



The Greatest Blessings

PLANNED GIVING FOR YOUR MINISTRY

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WHAT IS PLANNED GIVING?

Planned giving, also known as legacy giving or deferred giving, is a process where donors make charitable contributions to your ministry as part of their financial or estate plans. Planned gifts can be made during a donor's lifetime or after they pass away, and can include cash, property, stocks, life insurance policies, and charitable trusts.

Planned giving allows donors to make larger gifts than they might be able to give during their lifetime. Planned giving is more complex than a typical donation and often requires the involvement of tax advisors and legal counsel.

About 90% of all planned gifts are charitable bequests from wills or revocable trusts, so a deferred commitment from a donor's estate plan is the most common form of planned giving. But, planned giving does take other forms—it is the process of making a financially sensible, and often substantial, commitment to benefit a charity either during a donor's lifetime or after their transition.

Most planned gifts are made from a donor's assets, as opposed to regular tithing or annual gifts of cash from ordinary income. These commitments are not reserved for the affluent. Often, they will come from a ministry's most dedicated and grateful members, even those with presumably modest means and low income. For most donors, planned gifts are the most significant commitments they will make to the causes they care most about.

Planned gifts should be made with careful discernment and be based on the donor's overall financial holdings, taking into account their specific assets and future financial needs. To maximize the benefit of the gift for both the donor and the charitable beneficiary, this type of giving generally involves strategic legal and tax planning and requires a donor to seek independent professional advice from a trusted advisor, such as a financial advisor, estate attorney or CPA.

A variety of assets can make suitable planned gifts: publicly traded stock or other securities, closely held stock or interest in a family business, real estate, royalties from books or patents, mineral rights, retirement assets, or life insurance policies. So, another way one might define planned giving—a charitable gift that is *not* simply an outright gift of cash from discretionary income.

Aside from the bequest, there are a number of common planned giving vehicles and just as many variations or combinations designed to fit a specific donor's situation and charitable intent. Even immediate outright gifts of appreciated stock, or distributions from a qualified retirement plan, are often considered planned gifts. These aren't deferred gifts, but they can take more thought and planning to be more tax-efficient, and therefore take a bit more planning than writing a check.

Some advanced planned giving arrangements such as charitable remainder trusts or charitable gift annuities, can even provide the donor, or their loved one, with income during their lifetime you're your ministry with a significant gift of the remaining assets after the income beneficiaries have transitioned.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO YOUR MINISTRY?

- If you are not asking your members for planned gifts, someone else is
- Planned gifts typically do not affect a donor's income or lifestyle
- Donors with a planned gift commitment feel more vested in your mission and will often increase annual giving
- Planned gifts are usually much larger than annual gifts—according to one source, the average charitable bequest in the U.S. is between \$37,000 and \$78,360. That is as much as 1,000X what a donor might make while living. And nearly two out of every 10 will include more than one bequest.
- Anyone can make a planned gift, and many may want to do so but not know where to begin
- Some members have likely already named your ministry in their will, but you are not yet aware of their intent—wouldn't it be nice to know and demonstrate your gratitude?

Planned gifts are typically the most substantial gifts your congregants will make and your ministry will receive. Preparing your ministry to ask for, and to receive, these ultimate commitments can ensure financial stability and growth for your ministry and mission over time. Without asking and preparing to receive, we cannot assume congregants will naturally think of their Unity ministry when other nonprofits they support come calling.

DEVELOPING PLANNED GIVING IN YOUR MINISTRY

Step 1: Start a discussion with your board regarding the need to raise awareness about planned giving for your ministry—see if you can identify a potential volunteer, or form a Prosperity Team to carry out the initial first steps.

Step 2: Develop documentation and internal processes necessary to record gifts and commitments to your endowment (see “Legacy Society Enrollment Form”).

Step 3: Survey your ministry’s members to identify individuals that are considering a planned gift or have already included a bequest to your ministry (see “Planned Giving Survey Cover Letter,” and “Planned Giving Survey”).

Step 4: Recruit individual volunteers and a Prosperity Team to lead your ministry’s planned giving program. Strong volunteers are respected members of your spiritual community, a strong prosperity consciousness, ideally with their own planned gift commitments already in place, or professionals with a background in estate planning, financial planning, investment management, or marketing (see “Prosperity Team Volunteer Recruitment” and “Prosperity Team Member Job Description”).

Step 5: Set goals for your program that complement your ministry’s long-range strategic plan. How will planned giving donors help the ministry co-create the abundant future you have planned for it? (see “Setting Goals for Your Ministry’s Prosperity”)

Step 6: Establish a “Legacy Society” to recognize members of your ministry who have made a planned gift or commitment. Donors who have already made a commitment prior to, or contemporaneous to, the formation of the society are often referred to as “founding members.” Donors who prefer not to be recognized are listed as “anonymous members” (see “Establishing a Legacy Society”).

Step 7: Create an annual marketing plan to share information and engage your membership in supporting the ministry’s financial goal and vision for the future, exploring planned giving options, and becoming members of the ministry’s Legacy Society. A marketing plan might include: bulletin or newsletter announcements, website content, email and social media messaging, direct mail, personal visits from volunteers of the program, estate planning seminars (see “Suggested Marketing Activities”).

Step 8: Once you have received the benefit of a planned gift(s) or major gift, use the funds to establish a designated “Legacy Fund” for your ministry.

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Planned Giving Survey Cover Letter

Date

Jane and John Doe
555 Timber Ln
Deerville, MO 55555

Dear Jane and John,

One of the greatest priorities at Unity Church is the enduring prosperity of our spiritual community. With a shared vision and purpose, we can ensure our ministry continues to provide positive, practical spiritual teachings to help the next generation live healthy, prosperous and meaningful lives. We are stewards co-creating an abundant future for Unity Church.

To this end, we are pleased to announce the creation of a new “Legacy Society.” The purpose of our Legacy Society is to encourage planned gifts to our ministry’s Legacy Fund. As the Fund grows, it will provide an ever-increasing source of annual income for Unity Church.

Establishing the society allows us the opportunity to acknowledge and recognize members who have made planned gifts or commitments to the Unity Church Legacy Fund. As we shape the Legacy Society, we are asking members to respond to the enclosed survey so that we are aware of those who have already included Unity Church as a beneficiary of their will or trust, and those who may intend to do so.

Please take a moment to complete and return the enclosed survey by [date]. You will be learning more about the Legacy Society in the coming months, as we begin to formally introduce our planned giving and Legacy Fund program. If you have any questions about the survey or the society, please contact [Prosperity Team Volunteer] at [email address] or [phone].

Abundant blessings,

Rev. _____

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PLANNED GIVING SURVEY

I/We have created a will/trust.	Yes	No
I/We would like information on creating a will/trust.	Yes	No
I/We have included a gift to Unity Church in my/our will/trust.	Yes	No
If you already have a planned gift in place, may we include your name in recognition material?	Yes	No
I/We would like to learn more about planned giving opportunities to benefit Unity Church	Yes	No
I/we would like to learn about giving to the Unity Church Legacy Fund, or establishing my/our own named fund to extend our support of the ministry in perpetuity.	Yes	No
I/we would be interested in serving on the Prosperity Team to engage other members in planning charitable gifts to benefit Unity Church	Yes	No
Name		
Address		
City, State ZIP		
Email	Phone	

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LEGACY SOCIETY ENROLLMENT FORM

Name	Birth Date
Name	Birth Date
Address	
City, State, ZIP	
Email	Phone

I/We have provided support for Unity Church via the following commitment(s):

- Will Life Insurance Policy Charitable Remainder Trust
 Revocable Trust Retirement Plan
 Other (please describe) _____

I/We have provided for a planned gift of \$ _____ OR _____ % of my/our estate, which has a current estimated value of \$ _____

In no way does this form bind you legally to any amount or agreement, and the amount remains confidential.

I/We wish for our planned gift to remain completely anonymous.

My/our gift is to be used for the following:

- Unity Church Legacy Fund
 Our Gift is Unrestricted
 Other Fund or Purpose (please describe) _____

Donor Signature _____ Date _____

Donor Signature _____ Date _____

PROSPERITY TEAM VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT

An effective planned giving program begins with leaders who truly understand and embrace the long-term impact a planned giving program will have on the ministry. If the minister is not fully committed to building the program, it will not likely be successful. This is not to say that the minister should lead the effort, but she or he needs to recruit strong lay leadership, be one of the first to make a personal commitment to the legacy society, and continue to speak toward the importance of building the Legacy Fund over time.

Start by recruiting a leader for the Prosperity Team, the individual or couple who will breathe life into the program, motivating and inspiring others to action. Ask for recommendations from your board and come up with a short list of candidates. Those that are not selected to lead the effort would likely make great members of the committee. Here are a few traits to look for in Prosperity Team members and/or in the founding chair:

- Longtime members of the spiritual community—trusted, well-known, and well-respected
- Understand and believe in the need for building the Legacy Fund and the planned giving program
- Have demonstrated they have a prosperity consciousness, are consistent financial donors, or who have already made a gift or commitment to the Legacy Fund, or are willing to do so prior to taking on the role
- Previously strong volunteers for the ministry, with the time to devote to developing the program—retired or semi-retired are ideal
- Although not required, the following professional backgrounds would be assets: estate law, tax, financial planning, sales or marketing, fundraising, business or community leadership.
- Consider designating the Treasurer of your Board of Directors as a standing member of the Team and to serve as the Board liaison

The minister, and possibly the board chair, should call and set up personal visits with the candidates. During these visits you will speak to the importance of the proposed planned giving and Legacy Fund program, and express how it will support the long-range goals of financial stability and growth for the ministry. Acknowledge the individual's standing in your spiritual community, and praise their strong financial support. Talk about the potential that exists in developing this new source of sustaining support for your spiritual community, and what the Legacy Fund will mean for the next generation. Describe the role of the planned giving team in developing this program—bring along a job description for Prosperity Team members if you like.

Finally, describe the role of the committee chair and ask the individual to serve for a specific number of years. Do not neglect to share that the chair will need to make some level of personal commitment to the legacy fund, if they haven't already. If they say no, ask them to serve as a member of the committee. If they say no to serving on the team, ask them for suggestions of others that might be good candidates.

Once the founding chair has been selected, she or he can take the lead in facilitating the same process for recruiting the remaining team members. Members of the Prosperity Team should also be expected to make a personal financial commitment, and they should be willing to tell others about their commitment and why they chose to make it. Team members must also be able and willing to maintain strict confidentiality, as there will be a great deal of personal information shared with the team that must be held in strict confidence. The team's responsibility is to share information about planned giving with others, and to convey the impact that the Legacy Fund will have on the future of the ministry.

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PROSPERITY TEAM MEMBER JOB DESCRIPTION

Qualifications:

1. Personal, spiritual commitment to the stewardship of Unity Church, supported by the consistent giving of time, talent, and treasure for the betterment of our spiritual community, including a gift or commitment to the Unity Church Legacy Fund
2. Strong interpersonal skills, and the ability to work productively with staff, volunteers, and members
3. Demonstrated leadership ability
4. Preferred qualifications: experience in organizational or community leadership, sales or marketing, tax or estate law, accounting, financial planning, fundraising, life insurance

Responsibilities:

1. Make a personal planned gift or commitment to the Unity Church Legacy Society
2. Attend and participate in Prosperity Team meetings
3. Assist in developing and executing a three-year marketing plan in support of the Unity Church Legacy Society
4. Attend and participate in any events planned to educate potential donors or honor existing donors
5. Assist in the identification, cultivation, and solicitation of potential planned giving or Legacy Fund donors
6. Assist in identifying, recruiting, or orienting new members of the Prosperity Team

Time Commitment: 48 hours per year

1. Quarterly committee meetings (16 hours)
2. Legacy Society events (16 hours)
3. Other duties in support of the Planned Giving Marketing Plan (16 hours)
4. Three year term

SETTING GOALS FOR YOUR MINISTRY'S PROSPERITY

Step 1: *What is the vision?* Review your ministry's long-term strategic plan, looking for specific goals that the Legacy Fund will help you achieve. Are there critical programs or activities you would like to see funded in perpetuity? The point here is to relate your goals for building the Legacy Fund to specific future plans or needs. If you don't have a long-term strategic plan for your ministry, now is a good time to develop one—it will help you to articulate a vision, prioritize needs, and provide context for your endowment goals.

Step 2: *How will a Legacy Fund help you achieve these goals?* A Legacy Fund is intended for the long-term needs of the ministry. This new stream of funding is not dependent on the love offerings you receive in a given year, so it could be used to provide stable funding for something critical, like building maintenance, or ministerial compensation. If your goal is to raise money for a future capital expense, like a new building or expansion, you would want to create a designated investment fund for this purpose. This fund would be invested and managed for growth, much like an endowed fund, yet the entire amount would be available to be expended when it is time to begin building.

Step 3: *Set long-term, transformational goals for your Legacy Fund.* Building a Legacy Fund is a marathon, not a sprint. The sum of all the goals you set for the fund, your ultimate vision, may take time to achieve—you may not be around to see it come to fruition. Unless you are blessed by significant immediate gifts (i.e. "major gifts") of cash or other assets to fund your Legacy Fund, it may be many years before your goals are met and priorities will likely shift along the way. If the majority of commitments to your Legacy Fund are bequests, your fund won't receive the bulk of its funding until your bequest donors have made their transitions.

Step 4: *Break long-term goals down into specific, attainable financial goals.* Let's say one of your long-term goals for the Legacy Fund is to improve support for your minister(s), which includes funds to support annual salary and manse increases, paid benefit increases, continuing education expenses, and paid sabbaticals. You estimate that the overall goal will require an annual investment of \$20,000 and you will need a \$500,000 fund to permanently sustain it. When you break each component of that goal down, and list them as separate financial goals for your Legacy Fund, the goal for the paid sabbatical is listed at \$50,000—\$2,000 to \$2,500 per year. A single member of your spiritual community decides to fund that goal with an outright gift, so you set up a named fund to honor the donor, and a permanent fund to provide for ministerial sabbaticals is created immediately.

Step 5: *Set short-term goals that are not financial but demonstrate progress.* The Prosperity Team needs to be able to track progress toward the goal of establishing and sustaining your planned giving and Legacy Fund program. Although they may see some immediate results in gifts and commitments to the fund, the activity-related goals of developing and refining the program, recognizing your donors and attracting new donors, need to be kept top of mind. The activity goals should be linked to the steps you are taking to establish the program, as well as your marketing plan.

SUGGESTED PLANNED GIVING MARKETING ACTIVITIES

1. **Planned Giving Survey (first year, then repeated in 3-5 years):** Mail/email (or both) the survey to all members over the age of 40. This could take place prior to the recruitment of a Prosperity Team as a means of determining potential candidates for the committee, or it could be the first step the newly formed team takes to begin marketing the program.
2. **Survey Follow Up (first year, then repeated in 3-5 years):** Personally follow up with members who request additional information or indicate interest in a planned gift. Make use of UWM planned giving marketing resources to provide information on available giving options, and contact UWM if you or your donor require assistance.
3. **Personal Visits:** Conduct personal visits with members who inform you they have included your ministry in their will or trust. Ask them about their philanthropic goals, or how they would like to designate their gift. Provide information about your Legacy Fund, your Legacy Society, and ask them to document their gift through your Planned Giving Statement of Intent. Gifts from bequests or beneficiary designation are always revocable. Explain to your donors that the form is non-binding and serves as a means for your ministry to recognize and honor donors, encourage others to make commitments, and estimate future gift expectancies to the Legacy Fund. Ask the donor(s) if they would provide a brief statement on why they chose to make the commitment, for the purpose of acknowledging their gift and encouraging others to do the same.
4. **Planned Giving Program Announcement (first year):** Make a public announcement about the newly established planned giving program at a Sunday service or special event, followed up by a published announcement on your webpage and newsletter. Introduce the program and its purpose/goals, the newly formed Legacy Society, and the Prosperity Team. Provide information on any upcoming events, and direct members to the information you've provided in print and/or on your website, or through your Prosperity Team members.
5. **Establish Recurring Marketing Activities:** Marketing your Legacy Fund program is an on-going process. The messages you share should be repeated, across as many communication channels as possible, again and again. Plan to include the following activities in your annual marketing plan:
 - Newsletter announcements regarding: new Legacy Society members and their stories, informative material on various planned giving vehicles, updates on Legacy Fund goals/performance
 - Webpage content, including: information on your Legacy Fund, Legacy Society (listing of members, downloadable Statement of Intent form), your goals and strategic plan, suggested language for bequests, planned giving tips or insights
 - Targeted mailings to current donors age 40+
 - Regular announcements during Sunday services regarding planned giving society, Legacy Fund, or team updates, Legacy Society events

- Brochures on planned giving made readily available to your membership
- Flyers or signage announcing special events

6. Educational and Celebratory Annual Events: One or two modest annual events per year can provide an opportunity to honor and celebrate members of your legacy society, as well as an opportunity to engage and inform prospective donors. Scheduling these events at a time when members are already gathered, like after Sunday service or another special event, can boost attendance. The education format is often a seminar, where members can learn about estate and personal financial planning, and various planned giving vehicles, as well as speak and interact with other members who have made planned gifts to your ministry. The celebratory event is typically a more social occasion to celebrate legacy society members. The two events could be separate occasions, or combined; they often include a luncheon or reception.

7. Bequest Campaigns: Once your ministry has established a Legacy Fund and implemented a planned giving program, your marketing plan should be continually promoting bequests. The bequest campaign strategy is simply a more focused effort, with a goal and a defined period of time to reach that goal. This strategy is often implemented in concert with a special occasion, such as a significant anniversary of your ministry's founding or a capital campaign for a new building or building expansion. Although deferred commitments and gifts directed to your legacy fund do not make good gifts for capital projects, because the funds are needed more immediately, donors are often asked to make deferred commitments to a fund that permanently supports maintaining the new structure.

ESTABLISHING A LEGACY SOCIETY

A legacy society is an honorary affiliation of donors who have made a planned gift to your ministry. The purpose is to recognize donors who have informed your ministry of their commitment to its future, to thank them regularly, and to keep them engaged and feeling good about their commitment. It is also a means of raising awareness within your spiritual community of your planned giving program, your Legacy Fund, and the individuals who support it.

- 1. Define Membership Criteria:** Typically, legacy societies are intended to support a planned giving program, so outright gifts of cash or securities to your ministry should be honored in some other way to avoid confusion. This means that your legacy society should be honoring those who have current deferred gift commitments, as well as those who have since transitioned (i.e. bequests you have received in the past).
- 2. Name Your Society:** Organizations often name donor recognition societies for something of significance to their constituents and their history. For instance, a ministry might name their legacy society for: the founding minister (e.g. Mildred Park Society); the year of the ministry's founding (e.g. The 1920 Society), or perhaps their first bequest donor. Be creative, but consider what might have universal appeal and still be relevant 30 years from now—sometimes simplicity is best (i.e. Unity Church Legacy Society).