**Releasing God’s Blessings | Stewardship Campaign**

**Timeline & Checklist**

*This timeline is based on a three-week campaign.*

**Summer 2022: August through early September-Recruit or gather existing Generosity/Stewardship Team**

* \_\_Recruit or gather a team to serve as the Stewardship & Generosity Team to plan, prepare for, and lead the “Releasing God’s Blessings” worship series and stewardship/generosity campaign. This team will also engage in follow up. You may want to include a member from your worship planning team, Sunday School, and Youth Group. The goal is to build excitement and energy throughout your entire congregation.
* \_\_Plan for this team to attend the 3-session ZOOM training: **September 15, 22 & 29, 7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.** [**https://www.gnjumc.org/leadership-academy/**](https://www.gnjumc.org/leadership-academy/)

**Four to eight weeks before the campaign**

* \_\_ Include a stewardship/generosity article in your church newsletter (template included on last page of this document)
* \_\_Stewardship/Generosity Team develop prayer team to be intentionally praying for the worship series and campaign.
* \_\_Plan what will work best for your congregation in terms of a celebration on Commitment Sunday. Depending on your congregation’s in-person practices, you may plan a celebratory coffee hour or lunch, and you may hold an online celebration as well.
* \_\_Share the “Releasing God’s Blessings Small Group” curriculum with small group leaders. If you don’t have small groups, recruit a leader(s) who will facilitate groups concurrently with the campaign and worship series.
  + \_\_Review your database or membership list and individual or family giving records to prepare for sending targeted campaign letters. Each congregation is in a different context. Talk with the campaign team or leadership team to decide how to approach sending the letters, email or postal mail, or a combination of both. At the top of each letter is a suggestion about who might receive that letter.
  + \_\_Have the Finance Secretary or other church leader complete the “Releasing God’s Blessings” Baseline Form which will provide a baseline for this year’s campaign.
  + \_\_ Consider printing banners or t-shirts with the Releasing God’s Blessings logo. Uprinting.com and Canva.com are two easy options for ordering print materials and apparel.

**One week before the campaign**

* \_\_Letter from Pastor and Stewardship /Team chair regarding Commitment Sunday and Celebration Gathering, and Pledge/Commitment/Estimate of Giving card to be returned on Commitment Sunday or before (sample letter below). \*\*
* \_\_Share that the “Releasing God’s Blessings” Worship Series and Small Groups begin next week.

**During the campaign**

* \_\_Each week include a “Cheerful Giver-Minute of Meaning” in the service. A generous person in the congregation speaks about why they give and what the congregation’s ministry and missions means to them.
* Stewardship/Mission article in newsletter or e-newsletter
* \_\_If possible, show videos each week in worship that shows how ministry/mission is being carried out through the congregation.
* \_\_ Another Option is “Cardboard or Tag Board Testimonies” (instructions in Preaching Resources document, Week 2)
* \_\_Plan for how Pledge/Commitment/Estimate of Giving cards will be received. Typically, this would be done during worship by inviting individuals and families to bring their cards forward and place them in a basket or bowl, then offer a prayer of dedication for the commitment made and ministry that will happen because of these commitments. Because worship looks very different in every congregation you will need to plan for how the cards will be received and how they will be dedicated. Presenting and dedicating the cards can be a deeply spiritual moment in the service, both for in-person worship and online worship. BE CREATIVE! What will stir joy?

*Idea: Have a large bundle of helium balloons with a light basket tied to it, tied to communion rail, or otherwise weighed down. People place their cards in the basket and as prayed for, it is released with a piece of kite string tied to it. Let it float above the communion rail for the remainder of the worship service. Please note it is illegal in New Jersey to release balloons into the air outside.*

* \_\_Ask leadership of the church to agree to make a proportional/percentage giving commitment to the church and, as able, to step up their percentage unless already tithing (it does not matter what the proportion/percentage is, if it is a proportion/percentage).

**Week 1 of Releasing God’s Blessings worship series (two weeks before Commitment Sunday)**

* \_\_Promote the beginning of the Releasing God’s Blessings
* \_\_Small groups begin
* \_\_Preach: A Legacy of Blessings - “I Know Who I Am”

**Week 2 of Releasing God’s Blessings worship series (one week before Commitment Sunday)**

* \_\_Guest Preacher in worship this Sunday or next Sunday (Commitment Sunday)
* \_\_Small groups continue
* \_\_Send targeted letters to: Newcomers, Top Givers, Non-Pledging Households, Pledge Increase, (Include Pledge/Commitment/Estimate of Giving Card)
* \_\_Preach: Blessed People Bless Others - The Grace of Increase
* \_\_Stewardship Callers make personal contact with all members of the church, inviting them to be in worship on Commitment Sunday with their Pledge/Commitment/Estimate of Giving cards.

**Week 3 of Releasing God’s Blessings worship series (Commitment Sunday)**

* \_\_During the week, finish any details for the Celebration
* \_\_Preach: Overflowing Blessings
* \_\_Small groups meet for their final session. If new groups have started for the Releasing God’s Blessings campaign, be sure they discuss the possibility of continuing as a group and what topic they want to address as a group.

**Month following the campaign**

* \_\_Contact those who have not made a commitment either by letter or email
* \_\_Regularly report on campaign progress to congregation (in worship bulletin, newsletter, graphic display)
* \_\_Stewardship/Mission article in Newsletter
* \_\_Track giving weekly, monthly, and yearly so you can compare with the past and Baseline Form
* \_\_IMPORTANT: Send thank you notes to those making a commitment to the campaign

**\*\*Email or mail template for one week before beginning Releasing God’s Blessings (four weeks before Commitment Sunday)**

*And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times,*

*having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. 2 Corinthians 9:8*

Dear Church Family,

We are writing to you during what has been another year full of challenges. Yet as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (congregation’s name) we celebrate that even in the midst of challenge our congregation has been able to gather, in-person and online, and “release God’s blessings” through: (list several bullet points that lift up ways your ministry has blessed the community or things you celebrate as a congregation)

On Sunday, (date) we begin a special worship series and generosity campaign called, “Releasing God’s Blessings.” Over the next three weeks, we will walk through Paul’s guidance on generosity found in 2 Corinthians 9. We will focus on what it means to live as a disciple of Jesus Christ that receives abundantly and then shares abundantly as cheerful givers.

Join us as we look at:

Week 1: **A Legacy of Blessings - “I Know Who I Am”**

Through Jesus’ gift of salvation, we are called to *live into our legacy* of giving generously of the grace we have received.

Week 2: **Blessed People Bless Others - The Grace of Increase**

All that we are and all that we have comes from God. We are stewards through whom God is blessing the world.

Week 3: **Overflowing Blessings (Commitment Sunday)**

When you release the blessings, you have been given, they will overflow into the world in indescribable ways.

Small groups are forming so that you can take this worship experience even deeper and find powerful applications for your life. Our goal is to get the entire congregation to celebrate God’s blessings so that we can release and share them in our community. To participate in a small group (INCLUDE INSTRUCTIONS FOR TIME/DAY/LOCATION or CONTACT PERSON for Small Groups).

In just over three weeks, we will gather for worship and a commitment celebration on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (INSERT DATE).

Your presence is important as our congregation plans for our ministry and missions to bless many. (Here you will need to customize how your congregation is gathering for worship and what your celebration will look like; it may be an online gathering).

Join us as we draw from God’s indescribable gift (2 Corinthians 9:15)!

Faithfully,   
Pastor and Finance Chair