Offering	Focus
August 25, 2026 6:30 p.m. EDT	Joy of Generosity	Explore generosity as a joyful response to God's abundance and learn how the ELCA's four-week Joy of Generosity resource can support congregational stewardship.
October 13, 2026 6:30 p.m. EDT	How Do We Listen and Capture Good Stories?	Learn practical ways to notice, gather, and share stories that show how God is at work through your congregation and connect generosity with ministry impact.
December 8, 2026 6:30 p.m. EDT	How to Create a Narrative Budget	Move beyond line-item numbers by learning how to communicate a congregation's budget through the story of its mission, ministry, and impact.
Beginning January 2027	Funding Forward Book Study	Led by Missy Schroeder, this synod-wide book study will use Grace Duddy Pomroy's Funding Forward to explore sustainable ministry models grounded in mission, community and faithful stewardship of resources.
February 2, 2027 6:30 p.m. EDT	Stewardship for Small Congregations	Explore stewardship practices that fit the realities, strengths and capacity of small congregations, with an emphasis on relationships, storytelling, generosity and mission.
April 2027	How to Rent and/or Share Space Well	Practical guidance for congregations considering rental agreements, shared-

		use partnerships and ways to steward church buildings as assets for ministry and community.
June 2027	IK Synod Assembly — Tim Brown, Keynote Speaker	Tim Brown of ELCA Congregational Stewardship will serve as a keynote speaker, continuing the synod-wide conversation about stewardship, generosity, and discipleship.

Find IK Synod stewardship events and updates

Visit the Indiana-Kentucky Synod website for current event information, Zoom details, and stewardship updates.

[Indiana-Kentucky Synod](#)

Stay Connected

ELCA Stewardship Emails

Stay connected with Tim Brown and the ELCA Stewardship ministry for stewardship resources, learning opportunities, ideas and updates. Use the ELCA email signup form and select the stewardship option. [Sign up for ELCA emails](#)

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