



The Strengthen the Church Offering furthers the work of our conference and the national UCC as we work together to strengthen and renew existing congregations, fund leadership development, and provide exciting new programs for youth and young adults.

Plan Testimonials Leading Up to Strengthen the Church Offering Sunday

In the three weeks leading up to the Strengthen the Church Offering on Pentecost (May 31st), ask your congregants to share stories of how the United Church of Christ's vision impacts their lives. When recruiting lay people to offer testimonials, take inspiration from the Prophet Joel, whom Peter quoted on the first Pentecost. "God declares: I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young adults shall see visions, and your elders shall dream dreams." Some examples of testimonials:

- A child in the church school or confirmation program may speak to their excitement about the work of the church or the UCC.
- An elder or longtime member may testify about dreams for the future of the congregation and the UCC.
- A young adult may witness to how the congregation gave them hope.
- A new parent may share what the vision of a more just world means to them.

On the Strengthen the Church offering day, be it Pentecost or another Sunday, the pastor, moderator, or church president could offer their testimony and lead into a call to the offering. By sharing the stories of our lives, we can inspire generosity and invest in the vision of the United Church of Christ.

Directions on Testimonials

"Thank you for your willingness to offer a testimonial during an upcoming worship service. Testimonials help our community understand the importance of generosity in our lives, the reasons to support the Strengthen the Church offering, and what we can accomplish together. Sharing your story will help people in your congregation learn about the offering and motivate them to invest in the vision of vibrant, transforming, relevant church communities.

We want testimonials to reflect on the common campaign theme of "invest in the vision." In closing, end with the lines: "I hope you will join me in making a gift to the Strengthen the Church Offering on May 31st. Together, we can invest in the vision of the United Church of Christ."

The most moving testimonials come from sharing your own heart. You might begin to prepare your thoughts by thinking about the vision of the United Church of Christ. We strive to be a faith-forming, multiracial and multicultural, open and affirming, globally-minded movement to transform ourselves and our world. (You can learn more about the vision of the UCC by visiting https://www.ucc.org/about-us_what-we-believe). Next, reflect on the ways the vision of the UCC touches your own heart and soul.

- where do you see our church changing lives?
- how has our church changed your life?
- what vision of the future of the UCC most gives you hope?
- why are you committed to work and generosity to help that vision come true?

Talking about money, finances, and gifts can be difficult. It's essential to keep your talk focused on joy and reflective thinking instead of guilt and negativity (e.g., "this is something I want to do" instead of "this is something you have to do").

Testimonials help us tell our own stories and the story of our congregation. We appreciate your willingness to inspire generosity by sharing your story."