

# HOW TO GUIDE FOR SPECIAL SUNDAYS

No matter how or where we serve Jesus Christ, United Methodists do God’s work through a unique connectional covenant. It’s as simple as people coming together and combining their money to accomplish something bigger than themselves. United Methodists support apportioned and designated funds through their connectional gifts.

We hope this guide answers questions on how to use the new resources to promote and teach members about the importance of giving to the Special Sundays.

## WHY ARE THERE NO LONGER A PRINTED ENVELOPE OR PEW CARD?

With digital worship now a permanent part of our ministry, we’ve updated our resources to better meet evolving needs. As part of this shift, we’ve discontinued printed resources and now offer convenient downloadable options for pew cards and envelopes.

## WHAT IS A SPECIAL SUNDAY ENVELOPE LABEL?

To support each Special Sunday, we provide a downloadable envelope label tailored to each individual celebration. Simply print the template on 2” x 6” address labels, such as Online label [OL2097WX](#), Uline label [S-9658](#) or a Avery label [22838](#).

Once printed on the labels, stick the label onto an envelope—any envelope smaller than 6” wide should work. These branded envelopes can then be used during worship services, Sunday School, or small group gatherings to encourage donations. Templates are available in both color and black-and-white for your convenience. There is also an UMCOR disaster relief envelope template to encourage donations during crisis.



## WHAT ARE PEW CARDS?

Digital pew cards are available to explain each Special Sunday with a simple message about why we give, how to give, and the impact of our gifts. Each card features a QR code for easy online giving, accessible to both members and visitors. Pew cards are designed for the quadrennial season.

The downloadable cards are available in two versions: a single graphic to use in digital platforms or the three images designed to be printed and displayed. The three-image graphic is designed to fit in pew racks—just print, trim and place them out a few weeks before each Special Sunday.





## IDEAS ON HOW

## TO USE THE SPECIAL SUNDAY RESOURCES

Incorporate these ideas during worship, classes or small groups to promote

### Introduce the resources early

To inspire stronger donations, announce the upcoming celebration at least 2 weeks in advance. Consider these ideas:

- If you project resources digitally during worship, use the downloadable pew cards, social graphics or infographic to speak into the Special Sunday ministry OR use a video to explore the ministries we support
- Incorporate the graphics in your printed bulletin or newsletters 2-3 weeks prior to the Special Sunday
- Print and place the pew cards in pew racks three weeks prior to the Sunday or keep all 6 (six) in the pew rack to promote year-round
- Announce the Special Sunday online in emails, on social platforms or on your website using the digital graphics
- Include a pew card in each Sunday School classes or small groups to announce the upcoming Special Sunday
- Place the pew cards and envelopes with the labels on them in high-traffic areas around your church

### Include envelopes and pew cards in bulletins

For local churches using printed bulletins, consider incorporating the digital pew cards and envelopes with the labels into your worship materials. Print the labels to place on envelopes and include printed pew cards in your bulletins on the day of the Special Sunday. This approach not only encourages giving but also ensures that those who missed earlier announcements are informed about the special offering.

### Include envelopes and pew cards in mailings

If you mail out newsletters, consider adding envelope labels and pew cards. This provides an opportunity for those unable to attend in person to mail their donations back to the church.

### Include envelopes and pew cards in visitor packets

Add envelope labels and pew cards to visitor packets or distribute them at events. This helps share information about the ministries supported through these special offerings.

## GET YOUR CHURCH INVOLVED IN SPECIAL SUNDAY CELEBRATIONS

The local Church plays a very important role in connecting members to missions. These celebrations can help your congregation discover - or continue to support - areas of mission. Children's ministries can collect spare change drives; youth and young adult ministries can create virtual mission trips and learn about the ministries of the Special Sunday while fundraising; and the whole congregation can pray together for the outcome of the ministry.

**Review** the online [pastor and leader kits](#) for each Special Sunday and explore the resources available for use in worship, study, devotion and promotion.

**Involve** church leadership and laity in the planning of the Special Sunday. Use the [planning calendar](#) and the friends and family participate guide to help you schedule and promote the connectional giving efforts.

**Invite** your congregation to be a part of the Special Sunday celebration and offerings.



**Share** information, stories, and incorporate the provided content into your social media posts, sermons, and communications. Every Special Sunday pastor and leaders kit includes social media graphics and content to use and share.

**Thank your church** for participating. We encourage you to highlight the donations received and remind them of how they are the hands and feet of Christ.

## HOW ARE THE DONATIONS COLLECTED FOR EACH SPECIAL SUNDAY?

Special Sunday offerings are best collected through the local church. Church offices gather donations and send them to the annual conference treasurer, who forwards them to GCFA.

To encourage giving, share online giving options in your promotions. Include your church's online giving link in social media posts and communications. If your church doesn't have one, direct people to the official donation site at [donate.gcfa.org](https://donate.gcfa.org).

This makes it easy for people to give and share the link on their social media to encourage others. Pew cards also include a QR code that links directly to the donation site.

## WHAT SPECIAL SUNDAY RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE?

### PASTOR AND LEADER KITS

There is a kit for every Special Sunday available online.

Click the links below to find the appropriate resources you need:

- [Human Relations Day Sunday](#)
- [UMCOR Sunday](#)
- [United Methodist Student Day](#)
- [Native American Ministries Sunday](#)
- [Peace with Justice Sunday](#)
- [World Communion Sunday](#)

### SOCIA MEDIA GRAPHICS, ADS AND INFOGRAPHICS

Graphics are easy to share and use and offer an easy way to inspire giving. Graphics are available and designed specifically for each Special Sunday and are available in multiple languages. We encourage you to follow The United Methodist Church [Facebook](#) so you can easily like and share all the post leading up to Special Sundays.

### AGE LEVEL RESOURCES

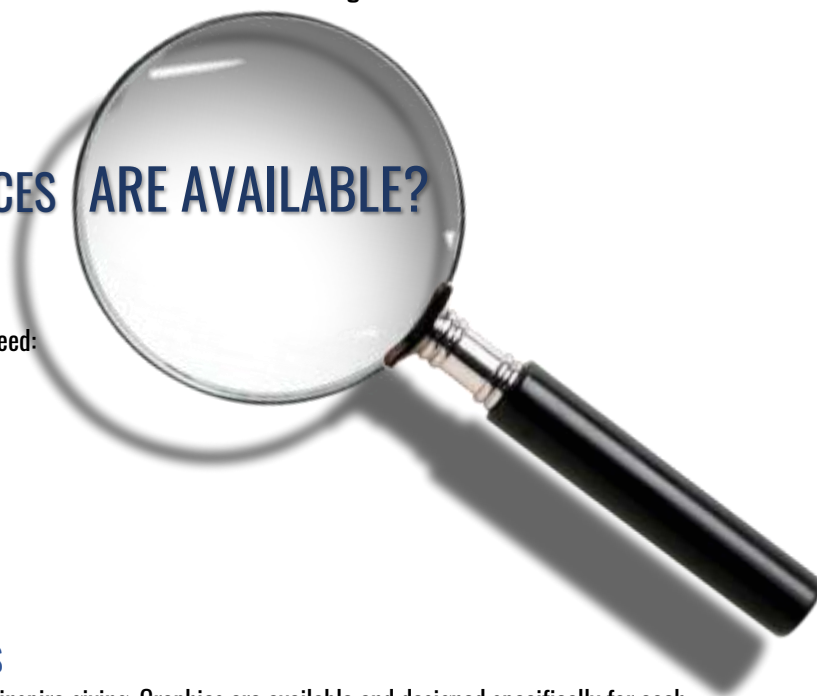
Every age group should be included in these connectional giving efforts. Explore resource guides, discussion questions for adults, a month-long plan for youth, children's bulletins, messages, and activities tailored for children. Additionally, older resources remain accessible online.

### MISSION MOMENTS AND MORE

These resources are designed for use during worship, as newsletter content, or for personal reflection. They include weekly devotions featuring a mission moment, an offertory prayer, a children's message, and concise newsletter content for your church bulletin or newsletter. Mission Moments and More are updated monthly, highlighting featured content on various giving opportunities. You can explore them [here](#).

### IMPACT STORIES

Share the powerful stories of hope, restoration, and the profound impact of generosity. These articles offer an accessible way to communicate the mission of the Church, inspiring others with easy-to-read and shareable content. View these stories [here](#).



## PROMOTIONAL AND PLANNING RESOURCES

Simplify your planning and promotion for each Special Sunday with these resources. Access prewritten content, posters, graphics, and more. Utilize the comprehensive planning calendar for the entire year or find fresh ideas in our resource guides.

## CHURCHWIDE SPECIAL SUNDAYS WITH AN OFFERING

Special Sundays are set aside each year to deepen the connection between the local church and ministries on a global scale. Individuals and congregations are encouraged to support the churches' collective efforts through an offering. We invite you to give through your local church or online, helping us continue this vital work together.

1

### HUMAN RELATIONS DAY (January)

Raises awareness and support to strengthen human relations through community and youth outreach. Ministries supported on this Sunday include Community Developers, United Methodist Voluntary Services and Youth Offender Rehabilitation Programs.

2

### UMCOR SUNDAY (March)

Raises awareness and support for the ministry of the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). United Methodist cover the operational cost of UMCOR through this Special Sunday to ensure 100% of any donations for specific project or missionary will go towards that project and not administrative cost. This allows UMCOR to focus on immediate relief and recovery to those in need.

3

### UNITED METHODIST STUDENT DAY (May)

Raises awareness and support for over seventy scholarships for undergraduate, graduate, or doctoral United Methodist students. Every dollar received assist in educating a new generation of principled Christian leaders for the church and the world.

4

### NATIVE AMERICAN MINISTRIES SUNDAY (April/May)

Raises awareness and support to affirm Native American people, their languages, cultures, and gifts to the church and the world. Half of the donations collected remain in the Annual Conference to develop and strengthen ministries through the local Committee on Native American Ministries (CONAM). The remaining dollars support scholarships and vital ministries to develop new programs.

5

### PEACE WITH JUSTICE SUNDAY (May/June)

Raises awareness and support for peace-related ministries. Half of the donations collected remain in each Annual Conference to strengthen local social justice ministries and fund a local peace with justice coordinator. The remaining dollars fund three grants that support ethnic/minority local church ministries and are made available to United Methodist congregations and organizations.

6

### WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY (October)

Raises awareness and support in the journey of our inclusive and diverse connection. The foundation for this Sunday is Holy Communion to remind us of our unity in Jesus Christ. Ministries supported on this Sunday include scholarships, grants, mentoring and training for leadership development.

# ANNUAL CONFERENCE SPECIAL SUNDAYS WITH AN OFFERING

Five Special Sundays are observed annually on dates determined by local Annual Conferences that collect a special offering to fund local ministries. Donations received for these Sunday's are governed by local Annual Conferences.

- 1 CHRISTIAN EDUCATION SUNDAY**  
Raises awareness and support to nurture growth and learning as disciples of Jesus Christ for all stages of life. Ministries on these Sundays support congregations and districts in providing educational and small-group ministries, developing gifts and strengths to teach, motivate and lead service in the church, the community and the world.
- 2 DISABILITY AWARENESS SUNDAY**  
Raises awareness and support to fully affirm and incorporate people with disabilities in the congregation and the community. Ministries on these Sundays in many cases support improvements to churches architectural and attitudinal accessibility. This Sunday helps change attitudes, priorities and practices.
- 3 GOLDEN CROSS SUNDAY**  
Raises awareness and support for health and welfare ministries for individuals of all ages and stages of life within the conference. Ministries on these Sundays support health and welfare ministries such as hospitals, community-service organizations, retirement communities, and agencies that serve persons with disabilities, children, youth and families.
- 4 RURAL LIFE SUNDAY**  
Raises awareness and support of the rural heritage of The United Methodist Church by affirming those who work with and on the land in rural and urban communities. We acknowledge the ongoing crisis of poor housing, health facilities and education occurring in rural areas globally. Ministries on this Sunday strengthen and nurture outreach and witness of congregations in rural areas
- 5 VOLUNTEERS IN MISSION SUNDAY**  
Raises awareness and support for the United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM) program. UMVIM is designed to provide an official channel to offer guidance and training for short-term mission. It is funded by Conferences and organized by jurisdiction.

## CHURCHWIDE AWARENESS SPECIAL SUNDAYS

Five Special Sundays are observed annually throughout the year to recognize the discipleship of the local church. Awareness Sundays acknowledge the ministries that occur within each local church and support the local community. These Sundays do not have a special offering but commit a day to celebrate those who achieve this work.

- 1 HERITAGE SUNDAY (May)**  
Raises awareness and recognition of where the church has been, understand how it shapes us and learn from our history to move forward with a spirit of personal and social holiness. We set aside this day to remember our legacy as United Methodist. Heritage Sunday is generally celebrated on Aldersgate Sunday or the Sunday preceding that date.
- 2 LAITY SUNDAY (October)**  
Raises awareness for the work and mission of all laity — not only within the walls of the church but in everyday lives. We recognize all lay Christians are empowered by the Holy Spirit for ministry and equipped to make disciples of Jesus Christ in a world desperately in need of healing and wholeness. Laity Sunday is generally celebrated on the third Sunday in October.
- 3 ORGAN AND TISSUE DONOR SUNDAY (November)**  
Raises awareness for the life-giving benefits of organ and tissue donation and encourage all to become donors. United Methodist support health care for all, and believe that organ donation and transplantation is a gift that we can give back. Organ and Tissue Donor Sunday is generally celebrated on the second Sunday in November.

# 4

## **MEN'S MINISTRY SUNDAY**

Raises awareness for the achievements and ministry men provide within and beyond the local church. We lift up organized United Methodist Men units, as well as other places and organizations where men gather for fellowship, nurture, spiritual development, witness and outreach. It is observed on a day designated by the congregation.

# 5

## **WOMEN'S MINISTRY SUNDAY**

Raises awareness for the achievements and ministry women provide within and beyond the local church. We celebrate women's history and the ministry women have enhanced within the church. This includes agencies like United Women in Faith and the Status and Role of Women as well as other organizations where women serve. It is observed on a day designated by the congregation.

## **APPORTIONED FUNDS**

The United Methodist Church fulfills apportionment funds through a proportional giving system that allocates the churchwide budget across all conferences. Each conference's share is determined using a specific formula approved by that conference. Contributions to these funds are supported by every local church. There are seven recognized apportioned funds.

# 1

## **WORLD SERVICE FUND**

Provides basic financial support to general agencies to maintain the common vision, mission, and ministry of The United Methodist Church. The general agencies produce essential services and ministries beyond the scope of the local congregations and Annual Conferences.

# 2

## **AFRICA UNIVERSITY FUND**

Supports the general operating expenses of Africa University, located in Old Mutare, Zimbabwe, including faculty and staff salaries and vital infrastructure. Additional donations through World Service Special Gifts support scholarships and the endowment fund.

# 3

## **BLACK COLLEGE FUND**

Supports eleven HBCUs—the largest number of Black Colleges and universities receiving funding from any church body in the United States. UM-related HBCUs offer opportunities—regardless of race, class, gender or ethnic heritage.

# 4

## **THE EPISCOPAL FUND**

Funds our bishops' salaries, office and travel expenses, and pension and health-benefit coverage. Bishops are elected to serve the churches and conferences and their work is vital to speaking and leading the Church.

# 5

## **GENERAL ADMINISTRATION FUND**

Funds the administrative functions of General Conference as well as supports the work of The Connectional Table, The Judicial Council, pension and salary aid, General Council on Finance and Administration and General Commission on Archives and History.

# 6

## **INTERDENOMINATIONAL COOPERATION FUND**

Enables United Methodists to participate in ecumenical and interreligious organizations advocating for unity among the worldwide Christian church.

# 7

## **MINISTERIAL EDUCATION FUND**

Supports the recruitment and education of ordained and licensed ministers. Supports programs, scholarships and services at thirteen United Methodist seminaries, continuing education of ordained, licensed and diaconal ministers and courses of study.