

Stewardship and Tithing  
120th Session of the East Tennessee Annual Conference  
September 9-13, 2020  
Bishop Jeffrey N. Leath, Presiding Prelate  
Host PE: Dr. Eva M. Settles  
Associate PE: Dr. Terence L. Mayes, Sr.  
Host Pastor: The Rev. Lee Russell Brown  
Bethel AME Church, Knoxville, TN

Churches are using all sorts of technology to continue spreading the gospel message online during this season of pandemic and social distancing. How does the church handle financial stewardship during this time?

According to the National Study of Congregations' Economic Practices, 78% of gifts are given during a worship service. Churches living on thin margins are not going to be able to operate if they lose 78% of their revenue during this crisis. So, what can churches do to maintain giving revenue when people are not in church?<sup>1</sup>

1. Pray.
2. Remember that your church building is not the church. The people who attended or who have the potential to attend make up the church. These people need to understand that their presence is missed and that the church is waiting on them with an extended hand.
3. Make plans for giving. "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."(Luke 6:38 NIV)

The day of special programs and church calendar days are of the past. If the

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<sup>1</sup> Hay, Robert. "Stewardship During a Pandemic." Presbyterian Foundation. Accessed August 18, 2020. <https://www.presbyterianfoundation.org/stewardship-in-a-pandemic/>

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church has depended on these days to meet their budget expenses, then the time has come for us to identify new revenue streams.

4. Ask. The people in your particular congregations may not know that the church is in need financially. With the use of technology, we can solicit the support of all who are supporting our ministries.
5. Don't cut your budgets. The negotiated and approved budgets are in place for a reason. Mostly, it is there to make certain that the church can maintain operation.

Humbly submitted,

The Committee on Stewardship and Tithing

The Reverends Coleman March, Lee Russell Brown, Kenneth Love, and Ruby Mason-Crum; lay delegates Quentin Anthony, JoAnne Gaunt, William Mustin, and Sylvia Phillips