

Stewardship Ideas for February
February 2025

Valentine's Day is just around the corner — a time to celebrate love. We often think of lines like “How do I love thee? Let me count the ways,” or picture roses, cupids, and hearts filling store shelves. But amidst the romance, have we lost sight of love's deeper meaning?

Romantic love is everywhere, yet even that is often reduced to fleeting infatuation. More significantly, many have forgotten the love that Jesus calls us to live out: “*Love your enemies*” (Luke 6:27), “*You shall love your neighbor as yourself*” (Matthew 22:39), and “*The one who loves another has fulfilled the law*” (Romans 13:8).

This love isn't about warm, fuzzy feelings. Christian love is about action. It's choosing to act kindly, even when our feelings fall short. When someone cuts us off in traffic, we can respond with patience rather than anger. When dealing with a difficult coworker, we can show genuine interest in their life rather than just tolerating their presence.

Often, loving actions lead to loving feelings, not the other way around. Romantic love, for instance, grows deeper through small gestures like holding hands. Similarly, in other relationships, choosing to act with love can foster understanding and compassion over time.

This Valentine's Day, cherish romantic love but also take every opportunity to practice Christian love — through your actions toward neighbors, enemies, and everyone you encounter. It's in these moments that we reflect God's greatest commandment: “*Let all that you do be done in love*” (1 Corinthians 16:14).

~ Rev. Jason Mahnke, Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation

Help for the Stewardship Team

2025 Virtual Tax Seminars for Clergy and Church Finance Leaders

This year's tax seminar will be virtual, hosted by the **Texas United Methodist Foundation**.

Church Finance & Legal Update Session

Tuesday, February 4, 2025

12-4 p.m. CST

Credit: Four Continuing Professional Education (CPE) credit hours

Speaker: Elaine Sommerville, CPA (Sommerville & Associates)

Cost: \$60 **Objectives:** This session will help you gain specific knowledge about relevant changes to current tax laws and learn more about the basics of general church finance, including how to handle unique issues related to church employees and contractors, reimbursement plans, charitable gifts, tax-deductible contributions, expense reimbursement, financial records, and reporting.

Clergy Tax Session

Tuesday, February 11, 2025

9:00am – 11:00am CST

Credit: Two Continuing Professional Education (CPE) credit hours

Speaker: Sandra Fowler, CPA, CPP (Sommerville & Associates)

Cost: \$30 **Objectives:** This session will help you gain specific knowledge about relevant changes to current tax laws and learn about payroll issues related to ministers, such as employment status, housing allowances, reimbursable expenses, tax-free benefits, and retirement plans.



Deadline to Register:
2/9/2025 at midnight; [Click here to register.](#)
Register for both sessions to receive a \$10 savings!

REGISTER HERE! Reaching Out, Welcoming In: Strategies for a Connected Church in the Digital Age

When: Saturday, February 15: 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m.

Where: Christ United Methodist Church, 4509 Highcrest Rd, Rockford, IL or virtual via Zoom

Cost: \$20 per person, in-person (includes lunch); \$10 per person virtual via Zoom

According to one [2018 report](#), millennials spend **8.5 hours** per day consuming digital content and Gen Z **10.6 hours** per day. Respectively, they spend **5.2** and **5.9** of those hours on their phones.

For your church, this is a **massive opportunity to connect with your community**.

Workshops to look forward to:

- **Strategies for a Connected Church in the Digital Age - [Lauren V. Davis](#) and Rev. Christian Coon**
 - Lauren, a seasoned expert in digital strategy and community engagement, will guide you through practical, real-world strategies to enhance your church's online presence, offering tips that go beyond the buzzwords to actionable insights you can implement immediately.
 - **What You'll Learn:**
 - Understanding the shifting dynamics of community engagement in the digital age
 - Techniques for leveraging social media, email campaigns, and websites to deepen community ties
 - Crafting content that resonates and inspires action among your churchgoers and broader community
 - Tools and platforms that can make your organization more visible and approachable
- **Making Good First Impressions: Your Church's Website - Rev. Chris Walters**
 - Learn how your church's website can make good first impressions and create engagement for visitors.
- **It's About Them: Guest-Centered Invitation to Ministry and Community - Rev. Scott Carlson**
 - Explore how to craft guest-centered invitations that foster meaningful connections and encourage ministry involvement.
- **Value-Based Ministry: Making Ministry Decisions Based on Ministry Values, Not Just the Financial Bottomline - Rev. Jason Mahnke**
 - Delve into strategies for aligning ministry decisions with core values to ensure impactful and mission-driven outcomes.

REGISTER HERE! Mark your calendars, and get ready to join us for a transformative day of learning and fellowship!

Questions?

Reach out to Jason Mahnke at jason@wumf.org

Hosted and sponsored by [Midwest Methodist Foundation](#), [Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation](#), and the UMC Conferences of [Northern Illinois](#) and [Wisconsin](#).