Moravian Ministries FOUNDATION

Moving ministries forward, ***together.***

2027 Stewardship Steps

2027 theme: Gathered, Renewed, Sent. Scripture: Acts 2:42–47. Three hundred years after the renewal of the Moravian Church at Herrnhut on August 13, 1727, this year's plan follows a community that was gathered by God, renewed in prayer, and sent in mission. Each quarter shares one part of the story.

Quarter by quarter:

- **Gathered (January–March):** We belong to one another. Study the 1727 Brotherly Agreement, in which Herrnhut's residents committed to a shared life in Christ.
- **Renewed (April–June):** Stewardship of our spiritual lives, from Easter (March 28) through Pentecost (May 16). Mark May 12, 300 years since the Agreement was signed.
- **Sent (July–September):** Celebrate the 300th anniversary of August 13, 1727, and the prayer watch that began August 27 and lasted a century.
- **Committed (October–December):** Commitment Sunday and Advent: What was passed on to us, and what will we pass on?

Every month: Spend time in prayer (individually, board, congregation), praying for one another as in the 1727 prayer watch, praying for how we steward all God has entrusted to us.

January: Reflect, Review, Learn

- Review the year:
  How did the church make a difference in people's lives and the community?
  If the church has a mission or vision statement, how was it fulfilled?
  How were the church's resources utilized?
  Where and how was God at work throughout the year?
  What stories of transformation can we share from 2026?
- Identify and evaluate the church's stewardship efforts over the last 3-5 years: What were the goals and the results?
  What worked? What didn't work?

How can you build on/expand what worked?
Is there anything you used to do that should be brought back?
Is there something new you'd like or need to try?

- Review giving patterns:
  What percentage increased their giving?
  What percentage gives regularly?
  What percentage gives through recurring or online giving?
  How many people are not giving?
  What demographic trends do you notice (new givers, age groups, etc.)?
  How many first-time givers did you have, and how many gave again?
- Conduct listening sessions:
  Host informal gatherings to hear from people and connect on stewardship. Tie questions to the "Gathered, Renewed, Sent" theme:
  Who in this congregation has shared something with you that made a difference in your life?
  What do you need to set down or make room for so you can give your time and gifts with excitement and joy?
  Where in our community do you think our gifts are most needed?

Recommended congregational communication: 2026 gratitude report: Utilizing information gained from reviewing the year, thank people for how their gifts of time, talent, etc. enabled the church to make a difference. Preview the 300th anniversary year ahead.

February: Set Goals and Draft the Plan

- What long term change(s) does the church hope to see in stewardship?
- What short term goals will help the church get there? (see MMFA's "Four Stewardship Essentials" resource for ideas)
- Is there one scripture passage that the church can use to guide its stewardship actions for the rest of the year (emphasis on the verse each quarter; suggested for 2027: Acts 2:42–47)? OR
- Are there stewardship "basics" on which to build over the year? Ex. What does it mean to be God's stewards? What do we steward? What difference does our stewardship make in the world?

- Build off the work you've done to identify actions the church will take.
- Identify 3-5 people to share personal stewardship stories throughout the year, ideally one per quarter matched to the theme
- Prepare the "Gathered, Renewed, Sent" theme and its quarterly emphases
- Lent begins early (Ash Wednesday, Feb. 10): consider launching the theme then

Recommended congregational communication: 2027 stewardship focus: introduce "Gathered, Renewed, Sent" and Acts 2:42–47, as well as questions to be explored together. Share your "why" behind the year-round whole life stewardship focus. Connect it to the 300th anniversary of August 13, 1727.

March: Finish the Plan

- What will we do in 2027 to grow people in their service and faith?
- What will we do each quarter to celebrate the generosity of our congregation?
- What will we do in 2027 to help people understand the impact of their stewardship?
- How will we measure our actions and know they were successful?
- Set dates for quarterly check-ins (end of March, June, September, and December)
- Stewardship calendar: plan monthly newsletters and bulletin features, social media posts, and story-telling moments, including the anniversary dates: May 12, Pentecost (May 16), August 13, and August 27
- Plan how first-time givers will be thanked and followed up with, and how people will be invited to set up recurring giving

Recommended congregational communication: Upcoming opportunities for stewardship development (see April-September section for ideas) and an introduction to the Renewed season beginning at Easter

April-September: Steward Formation (Renewed and Sent)

Bible study and teaching:

- Congregational or small group study on biblical stewardship
- Study Acts 2:42–47 alongside the 1727 Brotherly Agreement: what did they promise one another, and what would we promise?
- Expand understanding of "stewardship"
- Preach whole life stewardship (aim for one sermon per quarter)
- Intergenerational education: offer an event or series that teaches adults and children together
- Offer deeper dives into specific aspects of whole life stewardship: time, talent, treasure, relationships, Creation, etc.
- Stewardship book study

Workshops:

- Financial health: budgeting, saving, debt reduction, retirement, etc.
- Planned giving
- Generosity Autobiography

Other ideas:

- Develop a narrative budget
- Earth/creation care stewardship education and projects
- Partnerships with community organizations who are addressing areas the congregation cares about
- Renewed: invite the congregation to sign a covenant of generosity on or near May 12 or Pentecost (May 16)
- Sent: hold an anniversary lovefeast on or near August 13 (a Friday in 2027) that tells the story and celebrates where the congregation's gifts go
- Sent: organize a prayer watch beginning August 27, with people signing up for one-hour shifts
- Sent: highlight the mission partners the congregation supports, tracing the line back to the first Moravian missionaries in 1732

Recommended congregational communication: Mid-year impact update (June or July): share how the congregation's gifts are making a difference so far in 2027, and invite everyone to the August anniversary celebration.

October-November: Steward Dedication (Committed)

- Invite people to make a commitment to God and God's work through the church: time, skills, relationships, money
- Emphasize stewardship as discipleship and a spiritual practice
- Provide multiple ways to commit (in-person, online, paper)
- Host a special meal or fellowship event in conjunction with Commitment Sunday
- Begin sharing vision for 2028 ministry
- Frame commitments around the anniversary question: what has been passed on to us, and what will we pass on?
- Include planned giving and legacy gifts as a way to steward faith for the next generation

Recommended congregational communication: Why commitments matter, both for spiritual growth and for how the church will make a difference in people's lives in 2028.

Late November–December: Advent Stewardship of Our Spiritual Lives

- Utilize the four Sundays of Advent (November 28, December 5, 12, and 19) to speak to how faithful stewards live and grow as we prepare for the birth of Jesus.
- Connect the themes of anticipation, preparation, joy and peace to stewardship
- Create an Advent calendar where families can engage in acts of service and generosity throughout December

Year-End Stewardship Emphasis:

- Communicate about year-end tax benefits for giving: since 2026, people who don't itemize may be eligible to deduct up to $1,000 (single) or $2,000 (joint) in cash gifts, and members 70½+ can make gifts directly from an IRA through a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD; confirm details with a tax professional)
- Giving Tuesday (Nov. 30): share a simple online appeal and impact story
- Begin sharing 2027 impact stories and look ahead to 2028 possibilities
- Thank volunteers and recognize their gifts of time and talent

Quarterly Check-Ins (end of March, June, September, and December):

- Are we following our plan?
- What adjustments do we need to make?
- Which part of the theme comes next, and how will we introduce it?
- What stewardship stories do we need to be telling?
- How are people responding to our "Gathered, Renewed, Sent" emphasis?
- How are we showing gratitude for the stewardship we are witnessing?