

Returning God's Gifts  
Stewardship 2025

*Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's Grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and power forever and ever. Amen.*

– 1 Peter 4:10-11

As children, our parents set us up for success by teaching us to throw a baseball, scramble an egg, and tackle long division. They delight in our success as if it were their own. And we are forever grateful to them.

In the same way, God gifts us with everything we have – our time, our talent, our treasure – and He delights in both our success and our thanks when we give back a portion of all we've been given.

Our Stewardship theme this year is Returning God's Gifts. First United Methodist Church of Canoga Park has been serving the west San Fernando Valley for over one hundred years, and returning God's gifts allows the church to continue its mission: we support targeted ministries to disaster victims, war refugees, prisoners, the homeless, abused children, and people needing love and help all over the world.

And within our own walls and community, by returning God's gifts, older people are valued, the bereaved are comforted, sick people are not forgotten, and young people's education dreams are supported.

Here's a review of this year's Stewardship Program:

- October 6 – Inspiration Sunday
  - Your individual stewardship packet will be available for pick-up before worship. If you can't attend this service, your packet will be mailed to you.
- October 20 – Gratitude Sunday
  - We'll bring our estimate of giving cards up to the altar to be blessed. If you forget to bring your card, blank ones will be available at the service.
- October 27 – Celebration Sunday
  - The Stewardship Committee will report the initial totals for 2025.
  - As a thank-you for everyone who supports First United Methodist Church, Canoga Park, a gift card drawing will be held; the winners will dine at favorite local restaurants.

- Everyone who has returned an estimate of giving card is eligible to participate in the drawing; names are entered automatically.

We use the projected totals of the estimated giving cards to develop a budget for the coming year. Your gifts are confidential and seen only by our Financial Secretaries.

And remember, financial gifts are always about your personal approach to stewardship. Consider a percentage increase from last year or setting a plan for tithing (ten percent of your income), and please remember FUMCCP in your estate plan.

Finally, stewardship isn't only about money – consider sharing your time and talent by trying something new this year! There is always a need for more hands in maintenance, hospitality, music, and the audio-visual department. Contact Pastor Elaine for more ideas.

Your brothers and sisters in Christ,

The Stewardship Committee