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A Guide For Local Churches
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WHAT IS NON-TRADITIONAL REVENUE?

Non-traditional revenue, defined for this resource, is revenue obtained in a way that is not “business as usual.” For churches, we think of the offering plate, pledges, capital campaigns, dedicated gifts from church members, and the traditional stewardship season as usual avenues for giving. Non-traditional revenue invites us to think outside the box and brainstorm new ways of raising funds for ministry. An example includes reaching out to the businesses in your community to cast the vision of how they can be a ministry partner and impact the mission of your church. In this resource, we will discuss the following: a theological overview of fundraising; the development and cultivation of ministry partnerships; best practices; event ideas; legal considerations; and how to market your event.



MINISTRY PARTNERSHIP DEFINED

Ministry Partnership (i.e. sponsorship) is an avenue for businesses to market to a specific or targeted audience. It is the financial or in-kind support of an organization, event, or activity allowing a company to reach a certain demographic (e.g., the local church) while supporting their community.



THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR FUNDRAISING

Fundraising is hard work. It sometimes gets a bad reputation. Many think of it as begging. “They are asking for money AGAIN?” and “Weren’t we just asked to contribute extra dollars two weeks ago?” Fundraising is not and should not be perceived as begging. Fundraising should be viewed as ministry.

Henri J.M. Nouwen, in his book [A Spirituality of Fundraising](#), gives a vision to fundraising that involves the spiritual aspect. Many of the thoughts expressed here come from this book, along with J. Clif Christopher's books [Not Your Parent's Offering Plate](#) and [Whose Offering Plate Is It?](#)

Let's face it. When we are asked to approach someone for monetary support or personal time to further the mission, we worry about what they will think. Will they be receptive? Will there be a resounding 'NO'? Will I be successful? Nouwen says, “Ministry is, first of all, receiving God's blessing from those whom we minister...It is a glimpse of the face of God.” ([A Spirituality of Fundraising](#), p. 15).

Scripture tells us that where there is vision, there is mission. In Acts 16:10 (NIV), “during the night Paul had a vision: There stood a man of Macedonia pleading with him and saying, ‘Come over to Macedonia and help us.’” This vision led Paul to the mission to proclaim the good news in Macedonia. Without vision, people flounder and the mission gets lost (cf. Proverbs 29:18; 2 Kings 21:1-9). Telling the story of your mission should be central to the life of your church, in not only your everyday offerings, but also in special fundraising. Jesus Christ should be at the heart of the vision and mission.

Fundraising is an avenue to fulfill your vision and mission, and to invite others along to participate in receiving the blessing. Casting the vision, in a tangible way, places those who may not have imagined themselves as part of the story. Both the donor and the mission will receive blessings, and YOU receive blessings through Christ for nurturing the relationship with the donor and being emboldened to ask. Throughout the process, keep Jesus the focus and a part of the vision and mission.



CHURCH EVENT FUNDRAISING IDEAS

Sometimes you need help brainstorming WHAT to do to raise money. It all depends on the culture of your church, and the funds' intended use. Some of these ideas are more suited towards children or youth fundraising events, while others might be a full-blown elegant event. Be creative! The ideas presented are to get your creative ideas flowing.

Before you chose the type of event, consider WHY you want to raise funds. Develop a missional strategy – whose lives are you changing by giving these funds? Develop a narrative that reflects your mission to change lives. Tell the vision of the lives affected and brought to Christ because the donor gave generously.

Cause-related themes and the narrative will have a larger impact on the community for outside gifts. After all, we have a fundraiser not just for our own church members, but also for the community as a whole.

All these ideas are adaptable for your situation with a little creativity.

- 5K Run, Walk or Bike Race – Not only is this healthy, it can be a community activity. Walkers collect pledges; organizers design a t-shirt and water bottles to sell. Prepare incentives to give out, commonly referred to as swag. Create an entrance fee, and make sure to have medical and first-aid supplies on hand.
- “Work”-a-thon – Workers can collect pledge in return for participating in a big work day (mow lawns, walk dogs, clean around homes, rake leaves, help cook meals, other odd jobs). You’ll also be helping a neighbor.
- Ticketed Dinner Event – With or without a “show.”
- Sporting Event Party – Make sure to include babysitting for parents. Sell tickets and have a potluck for your mission.
- Award Show – In recognition of outstanding volunteers. Sell tickets and have a meal too.
- Auction or Silent Auction Events – Donated art or goods (gift cards, signed memorabilia, lessons from a professional, a round of golf, painting and craft lessons, etc.) to auction off. (Smaller items auctioned silently with bid sheets and auction number). Get outside ministry partners or businesses in your community to underwrite your event.

- Cook-offs – Sponsored by your church's bank or local businesses. Hand out a prize, but sell tickets to the tasting. Charge an entry fee if the market will allow.
- Painting Party/Craft Nights or Classes – Enlist local teachers to volunteer their skills for a fundraiser for your mission.
- Matching Gifts/Grants – Find businesses to match gifts up to a certain amount.
- Have a local business underwrite grants for volunteers who serve – Dollars earned is equal to how many hours they put in.
- "Text to Tithe" campaign – Get your provider to offer a smaller percentage fee during the campaign.
- Christmas Decoration Service – Have your group charge a fee to put up or take down Christmas decorations for anyone who wants the service provided.
- Angel Festival – Congregants create and design angels out of the medium of your choice. Sell hot chocolate at the event and have people vote by putting dollars into the container. The jar with the most "wins", but all proceeds goes to the event.
- Seasonal Fundraiser – Pumpkin patch, gift-wrapping or Christmas wrap, tulips at Mother's Day, Easter Lilies at Easter.
- Talent Show – Public event and sell tickets, underwritten by a business in the community or a vendor your church uses.
- Sell sidewalk donuts in a busy neighborhood – For example, Krispy Kreme offers a 50-60% profit margin on their donuts for charity.
- Movie Night – Sell movie vouchers. Cineplex offers easy ways to sell tickets for fundraising.
- Sell gift cards – Scrip Pro and Gift Cards for Causes provide commission on every card you sell.
- Travel Auction – Get your local travel agent to donate a trip somewhere (or give you a huge discount) and auction off the travel voucher.
- "Oddball" events – Movember is a challenge to men to grow their facial hair to raise awareness of male health issues. (Peer-to-Peer Fundraising)
- Virtual Road Race – Runners can run wherever they live, secure sponsors, just post their time online on the "home" system. Encourage runners in the same area to run together.
- Caroling for a Cause – "Carol-grams" sold and charge by the number of songs you sing at recipient's house.
- "Cobweb" Scavenger Hunt – Challenges teams to find a series of historical landmarks throughout the city. Take a selfie and post with a hashtag on social media. Pay an entrance fee to participate.

- Hoops for Hope – Basketball event, can be free throws, 1-on-1, 2-on-2, etc. Charge an entrance fee and bring hope to your charity.
- Trunk or Treat – Have businesses or church members “purchase” a space to hand out their favorite candy to children of the church and community. Money raised goes to children’s ministries or other charity, and there will be happy children.



PREPARATION

Questions to think through when developing a fundraising event.

- What is your objective/goal for the event?
- What is your budget (examples: speaker fees, printing, etc.)?
- Who is your audience? Local? National? Global?
- How many attendees?
- What will draw attendees to your event? What will they gain from it?
- Is a theme appropriate?
- Would you prefer an in-person or online event?
- Where will your event take place? What are the corresponding logistics of the event location?
- Will there be space to have vendors?
 - o If so, how many vendors can it hold? A decision on size of booth is needed (standard is 10 x 10).
 - o What is the design of your space for vendors?
 - o What types of vendors would you like to be present? Whom will your audience favorably receive?
- Will there be other sponsorship avenues? I.E. An event sponsor who wants more visibility besides a booth?
 - o Space for a sponsor held event?
 - o A meal/snack sponsor?
 - o A lounge space created for the sponsor?
 - o Will a larger event sponsor be able to present/speak at the event?
- What will be your pricing? Make sure to carefully price those opportunities well above your cost to help your event be financially successful.



MINISTRY PARTNER PACKAGE EXAMPLES

Churches often find examples or templates helpful when thinking about non-traditional revenue. Below are some questions to think about when putting together a ministry package to offer potential partners.

Determine Level

- Include a range of deliverables and price points to offer.
- Price points should vary to reach a wide net of potential Ministry Partners.
- Deliverables in each package should vary to appeal to the price point being secured and fully benefit the Ministry Partner, i.e., will your event sponsor be able to present/speak at the event?

This is the sample package that the General Council on Finance and Administration staff uses for General Conference. You can adapt these to meet the needs of the event you are hosting and use these tips to help you fund it by using sponsors . You will need to determine what would be relevant for your event and what your sponsors will be willing to pay for exposure.

Platinum Package

- Exclusivity on promotional offer
- Right of first refusal
- Full page acknowledgement (color) in Program Books distributed to participants
- Logo on Event credential lanyards
- Two digital banner opportunities designed in prime convention center locations
- Four digital acknowledgements show daily on monitors in prime convention center locations
- Two 4-color column wrap banners in prime convention center locations
- Two 4-color, size 2'x2' – 6'x10' graphic clings in designated convention center locations
- Quad exhibit booth in prime location (four, 10x10 spaces) in GC2020 Exhibit Hall
- Ministry Partner recognition and logo link on General Conference visitor registration website

Gold Package

- Exclusivity on promotional offer
- Right of first refusal
- Full page acknowledgement (color) in Program Books distributed to participants
- Two digital banner opportunities designed in prime convention center locations
- Four digital acknowledgements show daily on monitors in prime convention center locations
- One graphic cling in designated convention center location (Ministry Partner responsible for printing fees)
- One column wrap banner in designated convention center location (Ministry Partner responsible for printing fees)
- Double exhibit booth in prime location (two, 10x10 spaces) in GC2020 Exhibit Hall
- Ministry Partner recognition and logo link on General Conference visitor registration website

Silver Package

- One graphic cling in designated convention center location (Ministry Partner responsible for printing fees)
- Full page acknowledgement (color) in program books distributed to participants
- Two digital banner opportunities in designated convention center locations
- One exhibit booth (10x10) in GC2020 Exhibit hall

Wi-Fi Package

- Splash page with logo and link to organization's website upon Wi-Fi access
- Full page acknowledgement (color) inside cover program books distributed to participants
- Two digital banner opportunities designated within the convention center
- One column wrap banner in designated convention center location (Ministry Partner responsible for printing fees)
- One exhibit booth in prime location (10x10) in GC2020 Exhibit hall

Hospitality Package

- General Conference information table at select hotels with opportunity for Ministry Partner banner and "swag"
- Logo on selected hotel keys

A La Carte Options

- Exhibit booths (10x10)
 - o Standard booth
 - o Prime booth (priced higher than the standard – located in high traffic area)
- Acknowledgement/logo in program book, full page
- Logo recognition on display board
- Meeting space to host reception or dinner
- Charging Stations
- Booth outside resting lounge



BEST PRACTICES

Good partnership opportunities increase awareness, improve purchase intent, enhance the image, and communicate product or features of businesses.

Ministry Partners are looking for an opportunity to:

- Create company awareness
- Increase brand loyalty
- Drive digital traffic and generate leads
- Build credibility and educate the public about its products and services
- Show corporate social responsibility
- Offer value and solutions
- Create a deeper connection with attendees and community
- Entertain attendees
- Integrate with digital and social content
- Capture audience data/metrics
- Provide excellent customer service

Determine Your “Ask” Audience

Determining your target “ask” audience can be a challenge. It is the final step in the long process of planning, research, relationship building, and casting the vision.

Build your prospect list.

- Start with who you know: Your friends, your colleagues, work vendors, church or religious organizations, civic organizations, your personal vendors (think doctors, attorneys, etc.), your neighbors.
- Select those who might have an interest in the type of fundraising you are doing – i.e., your boss coaches youth soccer so he may support youth mission experiences.
- From that audience, determine who has the ability to give. Have they given in the past to your mission? Or, a like mission? Are they a business who has an interest in your mission?
- Then ask the question of yourself: Do I have access to this person? Do I have a personal connection? If not, building a relationship will need to take priority, and this will take some time.



THE ASK

Once you have narrowed down the list of potential donors, here are some helpful tips to think about before you meet with the prospective donor.

- Know your prospect, as a person and the company they represent. Your relationship is established. Do they have a mission statement that lends itself to the mission you seek funds for?
- Know their interests, and match that to the needs of your mission.
- Understand what you want to ask. Make it an opportunity, not about the money involved.
- Make a plan if the prospect says "no." Might they be interested in the future or another mission? Make it a two-way conversation.
- Be confident. Practice so you are very familiar with what you are going to say, and be high energy in the conversation.
- Cast a big vision of what you can accomplish in ministry with their funding. Present it as an opportunity for ministry, not about the money. Make sure they understand the life-changing dynamic of their gift.
- Create a contract that details all the deliverables and lays out exactly where the ministry partner will have visibility. Deliver everything promised.



SAMPLE LETTER OF INVITATION

This sample can be used after the initial call has been made, or for repeat vendors and **tailored** to meet the needs of your event. Make sure you have others look at your letter before sending.

<INSERT YOUR THEME LOGO HERE>

<INSERT DATE>

Dear <INSERT NAME>:

On behalf of the <INSERT EVENT NAME>, we would like to personally invite you to be a part of the <INSERT EVENT NAME> Ministry Partners and Exhibitors Program.

The <INSERT EVENT NAME> is scheduled for <INSERT DATES> in <INSERT CITY> at the <INSERT VENUE>. The theme for the conference is <NEW THEME>. Come join us in <INSERT CITY> and experience the diverse culture of activities the city has to offer (<INSERT CHAMBER OR CITY WEBSITE>). We are extending an opportunity for you to select and secure prime Ministry Partnerships and/or exhibit space at the <INSERT EVENT NAME>. We can customize a packet that will help you achieve your marketing and promotional goals. The <INSERT DATE> Event Packet is attached for you to review and make the best selection for your company/ministry.

Please contact us if you have any questions or comments regarding the <INSERT EVENT NAME> Ministry Partners and Exhibitors program.

Best Regards,

<INSERT SIGNATURE>

<INSERT NAME OF CONTACT>

<INSERT TITLE>

CC: <INSERT PASTOR'S NAME>



DRAFTING EVENT AGREEMENT

When considering an event arrangement that includes a Ministry Partnership (sponsorship), typically the partner provides either an 'in-kind' service or a monetary payment in exchange for receiving exposure at your event. 'In-kind' refers to a service provided (something your event would have purchased) either at a discount or at no cost. Examples of what this exposure entails could include the following:

- The right to identify as a Ministry Partner of the event in its marketing and acknowledgements in return for a monetary payment; or being identified and acknowledged as a Ministry Partner in event collateral materials, including invitations, flyers, signage, or website registrations because they provided money to the ministry of the church.
- Acknowledgment that the Ministry Partner is providing a significant discount on services they will provide to the event (in-kind partnership).

The type of event will dictate the type of ministry partnership agreement that will be prepared. Additional benefits may apply to those who chose a higher level of partnership:

- An area to display and promote its brand, or services at the event – be it a booth, a large banner, a digital banner, etc.
- The right to distribute logo merchandise to attendees (gift bags, booth collateral)
- Exclusivity
- Tickets to the event
- Set up of a lounge

Agreements for the event will have several factors to consider. In a typical agreement, each party should address the following:

- Whether the partnership is a one-time event or a series of events or activities.
- The number and types of promotional/acknowledgement opportunities of the ministry partner.
- Whether the ministry partner has the right to exclusivity. Higher levels of partnership will sometimes grant exclusivity.
- The responsibilities of each party as it pertains to the ministry partnership.
- The nature and tone of the acknowledgements – the messaging allowed avoiding Unrelated Business Income Tax. An example of messaging allowed would be “we acknowledge

this ministry partner”, over against, “we endorse this ministry partner”. Endorsing clearly puts you in the realm of telling your members “we recommend you purchase from this partner.” Acknowledging does just that: acknowledge their valuable partnership with you to accomplish your ministry’s mission.

- The use of intellectual property such as the trademark of the church and the parameters around its use.
- The fee structure for the ministry partnership.
- An indemnity clause.
- Notices and termination rights, including a morals clause, confidentiality, waivers, and compliance with applicable laws.
- Insurance coverages, if required.



MARKETING YOUR EVENT

According to United Methodist Communications, the communication agency of The United Methodist Church, “marketing isn’t a dirty word.” Getting the attention of the community requires using the tools you have available to grab their attention.

Some ideas you might consider:

- Write down your vision, strategy and tactics so you can remain focused and others involved clearly see your vision.
- Develop your plan at least six months ahead of the event.
- Consider your long-term goals. In addition, come up with a step-by-step plan to accomplish your mission.
- Distribute materials two months ahead of the event.
- Build a website for your event. With tools like WordPress, you can create one fairly easily and depending on the version, it can be free.
- Offer an intuitive registration platform to make the attendee’s first experience perfect. Include event tickets and, if applicable, vendor space registration.
- Social Media Movement – potentially viral social media challenge to advertise your event. See who gets creative! Prize for the person who has the most shares. Get a business involved to donate the prize.
- Film a Video Campaign – embed a video into a specific campaign web page for your event.
- Vision-sharing night – gather supporters to create a united effort for the cause.
- Consider email marketing.
- Create a Facebook Page for your event. Use Hootsuite to set up tweets and posts about your event.
- Create a #hashtag for your event to engage other participants.
- Write a press release to tell your story, the cause, the reason why this event is important. Contact the local paper or radio station to feature your event.
- Tier your ticket prices – Premium tickets may drive up standard tickets.
- Have your local sponsors share the event on their social media or press releases.
- If you have a speaker or presenter, have them share with their contacts.
- Post an ad in your newspaper or newsletter.
- Create posters and postcards to distribute.

United Methodist Communications offers online learning modules. At www.umcom.org/learn/market-your-church, this learning module is designed to take you through a two-phase process to create a unique style suitable for your church. The two phases help you research your community and vision of your church, the second helps you determine strategy and implementation. This process could work well for determining your event strategy as well.



RESOURCES

[Eventbrite Blog - The 2018 Guide To Event Sponsorship](#)

[Eventbrite Blog - How To Win Sponsors for Your Event \(and Bring Them Back Every Year\)](#)

[Hillborn: Charity eNews - Top 10 Things To Consider For Sponsorship Agreements](#)

[The Fundraising Authority - 10 Step Guide to Cultivating Corporate Sponsors](#)

[Nonprofit Hub - The Five Things Corporate Sponsors Want From Nonprofit](#)

[United Methodist Communications Marketing Plan Tool](#)

[A Spirituality of Fundraising, by Henri J. M. Nouwen](#)

[Not Your Parents' Offering Plate, by J. Clif Christopher](#)

[Whose Offering Plate Is It? by J. Clif Christopher](#)

[Six Steps to a Generous Life, by Bob Crossman](#)

[Enough, by Adam Hamilton \[www.UMC.org\]\(http://www.UMC.org\)](#)

[A Higher Bid, by Kathy Kingston](#)

[Fired Up Fundraising - How To Make Your Next Ask Practically Irresistible](#)

[The Fundraising Authority - A 5 Minute Guide to Making Better Fundraising Asks](#)