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for

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—Pope Leo XIV



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DIOCESE OF
FARGO
God's Gift Appeal 2026

Leadership Manual

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The Office of Development

Contact Information:

Steve Schons Stewardship & Development Director • 701-356-7926 • steve.schons@fargodiocese.org

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Case for Support & Operating Expenses

The goal of **\$3,886,500** provides partial funding/support for the following:

Diocesan Support: **\$1,099,103**

The parishes of our Diocese are assisted and supported by many diocesan offices. Services that one parish could not provide on its own, are made possible with help from diocesan programs and offices.

- Parish Services Department
- Human Resources
- Stewardship & Development
- Finance Office
- Technology

Seminary/Clergy Support: **\$998,053**

Your commitment to the Annual God's Gift Appeal helps to ensure the formation of the next generation of priests and leaders of our Diocese.

- Vocations Office
- Seminarian Education
- Permanent Diaconate
- Continuing education for priests
- Spiritual direction for priests

Proclaiming the Gospel: **\$812,667**

With your generous gift, the living Word of Christ is spread through digital and print communication. Evangelization through diverse ministry offices is sustained and advanced.

- Communications & New Earth
- Catholic University
- USCCB & Canon 1271
- North Dakota Catholic Conference
- Rural life Conference/Program

Evangelization & Family Faith Formation: **\$747,762**

Your gift to the annual God's Gift Appeal helps guarantee our faith is passed on to future generations. The Diocese promotes the handing down of our faith to future generations by assisting in the faith formation of all ages, training and forming catechetical leaders and catechists, and our Catholic schools.

- CEF – Adult Catechesis & Evangelization
- CEF – Youth Discipleship
- CEF – Catholic Schools subsidy
- Marriage Tribunal

**CEF = Catholic Education and Formation*

Caring for the Poor & Vulnerable: **\$228,915**

The poor, the marginalized, the elderly and the unborn benefit from your gift to the Annual Appeal. God's Gift Appeal helps those who need our help the most.

- Catholic Charities ND
- Hispanic Ministry
- Respect Life Office
- Catholic Relief Services

Operating Income

- God's Gift Appeal
- Endowment Fund Earnings
- Programming Donations/Contributions
- Grants



Parish Goal

Information regarding parish goals can be found online at:
www.fargodiocese.org/godsgiftappeal under Resources.

Here you will also find:

- The **Parish Goals** for the 2026 GGA campaign
- Learn more information about the **GGA formula**
- View the **Weekly Status** for each parish. The status is updated Fridays throughout the campaign.

Gift of Stock and Securities

There are many ways to make a gift in support of the Diocese of Fargo. A gift of stock and securities can benefit you in two ways: you may receive a charitable income tax deduction for the full fair market value of the securities, while avoiding capital gains taxes on appreciated stock.

In order to make a gift of securities, please alert us in advance.

Gifts cannot be properly acknowledged or designated without advance notice of who is making the gift, its designation, and the number of shares being transferred.

Upon the transfer of the securities, or if you broker has any questions, please phone Scott Hoselton in the Finance Office at 701-356-7930 or send a letter to the Diocese of Fargo, 5201 Bishops Blvd. S, Suite A, Fargo, ND 58104-7605, Attn: Scott Hoselton, along with the following information:

- Your name
- Your address
- Your parish
- The number of shares and the name of the securities delivered
- Originating Broker
- God's Gift Appeal

If you prefer instead, you may email the information to scott.hoselton@fargodiocese.org. This will ensure that you will receive proper credit and an acknowledgment letter stating the market value of your donation.

- **Gifts from the Harvest/Livestock**

For more information visit cdfnd.org/giftofcrops to download the Gifts from the Harvest form.

- **Gifts from Retirement Accounts**

An IRA owner, age 70 ½ or older, can directly transfer up to \$111,000 in 2026 to an eligible charity tax-free. This option can be used for distributions from IRAs, regardless of whether the owners itemize their deductions. To qualify, funds must be transferred directly by the IRA trustee to God's Gift Appeal. Distributed amount may be excluded from the IRA's income, resulting in lower taxable income for the IRA holder.

- **Donor Advised Funds**

Individuals that have a donor advised fund can direct donations to God's Gift Appeal, as it is a charitable entity.

2026 Materials

The following materials will be mailed to parishes by January 30, 2026.

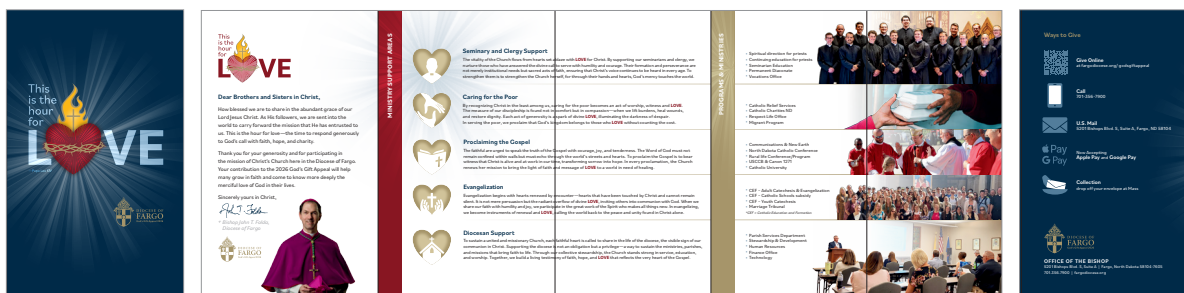
If additional materials are needed please contact our office at 701-356-7928.

- **God's Gift Appeal DVD** – A DVD will be available for each parish or you can visit www.fargodiocese.org/godsgiftappeal to download the 2026 GGA video and play it via your laptop to avoid setting up a DVD player.
- **Posters and Goal Posters** – Large and small versions
- **In-Pew Envelopes**
- **Tyvek envelopes**

Materials available on the website

- 2026 GGA logo
- Bulletin Inserts
- Scripts for Lay Volunteers and Pastors
- Sample petitions
- Sample Lay Witness Talk
- Sample Pastor Letters

Please visit www.fargodiocese.org/godsgiftappeal to download all materials for God's Gift Appeal.



2026 Brochures



2026 Goal posters

2026 Posters

Drop off this envelope at your Parish or add a stamp and place in your mailbox.

THANK YOU for YOUR SUPPORT.

Your contribution to this year's Annual Appeal supports the many ministries of the Diocese of Fargo.

GOD'S GIFT APPEAL
Diocese of Fargo
5001 Broadway Blvd., Suite A
Fargo, North Dakota 58104-7005

PLEASE STAMP HERE

LEVELS OF GIVING Please make checks payable to God's Gift Appeal

1. PRAYERFULLY CONSIDER YOUR GIFT

Suggested	Monthly payments	Daily Sacrifice
\$50.00	\$5.00	\$5.00
\$100.00	\$10.00	\$10.00
\$250.00	\$25.00	\$25.00
\$500.00	\$50.00	\$50.00
\$1,000.00	\$100.00	\$100.00

2. CHOOSE YOUR PAYMENT METHOD

☐ Personal Check (endowed)
☐ Credit Card
☐ Please contact me regarding having a frequent/variable payment.
Please print name: _____

3. PLEASE ACCEPT MY GIFT OF:

My Total Pledge: \$ _____
Account Enclosed: \$ _____
Balance Due: \$ _____

4. SEND CARD INFORMATION:

Cardholder's Name: _____
Cardholder's Address: _____
Cardholder's City: _____
Cardholder's State: _____
Cardholder's Zip: _____
Cardholder's Phone: _____
Cardholder's Email: _____

5. MAKE A GIFT ONLINE:

www.fargodiocese.org/godsgiftappeal

THANK YOU for YOUR GIFT!

2026 In-pew envelopes

2026 Annual Appeal Timeline

January-February 2026	
1/26-1/30	Appeal materials shipped to parishes ¹
2/7-2/8	Kickoff Weekend – Pastor or Celebrant to speak at all Masses ²
2/14-2/15	Education Weekend – Lay Leader(s) to speak at all Masses
2/16-2/20	Diocesan-wide GGA mailing to every registered household
2/21-2/22	Commitment Weekend – Pastor or Celebrant to speak at all Masses

¹ Includes in-pew envelopes, posters, brochures, DVD, and return envelopes to mail in gifts to our office.

² Please use Kickoff Weekend as an opportunity to announce the Appeal, show the DVD and encourage all to participate in the Annual Appeal.

March 2026	
From the Pulpit, Bulletin Announcement, Website or other forms of regular communication to your parishioners, thank your donors for their gifts and encourage those who have not yet made a gift to please consider supporting the 2026 God's Gift Appeal.	
3/6	Deadline for Stewardship & Development Office to receive Pastor's follow-up letter. ³
3/23-3/27	Diocese sends Pastor's follow-up letter to all non-contributors.

³ Letter samples at www.fargodiocese.org/godsgiftappeal

April 2026	
4/5	Easter Sunday

May 2026	
5/4-5/8	Diocese sends Bishop's follow-up letter to all non-contributors.

November 2026	
11/9-11/13	Follow-up mailing

*A letter will be sent to all those who contributed one-time at the beginning of the appeal and to those who have not yet contributed.

Tips for a Successful Appeal

An effective presentation can contribute greatly to the success of a new program or the launch of a campaign such as the *Diocese of Fargo God's Gift Appeal*. It is an opportunity to shed light and share timely information about our Church's ministries and services to our faith communities, to relay updates or stories or offer an inspiring message, to generate parish community support, and to acquire new donors or volunteers.

As you prepare to present information about the 2026 God's Gift Appeal to your parish community, below are tips that may be useful in delivering your presentation:

- **Be prepared** and have a good understanding of how the gifts to the GGA benefit the many ministries it supports.
- Show **strong, active leadership** and involvement of the pastor.
- Recruit an **effective GGA leadership committee**.
- **Strive for high participation** by pointing out that every person is asked to respond to the appeal.
- Suggest a **specific, increased gift**. Tithing guideline is 5% to Parish, 1% to Diocese, and 4% to other charities.
- **Emphasize pledges** rather than one-time gifts.
- Use and prominently **display publicity materials**.
- **Conduct a follow-up effort** and include components designed to reach a high level of participation.
- **Education and communication!** When GGA volunteers understand the importance for all of the vital programs made possible by the GGA and share this information with parishioners, the appeal is sure to be successful.
- **Show gratitude!** We cannot say thank you enough to those who support the GGA. Look for opportunities to thank them again. Remember that the success of every future appeal depends on this simple yet powerful gesture.
- **Emphasize** that the God's Gift Appeal DVD (Bishop Folda's message) can be viewed again at <http://www.fargodiocese.org/godsgiftappeal>.

Offer to be available for questions.



Kickoff Weekend: February 7-8, 2026

Steps to ensure a successful Kickoff Weekend

1. Display God's Gift Appeal posters at the entrance of your parish
2. Include Bulletin Announcements prior and on launch of the Appeal
3. Include God's Gift Appeal materials at the back of your parish:
Brochures, In-Pew Envelopes

Steps for a successful collection:

1. Please place in-pew envelopes in an area easily accessible to parishioners, i.e. pews, vestibule, etc. Ensure that ushers refill these spots with in-pew envelopes before each Mass.
2. Conduct the in-pew talk after the homily. Please do not leave the talk for the end as some people may have to leave Mass early.
3. Your message should be personalized and engaging. The more effectively you connect the Appeal with a message that will resonate with your parishioners, the more likely they will respond. Lay witness presentations can be used to give firsthand stewardship experiences and explain the importance of the programs funded by the appeal. This designated weekend also educates unregistered churchgoers, who have not received the Bishop's mailing about God's Gift Appeal.

Presentation of the Video

The video you have just seen shares the impact of your gift. Now more than ever, your support is needed to fulfill the mission of the Church within our thirty counties.

Guide Parishioners through Gift/Pledge Process

1. Parishioners may give via the in-pew envelopes provided to the parish. Donors may make a one-time gift or a pledge (for which they will receive monthly reminder statements). In-pew envelopes should be collected by the parish and sent to the diocese.
2. Parishioners are encouraged to give online at: www.fargodiocese.org/godsgiftappeal. There they may select to make a gift or pledge. *The parish listed on your pledge card that you received in the mail will receive the credit for your contribution.* If this parish is incorrect, please call 701-356-7925 to update your records.



Pastor/Parish Resources

Please include Appeal Progress Updates regularly in your parish bulletin to encourage participation. We encourage you to use the below sample bulletin announcements in your parish bulletin(s).

2026 God's Gift Appeal Progress

The 2026 God's Gift Appeal is well underway. We have \$(*Pledge Amount*) already pledged. This is approximately _____% of our goal of \$(*Parish Goal*). The outpouring of support from many parishioners like you helps sustain the important ministries across the Diocese of Fargo. If you have not yet given, please pick up a pledge card at the back of the church or visit www.fargodiocese.org/godsgiftappeal. Thank you for your prayers and support.

Commitment Weekend

This upcoming weekend will be Commitment Weekend at our parish. (*Parish Name*) has received \$(*Pledge Amount*) in pledges. Thank you to those parishioners who have already made their gift to the 2026 God's Gift Appeal.

Will you join your fellow parishioners in supporting this effort that strengthens many important programs and ministries across the Diocese of Fargo?

Our goal, \$(*Parish Goal*), can only be achieved through **YOUR** generosity!

If you have not yet made a gift, there will be pledge envelopes available in the pew and in the back of the church, or you can visit www.fargodiocese.org/godsgiftappeal.

Your gift will truly make a difference. Thank you for your prayers and support.

Goal Met

Thank you to all those who have helped our parish, (*Parish Name*), reach our 2026 God's Gift Appeal goal of \$(*Parish Goal*). We have received \$(*Pledge Amount*) in pledges from (*number of families*) families and have achieved approximately _____% of our goal.

If you have yet to give, please pick up an in-pew envelope at the back of the church or visit www.fargodiocese.org/godsgiftappeal. Thank you for your prayers and support. Your generosity is greatly appreciated!

Reports

The Diocese of Fargo, www.fargodiocese.org/weeklystatus, posts a Weekly Status Report, which is updated on Fridays. Reports will include the following information:

- Number of Households
- Number of Donors
- % of Participation
- Amount Pledged
- Outstanding Pledge Balance
- Total Gift Amount Received
- Parish Goal
- Over/Under Goal
- % to Goal

Parish Leadership Roles

Pastor

The Pastor provides leadership, expertise, direction and oversight to the appeal, and is essential to the success of the God's Gift Appeal at the parish.

- Introduces and endorses the video message during Kick-off Weekend or Education Weekend and instructs other celebrants to do the same.
- Instructs and assures that the methods to conduct the campaign are fully implemented.
- Recruitment of a lay speaker(s) for Education Weekend.
- Include petition prayers at Mass for the success of God's Gift Appeal.
- Encourage all parishioners to consider a generous gift in gratitude for all that the Lord has given them.
- Encourage the use of the pre-printed pledge card and response envelopes.
- Be familiar with ministries and programs that benefit from God's Gift Appeal.
- Provide timely updates during the active phase of the Appeal, from the pulpit and weekly bulletin.

Pastor Follow-Up Techniques

1. However possible, each parish is encouraged to conduct its own follow-up. God's Gift Appeal statistics prove that a letter, visit, or call from a member of the parish, especially the pastor, is more effective than the follow-up conducted by the Development Office.
2. Pastors send out at least one follow-up letter to parishioners with regards to the Appeal. There is a sample letter on the following page or you can create your own letter. Please send your follow-up letter to the Stewardship and Development Office by so it is received by March 14.

The more effectively you connect the Appeal with a message that will resonate with your parishioners, the more likely they will respond.

The diocese will send the Pastor's follow-up letter to all non-contributors.

Parish Secretary/Lay Leadership

- Assist the pastor with rollout and appeal timetable.
- Making sure the God's Gift Appeal video is shown on Kick-off or Education Weekend.
- Making the Lay Speaker pulpit presentation, if requested by the pastor.
Lay testimony is very effective.
- Encourage parishioners to participate in the God's Gift Appeal.
- As needed, coordinate weekly meetings (does not have to be long) with your pastor, leader(s) and parish volunteers to ensure the successful completion of your God's Gift Appeal.

Pastor Sample Letter

(or you can write your own letter)

Dear <<Name(s)>>,

The God's Gift Appeal campaign is very active in all parishes throughout the Diocese of Fargo and I am happy to announce that _____% of [Parish Name]'s registered households have contributed thus far. This is an encouraging start and I am asking you to join your fellow parishioners in supporting this Appeal with a gift. We need your support because your contribution will make a difference!

"This is the Hour for Love" - Pope Leo XIV

Your gift to the God's Gift Appeal will provide funding for 47 Catholic outreach ministries that help people throughout our diocese. I am hopeful that every household in our parish will take an active role in this effort. Many of our <<Parish Name>> families and individuals have been able to make a more substantial gift by pledging over the next eight months. I am asking you to consider a contribution of 1% of your income to the God's Gift Appeal.

The success of the appeal depends on your active response in faith. As good stewards of God's gifts, we are called to return to Him a share of the gifts He has given us. Your gift will help those in need. Your stewardship is a witness of your faith in Him. Thank you for your compassion and generosity.

If my letter and your gift to the Appeal have crossed in the mail, I extend my sincere thanks and ask for your continued prayers for our parish and the diocese. Please encourage others to serve one another as good stewards and support our diocese.

Thank you for all that you continue to do for His Church. May God bless you and your loved ones and keep all in His care.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

SIGNATURE

Pastor

GGA Note: Pastors, after we receive your approval of this letter or your personal letter, we will do the rest. We will have it printed on your parish's letterhead with your signature, which we have on file, and sent to your parishioners' homes. ***Before March 6, mail, email or fax your letter to us. Fax #701-356-7998.***

Have questions? Call Steve Schons at 701-356-7926



FAQ

1. Who benefits from God's Gift Appeal?

Every parish and all people within them benefit from the God's Gift Appeal, as well as those who turn to the diocese for charitable and spiritual assistance.

2. What is the goal of the God's Gift Appeal?

The goal of the 2026 God's Gift Appeal is **\$3,886,500**, however, the needs of the diocese far exceed **\$3,886,500**. It will be to the benefit of the ministries that are supported by the God's Gift Appeal to be as successful as possible.

3. How can I make a gift to God's Gift Appeal?

- Donate online at fargodiocese.org/godsgiftappeal
- Make a credit/debit card gift over the phone at 701-356-7928.
- Complete and return the pledge card you received in the mail
- Fill out an in-pew card at your parish.
- Gifts of stock, IRA distributions, bequests and charitable annuities can be coordinated by contacting Steve Schons at 701-356-7926 or steve.schons@fargodiocese.org.
- Donating by Gifts from the Harvest using the form under cdfnd.org/gifttofcrops.

4. What payments methods can I use to make a gift?

Cash, check, money order, credit card, or electronic transfer from your bank account.

- U.S. Mail
- Collection Basket
- Online at www.fargodiocese.org/godsgiftappeal
- Call 701-356-7900

5. Where should they send their pledge/gift?

Your check should be made payable to:

God's Gift Appeal (or GGA)
5201 Bishops Blvd. S, Suite A
Fargo, ND 58104-7605

6. Can a donor make a matching gift?

If you work for an employer with a matching gift program, you may be able to double the value of your gift to the God's Gift Appeal. To find out if your employer has a matching gift program, contact your company's Human Resources office.

7. Can a donor make an IRA charitable gift?

Yes, IRA charitable gifts such as a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) gifts. If you have questions, please contact:

Steve Schons, CFRE
Development Director
701-356-7926 or
steve.schons@fargodiocese.org

8. How can I learn more or make a Planned Gift?

Contact Steve Schons at 701-356-7926 or steve.schons@fargodiocese.org

9. Can a donor make a stock gift?

Please see page 4 for detailed instructions.

