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Faith Strategy Lead  
Clayton Chamberlain

STEWARDING THE FLOCK

# Your pastoral role in planned + smart giving

April 9, 2026

# Overview

What if stewardship isn't primarily about dollars raised, but disciples formed?

In this session, we'll explore how faith-based organizations can move beyond transactional fundraising and toward a deeper, more holistic vision of stewardship rooted in spiritual formation. Together, we'll reframe giving as an invitation into mission, legacy, and faithful participation in God's work — not simply a financial appeal.

# Meet Chris!

- Senior Team Lead - Faith Team
- Masters of Divinity from Lipscomb University
- 13 years of pastoral experience and fundraising for faith communities
- Trier of many things, master of none



FAITH SENIOR TEAM LEAD  
CHRIS HALL

# Meet Clayton!

- Faith Strategy Lead
- Studied Pastoral Ministry at Lincoln Christian University
- Previously served as a pastor in local church contexts
- Originally from Central Illinois, currently residing in Boston



FAITH STRATEGY LEAD  
CLAYTON CHAMBERLAIN

# Housekeeping

1. This session is being recorded
2. The recording will be available here later today
  - Later this month, we'll add it to the Learning Hub (accessible in your Partner Portal)
3. The slide deck can be downloaded below
4. This session is CFRE-approved for 1.0 continuing education credit

# Agenda

1. Rooted in Generosity
2. Not just an individual problem
3. Generosity as discipleship
4. Your pastoral responsibility
5. Next steps
6. Practical wins



## Reflection Question

If a first-time visitor attended your church or opened your appeal letter, what would they conclude generosity means to your organization?



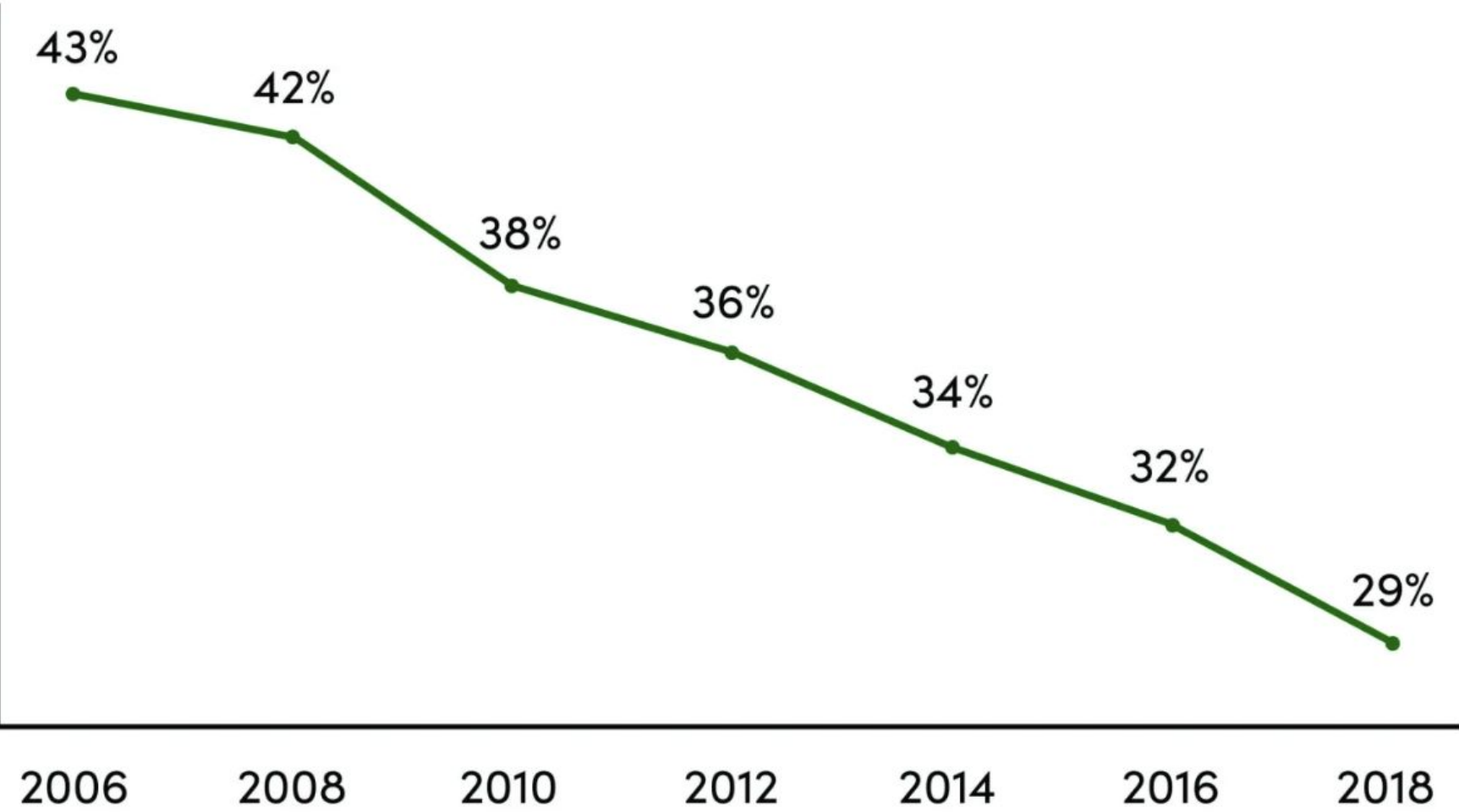
Rooted in generosity, not fundraising

# The problem: A 40 year decline

- Since 1983 we've seen a 40% dip in giving to religious organizations
- The number of nonprofit organizations has increased by approximately 400,000 (27%) over the last ten years

## Fewer Americans are giving to religious causes

*Percentage of American households who made donations specifically for religious purposes or spiritual development*



**Lifeway research**

Source: Indiana University's Lilly Family School of Philanthropy  
<https://generosityforlife.org/generosity-data/fact-sheets/>



# The problem: A 40 year decline

Category	Amount	Inflation Adjusted
Religion	\$145.81 billion	↓ 1.0%
Human Services	\$88.84 billion	↑ 1.7%
Education	\$87.69 billion	↑ 6.7%
Foundations	\$80.03 billion	↑ 10.8%
Public-Society Benefit	\$62.81 billion	↑ 7.2%
Health	\$56.58 billion	↑ 4.4%

- Adjusting for inflation, giving to religious institutions has dropped 4.1% since 2021
- Most funding comes from:
  - 5-10% of member households
  - People over 80





## The problem?

Generosity is seen as an optional part of the Christian life, rather than a formational part of the Christian life.



# The Pastoral Opportunity

# Stewardship and tithing



## Stewardship

Are we helping  
people give in ways  
that go beyond the  
money they have in  
their hand right  
now?

We often talk about generosity when it comes to cash...

## Holistic Stewardship:

- Family
- Creation Care
- Relationship
- Income
- Non-Cash Assets
- Legacy



## Reflection Question

What would change about your communications if you believed every appeal was a discipleship moment?



# Wealth and generosity in the Bible

# Jesus on wealth

What does Jesus *actually* say about wealth?

- ~25% of Jesus' teaching relates to wealth
- ~50% of Jesus' parables relate to wealth
- One of the most frequent topics in His ministry
- The Majority of Jesus' teaching on wealth are **warnings about the dangers of it**

# Jesus' wealth warnings

- “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed...” -*Luke 12:15*
- “Life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.” -*Luke 12:15*
- “[Some people] like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.” -*Mark 4:18-19*
- “You cannot serve both God and money.” -*Matthew 6:24*
- “Truly I tell you, it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven.” -*Matthew 19:23*



# A common assumption:

“Money is neutral.”

- This is technically true, but incomplete.
- In practice, money is:
  - Spiritually formative
  - Competing for our loyalty and devotion
  - Capable of shaping our desires
- Bottom line: Jesus treats money as spiritually powerful



# Jesus' wealth warning:

Jesus sees wealth as his greatest competition for our hearts.

“You cannot serve both God and money.”

- Matthew 6:24

- Not a suggestion, a limitation
- Implies competing allegiances
- Positions money as a rival master
- Bottom line: Jesus treats money as spiritually powerful

# Cultural contrast

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## Jesus on wealth

- Life ≠ abundance of possessions
- Wealth is spiritually dangerous
- God is your Father/Provider

## Culture on wealth

- Wealth = success
- More is better
- Security comes from accumulation

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**We are being disciplined by two competing visions of the good life.**

# Acts 4 - The surprising evidence of grace

## Acts 4:32-35

“All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. **And God’s grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them.** For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need. (emphasis mine)”

# Generosity...

- Is central to Jesus' teaching
- Is a practice that frees us from the deceitfulness of wealth
- Is a pathway into fuller life with God and neighbor
- Is rooted in trust that God is our generous provider
- Is a visible sign of God's grace at work among us
- **Is essential to the life of every disciple**





# Your pastoral responsibility

# Shaping how people understand generosity

We all shape how people think about generosity:

- What it is
- Why it matters
- How to practice it

**Regardless of our titles, when we talk about generosity, we are doing pastoral work.**

# The Core Responsibility

Our role is **not primarily** to:

- Raise money
- Optimize campaigns
- Increase participation rates

Our role **is** to:

1. Form disciples
2. Reinforce healthy and accurate views of God
3. Invite people into faithful participation with what God wants to do in, and through them

# 1. Form disciples

The goal is not just dollars raised—it's disciples formed.

- “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” - Matthew 6:12
- Generosity is a powerful way to:
  - Align our values with those of the Kingdom
  - Loosen the grip possessions have on us
  - Grow our trust in God
- Remember: **Generosity is discipleship practiced with our resources.**



## 2. Reinforce healthy and accurate views of God

The way we talk about giving reveals a picture of God.

Peoples' giving is shaped by who they believe God is.

- Scarcity mindset or abundance mindset?
  - Scarcity Mindset
    - Sounds like “There is not enough”
    - Leads to fear, anxiety, and closed-handedness
  - Abundance mindset
    - Sounds like “God is a faithful and generous father”
    - Leads to trust, gratitude, and open-handedness

# 3. Invite

We invite participation in what God wants to do in, and through us.

## God's work in us

- Free us from the dominant narrative of wealth
- Allow us to choose whom we will serve
- More fully live out our vocation as image bearers of God

## God's work through us

- To colabor with God in caring for those He loves
- To put God's lavish generosity and love on full display
- To cooperate in the inbreaking kingdom of God





Next steps

See it clearly:

# Communication

## Perform a communication audit

- Frequency - Observe the frequency with which you have communicated about wealth or generosity in your context in the last 12 months. How does that frequency compare to the roughly 25% of Jesus' teaching that was spent on these topics?
- Messaging - Observe the messaging that you use when communicating about wealth and generosity. What do the words or phrases that you employ communicate that you believe about these topics? How does this messaging compare to that of Jesus and the New Testament?



See it clearly:

# Language

- Clearly articulate what you believe generosity is, and is not. Root this in what you believe about the character of God.
- List out the words and phrases that you currently use, and whether they align with your theological vision of generosity.
- Replace words or phrases as needed with new messaging that more closely aligns with your theological vision, and with the vision you hope to instill in your community.



See it clearly:

# Your community

Meet people where they are.

- Consider where segments of your community are in their discipleship journey as it relates to generosity and wealth (*Someone who has never given, someone who has given once, someone who gives on occasion, lybnts/sybnts, recurring givers, etc.*)
- Describe what each of these groups of people are likely to believe about wealth, generosity, and what a gift to your organization or church means.
- Write out a clear discipleship next step and generosity next step that each of these groups can be invited into.





# Reflection Question

What would your community look like if generosity were as natural and central as prayer or worship?



# Quick Wins

# Practical steps to take today

1. Integrate Smartgiving and Planned giving into regular rhythms of your organization
  - a. Pre-marital counseling
  - b. Baptism courses
  - c. Membership classes
  - d. Volunteer trainings
2. Make the tools clearly and easily findable on your website
3. Practice what you preach





Questions?



Thank you.

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