Q3 2026 Stewardship Arc — Elder One-Pager

> **Seasonal document.** This one-pager serves Q3 2026 (July–September). After September 30, 2026, archive it out of the plan; seasonal documents do not remain in the plan past their season.

Q3 2026 Stewardship Arc — Elder Board One-Pager

For discussion at the next Elder Tuesday meeting. Drafted by Anton Brown, Senior Pastor — May 4, 2026 (Revision 3, calibrated to monthly dashboards Jan 2025 – Mar 2026 and the March 2026 Attendance Trend Report).

What I am asking the elders to do

Approve a four-week September stewardship arc preached from 2 Corinthians 8-9, paired with BFG study, congregational prayer, ministry updates, and FY27 estimate-of-giving cards — sequenced to land before the October 25, 2026 congregational vote on the FY27 budget.

Why now — what the data actually says

Indicator	Value

2025 Total Tithes & Offerings	$204,332
2025 Avg Per Capita Giving (highest since 2022)	$67.01 (+11% vs 2024)
2025 Avg Weekly Worship Attendance	63.3
2025 attenders/members lost (15 families)	29 people
FY26 budgeted income	$259,154 (+27% vs 2025 actual)
FY26 YTD income through Apr 17	$57,783 (22.3% at 29% of year)
Q1 2026 Budget+Funds (highest in recent history)	$48,327
Jan 2026 Per Capita ($97.35 — highest in 5 years)	Strong
Jan 2026 Baptisms	4 (more than all of 2025)

2025 was a hard year. We lost 29 people across fifteen families. Worship attendance, BFG enrollment, and total dollar giving all declined. And — those who stayed gave more sacrificially: per capita giving rose 11% to $67.01, the highest figure since 2022. Q1 2026 produced the strongest first quarter on record for Budget+Funds giving ($48,327). EQUIP attendance is at a five-year high. January 2026 saw four baptisms — more than all of 2025.

The 'gap' against the FY26 budget exists because FY26 was set 27% above 2025 actuals. That is not a generosity failure; that is an aggressive budget meeting a stabilizing reality. The September arc is not about plugging that gap. It is about inviting the congregation to fund the FY27 priorities the August Summit will name, anchored on a realistic baseline.

How the arc fits Mayflower's plan

- The arc preaches through a New Testament book passage — directly faithful to Mission #1 of the Two-Page Plan: faithful expository preaching of whole books of the Bible. It treats 2 Corinthians 8-9 as a brief expository unit; it does not displace the regular preaching schedule.
- It tracks four of the Five Priority Ministries (Word, Lord's Day, Prayer, Membership/Shepherding) and uses Disciple-Making Pathways via paired BFG study.
- It is timed to the FY27 planning cycle: BoF builds the FY27 budget in July; the August Summit names FY27 priorities; the September arc gives those priorities a stewardship voice; the October 25 congregational meeting approves the FY27 budget; FY27 begins January 1, 2027.

What I will need from the Elder Board

Ask	Detail	Form
Approve the arc	Confirm 2 Corinthians 8-9 as the September 2026 preaching text and the September 6-27 timing.	Vote at Tuesday Elder Meeting
Affirm the lay testimony plan	Approve a single congregational testimony on God's providence for Week 1 (not on giving levels).	Pre-approve speaker
Greenlight estimate-of-giving cards	Pastoral, non-binding, used for planning. Card text reviewed by elders.	Approve template
Lend voice	Each elder names FY27 stewardship in pastoral conversations between now and Sept 27, especially in shepherding teams.	Ongoing through the arc
Set the FY27 budget assumption realistically	Direct BoF to anchor FY27 income on 2025 actuals (Total Tithes & Offerings $204,332) plus a defensible growth assumption — not on the FY26 number we are running 27% behind.	Standing direction to BoF
Bind the BoF July build to the plan	Each requested FY27 budget line ties to a goal area on the Annual Goals Template, so the September arc speaks about funded priorities with specificity.	Standing direction to BoF

Tone and posture

The arc is gospel-centered, not guilt-driven, and not anxious. The data does not warrant anxiety. The Macedonians in 2 Cor 8 give 'beyond their ability' from the joy of grace; Mayflower in 2025 has, in our own way, done the same. The September arc names that, gives thanks for it, and invites the congregation to walk into FY27 with confidence in God's provision.

Q3 2026 Stewardship Arc — Detailed Plan

The four-week September arc, supporting elements, and timing. Aligned to the Mayflower Two-Page Plan, Five Priority Ministries, and the FY27 budget approval cycle.

Why 2 Corinthians 8-9

2 Corinthians 8-9 is the New Testament's most concentrated treatment of giving. It is gospel-rooted (8:9), grace-named (8:1, 8:7, 9:14), free of compulsion (9:7), and ends in thanksgiving and prayer rather than budget rhetoric (9:12-15). For a Reformed Baptist congregation that values expository preaching and confessional clarity, it is the right text. It also matches Mayflower's actual moment: a congregation grieving real losses while quietly demonstrating sacrificial generosity. The Macedonian church is the closest biblical analogue we have.

The Four-Week Arc

Week	Text + Theme	Sermon Center	Supporting Element
Week 1 — Sept 6	The God Who Provides — 2 Cor 8:1-9	The Macedonians' joyful generosity flows from the gospel: 'though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor.' Set the foundation: stewardship is gospel response. Frame: God has been faithful to Mayflower across a year of loss; we steward into His provision.	Brief congregational testimony (Week 1) on God's providence. Bulletin insert: Mayflower's purpose statement and a one-paragraph FY27 invitation.
Week 2 — Sept 13	Excelling in This Grace — 2 Cor 8:7-15	Generosity is named alongside faith, knowledge, earnestness, and love as a grace to grow in. Highlight that 2025 per capita giving rose 11% — those who stayed gave more sacrificially. Invite the whole congregation into that grace.	Pre-service prayer for stewardship; BFG questions distributed; Director of Biblical Counseling available for budget-related counsel.

Week 3 — Sept 20	Sowing and Reaping — 2 Cor 9:6-11	Cheerful giving, not under compulsion. Tie to specific FY27 priorities the Summit will have named: visitor retention, BFG expansion, EQUIP momentum, missions. Show what gifts fund, concretely.	Five-minute ministry update (one Priority Ministry leader). Lead with what God has done — the four January baptisms, the EQUIP momentum, the strongest Q1 giving in recent history.
Week 4 — Sept 27	Thanksgiving That Overflows — 2 Cor 9:12-15	The aim of generosity is overflowing thanksgiving and prayer. Close with the FY27 invitation: estimate-of-giving cards, recurring-giving sign-up, planned-giving conversations.	FY27 estimate-of-giving cards distributed; QR code to set up Planning Center recurring giving; pastoral-conversation sign-ups.

Supporting Elements

The preaching is the central act. These elements support it without making the arc feel like a stewardship campaign rather than a sermon series.

Element	Description	Owner
BFG curriculum	4-week study guide on 2 Cor 8-9 paired with the sermon series. EQUIP team prepares; BFG leaders use in their groups during the arc.	EQUIP Discipleship Leader / BFG Leaders
Bulletin inserts	Each Sunday: Week 1: purpose; Week 2: 2025 per capita generosity; Week 3: priority ministries funded; Week 4: how to give & estimate-of-giving card.	Church Secretary
Congregational prayer	Before and during the arc, name FY27 stewardship in pastoral prayer. A church-wide prayer gathering Sunday Sept 13 evening.	Prayer Team Leader
Lay testimony	One brief congregational witness (Week 1) on how God has provided. A providence testimony, not a giving testimony. Vetted by elders.	Senior Pastor
Ministry update	Five-minute Sunday-morning update (Week 3). Lead with God's work — baptisms, EQUIP momentum, Q1 2026 generosity — then point to FY27 priorities.	Senior Pastor / chosen ministry leader

Estimate-of-giving cards	Pastoral, non-binding, used for planning. Distributed Week 4 with a clear two-week return window.	Financial Secretary
Recurring giving lift	Planning Center QR code on every bulletin and screen for two months. Goal: lift recurring giving share by 10 percentage points.	Treasurer / Comms
Pastoral conversation availability	Sign-up sheet for any household wanting to talk through stewardship questions.	Senior Pastor / Director of Biblical Counseling

Timing — How September Fits the FY27 Planning Cycle

Mayflower's fiscal year runs January 1 to December 31. The arc lands during the FY27 planning cycle. FY27 itself begins January 1, 2027.

- July 2026 (FY26 Q3): BoF opens FY27 budget build with a realistic income baseline anchored on 2025 actuals.
- August 2026: Leadership Summit produces FY27 Two-Page Plan (refreshed) and FY27 Annual Goals.
- Early September 2026: Officer elections, leadership handoff. Plan owners confirmed.
- September 6-27, 2026: The four-week arc.
- Early October 2026: Estimate-of-giving cards returned; staff and BoF revise FY27 budget assumptions if warranted.
- October 25, 2026: Quarterly congregational meeting approves FY27 budget.
- January 1, 2027: FY27 begins.

Targets — What 'Faithful and Effective' Looks Like

The aim is not a fundraising number. The aim is a faithful preaching of the text, a clear FY27 invitation, and the kind of cheerful response 2 Cor 9:7 names. That said, we should know what we are watching.

- Recurring-giving share: lift by ten percentage points by November 1, 2026. Current state to be measured before the arc begins.
- FY27 estimate-of-giving response: at least 60% of giving households return a card within two weeks of Week 4.
- Average September 2026 weekly giving: tracking against — not necessarily ahead of — the FY27 budgeted weekly target.
- BFG participation: at least 70% of regularly-attending members in a BFG running the parallel 2 Cor 8-9 study (March 2026 BFG/Bible Study attendance was 33; the goal is to lift further into the fall).
- Pastoral conversation requests: any number is good. This indicates trust.

What Could Go Wrong — and How We Avoid It

- Anxiety bleeds in. — 2025 was hard. If the elder team is anxious about losses, the congregation will hear it in the preaching. Discipline ourselves toward gratitude and gospel confidence; that is what 2 Cor 8-9 teaches and what the data permits.
- Numbers eclipse the text. — Resist the urge to show the FY26 budget gap. The Week 3 ministry update should focus on what God has done — baptisms, EQUIP, Q1 generosity — not on what is missing.
- Cards feel like contracts. — Estimate-of-giving cards are pastoral and non-binding. Use that language explicitly on the card.
- BFGs lag. — If BFG leaders cannot turn the parallel study around in time, simplify to a single discussion guide for use in any small group setting.
- Lay testimony goes off-script. — Vet the testimony in advance. Frame it as 'how God provided,' not 'why I give to Mayflower.'

Source materials: Monthly dashboards Jan 2025 – Mar 2026; 2025 Annual Dashboard Report; March 2026 Attendance Trend Report; Two-Page Plan (adopted May 30, 2026); FY26 Stabilization Inventory (May 2026); QuickBooks Budget vs. Actuals through April 17, 2026; Donations export Jan 18 – May 3, 2026.

Revision history: Rev. 3 (May 4, 2026) — recalibrated 'Why now' against the full monthly dashboard set. Earlier revisions framed the giving picture as 'meaningfully behind pace.' That framing was directionally correct but missed the context: the gap is largely a budget-design gap (FY26 set 27% above 2025 actuals), and Q1 2026 is the strongest first quarter on record. The recalibrated tone is grateful and confident rather than anxious — matching what the data warrants.

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