



Communication

An important tool for successful stewardship programs



Presbyterian
FOUNDATION

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Communications Overview

- Building understanding between individuals
- Clarity
- Conciseness
- Active listening
- Adaptability
- Respect

Goal of Effective Communication

- Improved relationships
- Reduce conflicts
- Enhance collaboration
- Better decision making



Who Are We Communicating To

- Donor centered communication
- Affinity groups



What Are We Trying To Communicate

- Visional, inspirational, spiritual
- Abundance vs Scarcity
- What is your Story
 - What is it you do well? In your church, in your community, in the world?
 - How are you being the hands and feet of Christ?
 - Celebrate your church
 - Create energy about the church
 - Invite people to engage in the church

When Do We Communicate

- During the Campaign
 - Continued communication throughout the season
- Sunday Morning
- Year round
 - FPC Example: Quarterly Statements include “Story of Generosity”



QUARTER ONE
Story of Generosity
Your Gifts in Action

FOR THE COMMON GOOD


This year's stewardship campaign was the fastest and most successful in recent memory, surpassing the \$4.9 million mark and enabling the Session to approve a balanced 2025 budget. A total of 515 households pledged to give in 2025 with 91 households submitting a new pledge of support. Every single pledge—whether from a first-time giver or a longtime member—helped strengthen the foundation of First Presbyterian Church and sustain our mission.

At the heart of Christian generosity is the truth that we give because God first gave to us. In just the first quarter of this year we've already seen the impact of your pledge dollars at work. Because of the support of our congregation, our church already has committed resources to mission work—ensuring that financial barriers do not stand in the way of our pursuit of the common good. Three recent powerful examples of this commitment include:

JAMAICA MISSION TRIP
Now in its 30th year, this trip to Mandeville, Jamaica, provided dental care, construction support, and education for those in need. Seventeen participants, including church members, dentists, and Oak Hill School teachers, served hundreds in the community. While participant fees offset some costs, the church covered \$11,630 of mission expenses through the General Fund, ensuring this mission could continue.

YOUTH MISSION TRIP TO REYNOSA, MEXICO
Over spring break, a small but mighty team of youth and staff served alongside Isaiah's 55 Ministries, a trip that was described as a “game-changer.” Two full-time staff members traveled with the group—an expense not easily quantified but one that is supported by pledge dollars. While final accounting is still in process, the total cost of the trip exceeded participant fees. The church joyfully covered the remaining balance of approximately \$3,333 through the General Fund and the Youth Activities Fund.

But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. —JEREMIAH 29:7



ROOM IN THE INN
Since 1985, FPC has partnered with Room In The Inn to provide food, shelter, and hospitality to Nashville's unhoused neighbors. Every Wednesday night from November through March, we welcome ten men into the Cannon Center, providing meals, laundry, showers, and a warm bed. In the first quarter alone, the church covered costs for staff time, transportation, and meals—a reminder that your pledges don't just fund programs, but the staff and facilities that make it possible.

As our mission efforts continue to grow, so does the need for dedicated staff leadership. That's why the church has committed to hiring a Missions Director this year, ensuring long-term sustainability for these vital ministries. This position, already included in the approved budget, will provide the structure and support needed to expand our outreach even further.

And this is just the first quarter of the year—there will be many more mission efforts to come. Because you gave, our church can continue to serve, ensuring that financial limitations never keep us from answering God's call.

*Thank you for your faithfulness.
Because you gave, we go serve.*

Your Gifts In Action
COMMON GOOD BY THE NUMBERS

Every single pledge—whether from a first-time giver or a longtime member—helped strengthen the foundation of First Presbyterian Church and sustain our mission. The support of our congregation enabled us to continue our commitment to pursuing the common good through longtime partnerships and new mission initiatives in the first quarter.

23 volunteers
sent to Jamaica and Mexico including church members, staff, youth, dentists, and Oak Hill School teachers

\$15,000+
Mission Trip Expenses Covered by the Church
(Note: Some accounting is still in process)

10 men weekly
received food, shelter, and hospitality through Room In The Inn

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How Do We Communicate

- Stories
- Testimonials
- Line-item vs Narrative Budget
- Messaging from different sources (pastor, elder, peer)



Pastor

- Practical
- Spiritual
- Pastoral
- Talk about their own stewardship
- Preach about generosity regularly
- Be a story-teller
- Invite/ask
- Say Thank You

Session/Lay Leaders

- Shares their stories
- Supports the process
- Be pledgers/tithers
- Be leaders in stewardship



Dos

- Tell your story
- Develop a narrative budget
- Invite people to be a part of the excitement
- Make it easy for people to give
- Say Thank You a lot!

Don'ts

- Do it alone include others
- Cut corners
- Be afraid to spend some money
- Use a “One Letter Fits All” mailing

Case Study: FPC Nashville

- Our Challenges

- Finance staff turnover during covid
- Lack of good data for 4 fiscal years
- Lack of budget understanding within congregation and leadership
- Faced a \$800k increase in our pledge campaign to present a balanced budget for 2025
- Lack of uniting vision

- Our Potential

- A congregation known to be generous in the community
- Beloved pillar of the community

Case Study: FPC Nashville

What We Started:

- Talking about our 5 pillars
- Sharing the complete budget
- Explained the complexity of our budget to the congregation
- Explained the need and the impact of the needed funds
- Targeted communications
- Ambassador program for specific audiences
- Simple mailed brochure
- Publishing month contribution numbers in the bulletin and emails

What We Stopped:

- Never talking about the budget
- Sharing only the pledge campaign number
- Expensive campaign brand materials and collateral (brochures, videos, etc)

Case Study: FPC Nashville

What we learned:

- Evaluate donor data to make good decision
- People responded when we stated the need
- This process is staff dependent

Six elements of an effective Financial Stewardship Campaign

- Identify and celebrate what members value in their congregation
- Inform members how their gifts are being used
- Challenge members to a higher level of giving
- Secure a financial commitment from members
- Affirming members and acknowledging their response
- Evaluate your program

Don't judge each day by the
harvest you reap,
but by the seeds you plant.

Robert Louis Stevenson

Thank you!

Contact info