

EARN.

SAVE.

GIVE.

Stewardship  
Campaign  
workbook

9/11/22- 10/9/22

Rush Chapel UMC



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# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Rush Chapel UMC's 2022 Stewardship Campaign

Our theme for this year's Stewardship Campaign is: Earn. Save. Give. Inside you will find weekly info to go along with the sermon and some inspiration detailing how giving contributes at Rush Chapel. We hope that you will consider all the ways Rush Chapel has inspired you as you think about making your 2023 promise.

All during the pandemic, in circumstances no one could even imagine, you have remained so faithful. Your financial support has allowed the critical work of the church and our outreach to the community to continue uninterrupted and in some cases actually increased.

Thank you! Thank you for your faith in Jesus Christ! Thank you for your faithfulness in the cause of Christ and Christ's Church!

Your financial support of our ministries makes all this possible. Our Stewardship Team asks you to begin praying now about how God wants to use you to support and underwrite our ministries.

Giving is a spiritual act. Through our financial support of the ministries of the church we put our faith into practice.

# INTRODUCTION

Not only is this vital to underwrite and make possible the many ministries of the church, but for each of us it is a spiritual exercise. When we give we prioritize, we make decisions, and in a very tangible way we determine God's place and importance in our lives.

The Biblical guideline is the tithe, or first fruits. It means that we dedicate to God the first 10% of our income. (Malachi 3:8-10.)

Each week we will have a "letter" from John Wesley put together with his sermons on stewardship and money. The letters will support and inform the sermons each Sunday. Take time to prayerfully consider what stewardship means to you as we journey these next several weeks together.

At the end of our 4 weeks, we will have a Celebration of Commitment Sunday where we will be able to turn in the pledge cards you received in the mail. If you did not receive one or need another one, they will be available in the back of the sanctuary. We will pray, sing, and celebrate together the commitments made to furthering the kingdom of God right here at Rush Chapel. God is doing a great thing, let's be a part of it together!

- Pastor Jared Evans

# STEWARDSHIP F.A.Q.

## Pledging at Rush Chapel United Methodist Church

### 1. Why is it important to pledge in advance?

Pledging allows the leadership of our church to plan the church budget more responsibly. As we have a more accurate idea of the amount of income we can expect during the year, we can budget more accurately and be more responsible to our programs, leadership, and congregation. Also, pledging allows you to be more purposeful in your giving. You can seek God's guidance and examine your own situation to determine a realistic and God-honoring pledge. Pre-planned pledging is far superior to simple impulse giving because it allows you to plan ahead of time and be prepared to give to support God's work through this local body.

### 2. What happens to my pledge card after I turn it in? Who sees my pledge card?

Pledge cards are turned over to the Church financial secretary to be tabulated and filed. These files are kept private. Only the totals are turned over to the Church finance committee for the budgeting process and analysis.

### 3. What happens if I fall behind in my pledge? Do I receive any reminders about my pledge?

The pledge is not a legally binding contract. This pledge is a prayerful commitment between you and God.

A statement is mailed out semi-annually that reminds you of your pledge amount and shows your actual contributions. You may email the church at any time to review where you stand on your pledge.

# STEWARDSHIP

## F.A.Q.

4. Will I receive a statement of contributions at the end of the year?

Yes, a record of contributions will be sent to you prior to January 30th each year as part of the semi-annual reporting. All contributions to Rush Chapel UMC are tax deductible.

5. What is my money used for?

Contributions from our members and others who attend fund the Rush Chapel United Methodist Church budget. This budget includes funding for all of the ministries and programs of our church (worship, children, education, youth, senior adults, missions, etc.) and for the operation and upkeep of our physical church (maintenance, utilities, insurance, etc.). A part of our budget is sent to the conference office to fund denominational efforts, including UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief). This is a way all United Methodists are connected and active in mission. This contribution is called our "apportionment" and is based on the total amount of our church budget.

6. Should I be cautious or optimistic with the amount that I pledge?

You should be realistic with the amount that you pledge. A pledge that is too high to be paid only hurts our budget process. However, a pledge that is only a token amount doesn't reflect commitment to God's work.

# STEWARDSHIP

## F.A.Q.

7. What should I do if my circumstances change and I cannot fulfill my pledge?

We recognize that circumstances do change. You may adjust your pledge amount simply by calling the church office and speaking with the administration.

8. What guidelines should I use in determining my pledge?

Many places in Scripture speak of contributing a tithe, which is ten percent. While this is primarily an Old Testament concept, it is a good pattern to follow. Prayerfully consider as we work through these next several weeks together. We understand that these are hard times. We also believe that the work of Jesus Christ through this local church is important. Please prayerfully and purposefully consider your pledge amount.

# EARN.

Greetings, Rush Chapel United Methodist Church.

My advice to all of you is this: "Earn all you can." I preached a sermon on The Use of Money in 1760.

I'll summarize it for you in this letter and I'll use more common language.

I made 5 points about "earning all you can." I preached this sermon to rich and poor alike in a time when there was not much hope. This was a time in England when there were issues of increasing debt, poor job security, poverty, health care difficulty, and oppressive working conditions in factories and mines. The slave trade was lucrative, alcoholism was rampant, and child labor profitable. The industrial revolution had brought ever increasing divides between the wealthy and the poor. This was in 1760, mind you.

My hope is that the sermon I preached so long ago will give you something to think about as you debate together what it means to be a Christian and what it means to be good stewards of the life that has been given to you.

When I said "earn all you can," I wasn't talking about a rationale for aggressively acquiring as much money as you can. It is not about being greedy and crushing others and living one way during the week and another way entirely for an hour on Sunday.



# EARN.

“Earning all you can” means earning an income in a way that is integral to who you are as a Christian. How you earn your money is just as important as what you do with your money after you earn it. But I am getting ahead of myself and you will have to wait for the next two weeks' lessons to hear what I said about that.

So take note, here are my five points:

ONE- Earn all you can but not at the expense of your life, your health, or your body. No gain should induce us to enter into an employment that is so hard as to impair our constitution.

Neither should we continue in a profession that deprives us of food and sleep in a proportion that nature requires. Some employments like those dealing with arsenic or melting lead are totally unhealthy. Others are unhealthy only to those of a weak constitution such as having to remain in an unhealthy posture for too long. If you are already employed in such an employ then exchange it as soon as possible for one that might lessen your gain, but not your health.

TWO- Gain all you can but without hurting your mind. Mental Health was not often thought of highly in my day at the detriment to many. Your work must not betray your conscience and soul. We may not engage in any sinful trade that is contrary to the law of God or our country. Other businesses may be innocent in themselves but cannot be followed without conforming to some custom that is not consistent with good conscience, like lying. Every man and woman must judge for themselves and abstain from whatever is hurtful to his/her soul.

# EARN.

THREE- Gain all you can without hurting your neighbor in substance. Love your neighbor as yourself. You cannot devour your neighbor's land by such things as gaming. Don't sell your goods below market price to ruin your neighbor's trade. Don't entice away your neighbor's workers.

FOUR Gain all you can without hurting your neighbor in body. Do not sell anything which impairs health, like liquor. Treat a patient's pain and disease promptly.

FIVE Gain all you can without hurting your neighbor in soul. Do not minister directly or indirectly to your neighbor's unchastity or intemperance. Consider this to do with taverns, victualing houses, and houses of public, fashionable diversion. Your work should not cause your neighbor to stray from God.

So that's it, my five points. My first advice to you pertaining to wealth is to "earn all you can," but do not diminish yourself, do not diminish the lives of others, and do not diminish the integrity of God's creation. Now you need to wrestle with your faith community what that means in your individual households, but I hope you will find that I have given you lots to think about. Only you can answer from deep within your soul as to what God is calling you to do.

Yours in Christ, John Wesley.

# SAVE.

Greetings once again, Rush Chapel United Methodist Church!

Last week we shared briefly some of my sermon material on the use of money and my challenge for you all to "earn all you can" but to not to do so in ways that would diminish yourself, the lives of others, or the integrity of God's creation. I promised you that I would return to elaborate. Before I give you my next piece of advice, let me tell you about an experience that deeply impacted my life.

When I was elected a fellow at Lincoln College in Oxford, they paid me 30 pounds a year. I was single and that was more than enough money for me to live on. And I enjoyed it! I spent money on cards, tobacco, and brandy.

And then something happened that changed everything for me.

I had just finished paying for some pictures for my room when one of the chambermaids came to my door. It was a cold winter day, and I noticed that she had nothing to protect her except a thin linen gown. I reached into my pocket to give her some money to buy a coat, but found I had too little left. Immediately I was struck by a thought that the Lord was not pleased with the way I had spent his money. I asked myself, "Will my Master say, 'Well done, good and faithful steward?' or will he say, 'You have adorned your walls with the money which might have screened this poor creature from the cold!' O justice, O mercy! Are not these pictures the blood of this poor maid?"

Well, that was quite life-changing for me. You could say I was struck by grace. It caused me to re-evaluate my behavior. From that point on, I began to save all I could. I figured out that I needed 28 pounds a year to live, so whatever I had in addition to that, I gave away. As I was making about 30 pounds a year, I gave 2 pounds away. When I made 60 pounds, I kept 28 and gave away 32.

# SAVE.

When I made 90 pounds, I gave away 62. By the time I was making 120 pounds a year I was giving away 92 pounds. I continued to do that throughout my life. I became quite a popular preacher and earned my money through donations, speaking, and books. I originally started producing “penny tracts” so that poor people could afford them, but I sold so many I earned quite a lot from them.

At my peak I was earning 1400 pounds per year and I lived on 30 pounds and gave the rest away. I never had more than 100 pounds to my name. I am told that adjusting for inflation that would be the equivalent for you today of earning 1.4 million dollars and living on 30,000 dollars per year and giving away 1.37 million dollars.

I even got audited by the IRS of my day who were well aware of my earnings. They couldn't believe that I didn't have more silver, and I was accused of not paying adequate excise tax. I told them that I have two silver spoons at London and two at Bristol and that I had no intention of buying any more while so many needed bread.

This way of living became so important to me. I felt that the way we approach our riches is a spiritual problem, so I preached on it several times, including in 1760 when I preached a sermon entitled “The Use of Money.”

In that sermon, I gave a simple formula: “Earn all you can. Save all you can. Give all you can.” I explained the “Earn all you can” in last week's lesson. We will talk next week about the giving bit. Today I want to share with you my words on saving money.

In that sermon on The Use of Money, I told people to save all you can.

# SAVE.

Do not throw it away in idle expenses. Do not waste it in gratifying the desires of the flesh. Do not waste any part of it in gratifying the desire of the eye by superfluous or expensive apparel or needless ornaments. Do not succumb to the pride of life to gain the admiration or praise of others. Experience shows that the more our desires are indulged, the more they increase. Don't throw away money upon your children any more than on yourself. Don't leave your money to your children when you die if you have reason to believe they would waste it, in which case give them just what will keep them above want and bestow the rest to the glory of God.

When I preached on the Danger of Riches in 1781, I said this:

1. Provide necessaries and conveniences for your own household.
2. Men in business should lay up as much as is necessary for the carrying on of the business.
3. Leave our children what will supply them with necessaries and conveniences after we have left the world.
4. Provide for things so as to not owe a man anything

To lay up any more is clear proof of our desiring to be rich.

I know your lives and financial commitments are more complex than they were in my day. However, the concept of learning to distinguish between need and want and remembering that God's abundant gifts are for everyone has not changed over the centuries. Stewardship means not only properly using what we have but also what we choose not to have in order for others to have the necessities.

Change begins with you and the choices you make each day. In your idiom, I believe a phrase you might use is "live simply, so others may simply live."

Until next time, save all you can, yours in Christ, John Wesley.

# GIVE.

Greetings Rush Chapel United Methodist Church. I am honored to write to you once more.

Today I want to explain the last part of my 3-fold statement on the use of money. This week I want to tell you to "give all you can." We've already discussed "earning all you can" but to not to do so in ways that would diminish yourself, the lives of others, or the integrity of God's creation.

Last week I shared with you an event in my life that profoundly changed the way that I thought about spending money. When I had just frivolously spent my paycheck and had nothing left to help the poor chambermaid who came to clean my room, I was so ashamed. That grace-filled moment led me to re-organize my life and to always think carefully about what I really needed as opposed to what I wanted.

And so as I told you, "Save all you can."

But there is a the third rule and it is that rule that gives meaning to the other two, which is what this letter is all about today. Let me share with you what I preached on this back in 1760 in my sermon "The Use of Money."

I said this: If you stop at gaining and saving all you can, then it is nothing if you do not go forward. You cannot properly save anything if all you do is lay it up. You may as well throw your money in the sea or bury it in the earth. Not to use it is to effectively throw it away. You need to add a third rule to the two preceding. Having first gained all you can, and secondly saved all you can, then give all you can.

# GIVE.

1. First, provide things that you need for yourself – food and clothes and things to preserve health and strength
2. Provide these too for your spouse, children, servants, and others in your household
3. Then do good to those of the "household of faith"
4. Then do good unto all humankind

If you have doubts about expenditures, then ask yourself if you are acting as a steward. Look at what scripture says and examine your conscience. Render unto God not a tenth, not a third, not a half, but all that is God's by employing all on yourself, your household, the household of faith, and all humankind in such a manner that you can give a good account of your stewardship later.

If I follow this way of living, then by giving all I can, I am effectively secured from "laying up treasures upon earth." I am secured from either desiring or endeavoring as long as I give all I can. I believe that excessive wealth, absent of effective stewardship and radical charity, prevents you from growing in grace and creates sinful actions and attitudes. Stewardship that centers on the poor is a means of grace.

# GIVE.

I used to tell people that if I die with more than 10 pounds in my possession, then I would consider myself to be a thief. I also directed my friends that after my funeral service, they were to take down the draperies used for my service and sew them into clothing for the poor.

Now giving all you can is not intended to be a hardship. It is to be a source of joy. So, earn all you can, save all you can, but then remember to give all you can.

Yours in Christ,  
John Wesley



# STEWARDSHIP.

Rush Chapel United Methodist Church. Thank you for allowing me to share with you concerning wealth.

Over the last few weeks, I have written to you and explained what I meant by “Earn all you can,” “Save all you can,” and “Give all you can.”

Now let me tell you about a sermon I wrote in 1768 entitled “The Good Steward.”

In this sermon I talked about the difference between a debtor and a steward. I said this:

A debtor is obliged to return what he has received, yet until the time of payment comes, he is at liberty to use it as he pleases.

Now, in your 21st century language, you might say the borrower of a loan is obliged to return the loan, but in the meantime can use the money as he or she sees fit.

It is not so with a steward; she is not at liberty to use what is lodged in her hands as she pleases, but as her master pleases. She has no right to dispose of anything which is in her hands, but according to the will of her lord. For she is not the proprietor of any of these things, but barely entrusted with them by another; and entrusted on this express condition-- that she shall dispose of all as her master orders.

Now, this is exactly the case of every person, with relation to God. We are all stewards.

# STEWARDSHIP.

We are not at liberty to use what God has lodged in our hands as we please, but as God pleases, who alone is the possessor of heaven and earth, and the Lord of every creature. We have no right to dispose of anything we have, but according to God's will. ... God entrusts us with them on this express condition-- that we use them only as our Master's goods and according to the particular directions which God has given us in the Word.

Or to sum up, since God entrusts us with all we have, we should "dispose of all as God pleases." And God desires that all people share in the blessings of God's good creation.

We are to be faithful stewards of more than just our money. God entrusts us with ... our souls, our bodies, our speech, our hands and feet, our talents, our time, a portion of worldly goods, including some money.

I also pointed out in this sermon that when we die, we cannot take our riches with us; at that point, we will no longer be stewards of them, so it is important that we use these gifts to our best ability while we can.

This is my lesson with you, at least for a while, so I urge you to be good stewards of God's resources and to be the extravagantly generous people that I know that God is calling you to be.

# STEWARDSHIP.

It is my prayer that Rush Chapel United Methodist Church can be a beacon of faith to the community around you. To do so to your fullest extent, I urge you to earn all you can, save all you can, give all you can, and be good stewards of the life and resources God has given you. Be bold in your stewardship, that your church may be bold in its service.


Thank you, friends,  
Yours in Christ,  
John Wesley.



# LET'S CELEBRATE OUR COMMITMENTS

## Giving Cards

By now you each have received giving cards much like the one pictured on the right. Take time to prayerfully consider everything we discussed and how you and your family can best make a pledge to the commitment of Rush Chapel UMC and the kingdom of God.



*Giving Commitment Period*

**ESTIMATED GIVING CARD**

Name (s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature (s): \_\_\_\_\_

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My/our commitment to gifts is to give to God through this church \$ \_\_\_\_\_

At this time, I pledge to give to God through my prayers, presence, service, and witness.

Bring your cards to commitment Sunday,  
October 9th.

On October 9th we will meet to celebrate, pray, and bless the commitments we have made to God and to one another.

We hope this has been a time of growth and spiritual fulfillment as we have journeyed through this season of stewardship together.

May the God who has created all things, given all things, and sustains all things bless you and keep you in all you do, that we might continue to work in all things to glorify God!

EARN.

SAVE.

GIVE.



**RUSH CHAPEL**

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

EST. 1838