



LET'S TALK MONEY

Stewardship and Generosity Presentation
with Jim Ducker and Sheri Meister

Dakotas | Minnesota
**METHODIST
FOUNDATIONS**

Our Team



Jim Ducker



Sheri Meister



For the Love of God everywhere

Welcome

- **Purpose of the Series:** This four-part journey is about equipping churches to talk openly about money, generosity, and mission in ways that are spiritually grounded and practically sustainable.
- **Today's Focus:** Before we talk about budgets, fundraising, or giving strategies, we need to ask: *Why does this matter?* What's our deeper "why" as people of faith and as a church community?

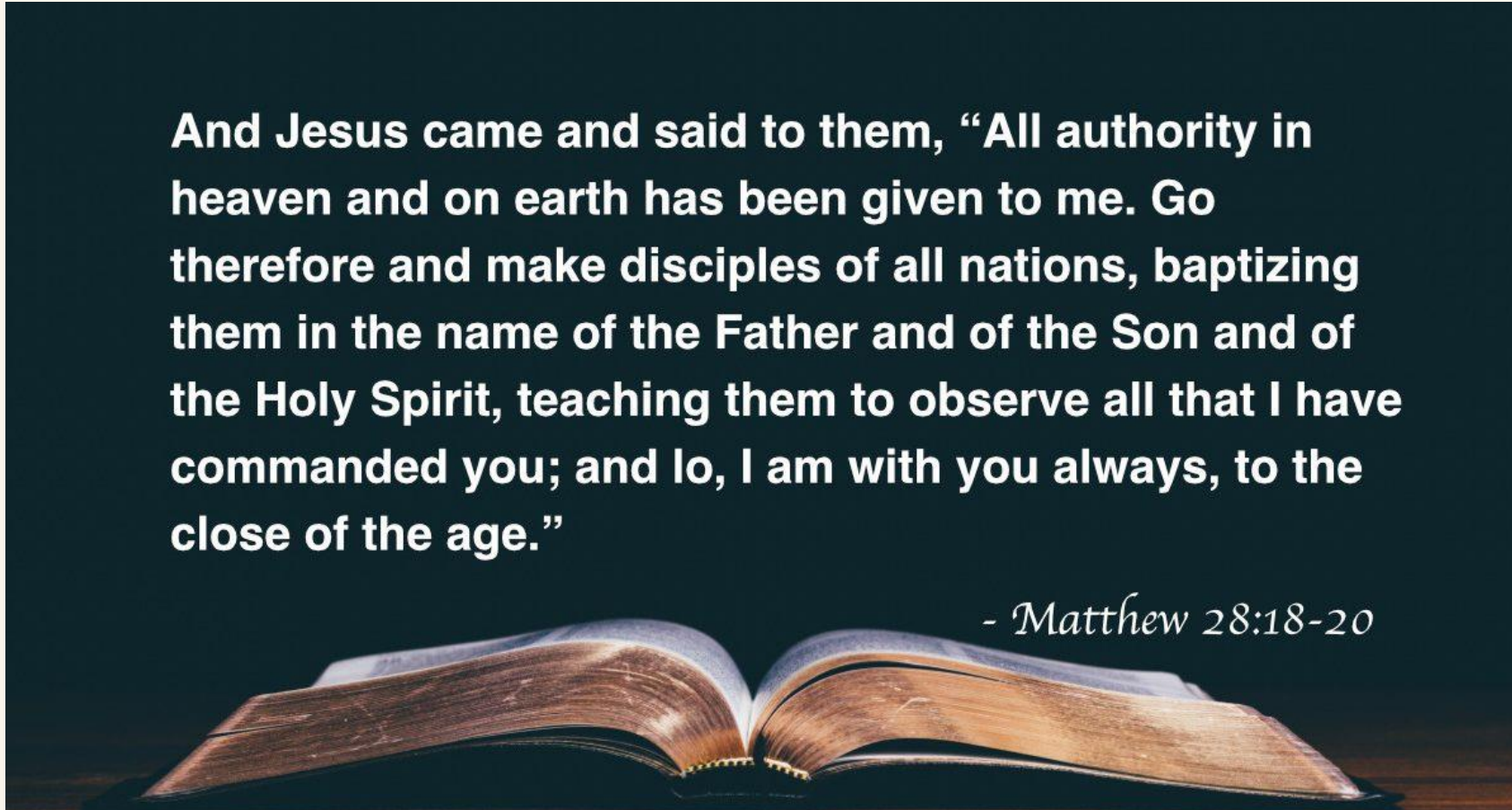


Rooted in the Wesleyan Way

Make all you can...save all you can...give all you can

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.”

- Matthew 28:18-20



What's your why?

Defining the “**why**” of the church is about uncovering the deeper purpose that goes beyond programs, attendance numbers, or even budgets. It’s the foundation that gives meaning to everything else. Here are some lenses you might use when helping a church articulate its “why”:



Identifying Who You Are as a Church

Strategic Planning Connection

- Churches can't separate stewardship from identity. Generosity grows where mission is clear.
- If people can't articulate why their church matters, giving will feel transactional rather than transformational.



Transactional: Bailout money – making budget – filling in the deficit, checking boxes.

Reflection question: *“If our church disappeared tomorrow, what would our community lose?”*



Biblical & Theological Roots

Ground the “why” in Jesus’ Great Commandment and Great Commission:

To love God, love neighbor, and make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Frame it as a **spiritual identity** rather than just a mission statement. The “why” answers the question: *What has God placed us here to do that no one else can do in quite the same way?*



Community Calling

- The “why” is not generic—it should reflect the unique needs and opportunities of the community.
- Who are the people God has entrusted to our care?
- Where do we see brokenness, loneliness, or injustice that the church is uniquely positioned to meet?
- How do our gifts, passions, and resources intersect with those needs?



Spiritual Practice

The “why” is about transformation



It helps shift focus from “*what do we do?*” to “*who are we becoming as followers of Jesus?*”



Practical Discernment Questions

If you're guiding a church or board to define this, you might invite them to ask questions like:

- When people encounter us, what do we hope they experience about God?
- What breaks our heart in the community that compels us to act?
- What difference would it make if we didn't exist in this place?
- How do our ministry practices tell the story of who we are in Christ?



Living the “Why”

Once the “why” is defined, it should serve as the filter:

- Do our ministries align with it?
- Does our budget reflect it?
- Do our stories communicate it?

A clear “why” simplifies decision-making. It ensures that the church doesn’t drift into busyness or survival mode but stays rooted in its God-given mission.



Church Budgets

What is a church budget?

- A financial action plan for your church that creates clergy financial goals, holds the church accountable to those goals, and plays a crucial role in the financial health of your ministry.

Why is a church budget essential?

- Budgets help illustrate where your money is coming from and where it is spent. It enables better financial stewardship.
- Critical for planning church activities, managing church expenses, and maintaining assets like a church building.
- Helps enable stewardship of your financial resources to take your ministries further!

Ministry/Mission should drive budget decisions, not the other way around!



Church Budgets (Cont.)

Key Budget Types:

- Narrative Budget – Budget is in a Narrative/Picture/Graphic format. Tells the ‘story’ of your church from a financial perspective.
- Line Item – Lists every expense and income stream, with projections for how much each will cost or bring in.
- Program Budget – Evaluates each program
- Zero-Based Budget – All expenses must be justified. Every expense item starts from a ‘Zero-Base’, or \$0.



Church Budgets (Cont.)

More on narrative budgets...

- Links vision, values and ministry with financial priorities, i.e., the 'why'.
- Encourages members to discuss the needs of the ministry more deeply, tell others about the work of the congregation, and see their own stewardship as an expression of faith.

It's not the numbers, but the stories that inspire us to give generously!



Church Budgets (Cont.)

Church Budgeting Tips

- Involve key stakeholders
- Ensure transparency and accountability
- Celebrate milestones/achievements!
Instead of waiting until the end of the year, regularly update your congregation and supporters on progress toward mission goals.
- Be realistic and flexible. Circumstances throughout the year can influence the need for budget adjustments.



Church Finance Committee

Characteristics of an Effective Committee (Membership):

An effective committee proposes a budget and then raises, manages, and distributes the financial resources of the church to support its mission and ministries!

- Communication Skills
- Financial Acuity/Expertise
- Credibility
- Church and Community Leaders



Church Finance Committee

Typical Membership of a Finance Committee

- Chairperson
- Pastor
- Chairperson of the church council
- Chairperson or representative of the committee on pastor-parish relations
- Chairperson of the ministry group on stewardship
- Lay member of the annual conference
- Representative of the trustees to be selected by the trustees
- Lay leader
- Financial secretary
- Treasurer
- Church business administrator
- other members to be added as the charge conference may determine



Church Finance Committee (Cont.)

Roles and Responsibilities (Book of Discipline ¶258.4):

- Gives stewardship of financial resources their priority throughout the year
- Carries out church council directions in overseeing the financial secretary and treasurer.



Church Treasurer

Roles and Responsibilities (BOD ¶258.4):

- Disburse all money contributed to the local church budget, keeping accurate records of how money is spent.
- This leader works with finances according to the guidelines established by the committee on finance for total fiduciary responsibility.
- Remit each month to the Conference Treasurer all World Service (i.e., part of apportionments) and Conference benevolence funds collected.
- Works with the financial secretary to maintain records of all funds received.
- This leader is accountable to the charge conference through the church council.



Apportionments

Apportionments are the share each annual conference or local church pays to support international, national, and local missions.

- Every congregation invests "equally" in our shared mission.
- A percentage of the local church funds remitted stay within the state and help fund various Dakotas Conference programs. About a quarter of the funds remitted by local churches go the worldwide United Methodist Church.



The History of Apportionments



John Wesley



Apportionments started with John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement. He realized that people in the small faith groups he helped organize could do more with combined resources than they could as individuals in terms of funding new preaching houses, supporting clergy who traveled among worshiping congregations, and providing relief for those in the pauper' prisons where Methodists also shared the good news of Jesus Christ. As the church grew, the Methodist connection spread across the world, delivering hope.

Apportionments (Cont.)

Why give through apportionments?

- Like tithing and stewardship, giving through apportionments is a communal formational practice that cultivates spiritual maturity and counter-cultural, Christlikeness.
- Your apportionment giving helps create and sustain vital ministries that are making a difference in people's lives every day and demonstrates what it means to be Christ followers.



Apportionments

Ministries your church apportionment dollars support:

- Camping and Youth/Young Adult Ministries
- Board of Ordained Ministry
- New Clergy Moves
- Infrastructure and Leadership for Providing Administrative Support to Churches
- Annual Conference



Why Does Stewardship & Generosity Matter?

It's a Spiritual Practice

- Stewardship isn't fundraising—it's discipleship.
- Giving reflects our trust in God, not just our financial capacity.

2 Corinthians 9:7

“God loves a cheerful giver”

The Joy of giving.



How has giving strengthened your spirituality?

Courageous Generosity Philosophy

True generosity is about courage.

- Courage to trust God with what we have,
- Courage to release resources for God's mission
- Courage to believe God will provide for tomorrow.



Key Ideas:

- Generosity requires *faith over fear*.
- Generosity is *transformational*
- Generosity is *countercultural*.



Where does your church's stewardship reflect courage?
Where does fear still have a grip?




$$\frac{\text{abundance}}{\text{scarcity}} = \text{opportunity}$$




Gracious and Loving God,

Just as you promised Abraham that he would be blessed to be a blessing, we know you call us to the same. We give you thanks for the gifts of grace you pour into our lives—grace that goes before us, redeems us, and makes us holy in love. We are grateful for the invitation to join our gifts together so that they may become a means of grace, blessing others and building up your Church.

We marvel at the way you weave these gifts into a holy tapestry, reaching beyond what we could ever ask or imagine, embodying the love of Jesus Christ in ways that transform hearts and communities. In this we see your Spirit calling us to holiness of heart and life, to love you and neighbor fully.

As we respond to your invitation to share what you have entrusted to us, remind us that generosity is a means of grace—a way you shape us into your likeness. Give us courage not only to offer our own gifts, but also to extend your invitation to others, especially those blessed with resources to steward well. Send your Spirit before us, preparing hearts to hear, and give us ears to listen and words seasoned with humility and love. May we walk together, discerning how best to invest in your Kingdom work.

in your name we pray. Amen.



Our Team



Jim Ducker



Sheri Meister



For the Love of God everywhere