



Glossary of Terms and Frequently Asked Questions

Generosity is a matter of action, intentions, and heart. One way to describe it is the grateful outpouring of gifts to others, out of our love for God.

Stewardship

The devout investment or use of money, time, and ability. In biblical times, a steward supervised a household or an estate. Today, as God's children, we deem God the source of all we have, seek to hold it in trust for God, and desire to be "good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (1 Peter 4:10a) God calls us to be good stewards of all we are given.

Pledging

Stating in written form what you intend to donate in the coming fiscal year. It is not a legal contract, although a pledge is made in good faith. Pledges are made in advance of the fiscal year so that the Finance Committee can make responsible financial plans for the coming year and the congregation can adopt a sustainable budget.

Offering

The gifts brought to God beyond our tithes. An offering is not linked to what we earn—it is freely given by Christians based on their financial situation in life. An offering may be given to express thanks, give praise, or show our love for God.

Tithing

A biblical standard, one-tenth of one's annual income, given as a contribution to support the ministry and mission of the church. According to the scriptures, the purpose of tithing is to teach us to put God first in our lives. Jesus said, "*For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*" (Matthew 6:21)

Tithing is a habit that encourages us to focus on God as the source of our strength, rather than our own achievements or financial assets. Tithing leads to spiritual growth. Tithing also provides the financial assets for congregations to launch and expand a wide continuum of ministries. Together, we can accomplish far more than most of us can achieve individually.

Apportionments

One of the unique and defining factors of the United Methodist Church is that we are Connectional. One way we show this connection is through apportioned giving.

Apportioned giving is a term that describes how the money you give to your church each week is divided and distributed throughout the United Methodist Church. Through you and your support of apportioned giving, we can participate in the ministry and mission of the United Methodist Church both locally and around the world.

- 91.9% of your giving stays in your church supporting and upholding its ministry and mission.
- 2.6% of your giving goes to the General and Jurisdictional Church Funds to fund ministries in the Southeast and around the world through the General and Jurisdictional Church Funds.
- 6.5% of your giving goes to support the ministries of the North Georgia Conference

Frequently Asked Questions

1. I've never pledged to the church, nor have consistently given to the church. Is it a Christian mandate that I give?

As I shared in the giving letter, our church sets a **budget** (what we can do ministerially) primarily based on what is **pledged** (what people commit to giving to the church in the next year). We do also account for **non-pledged giving** in our budget and are grateful for those resources, but know not to expect it in the way we expect pledged contributions. Think about giving in these terms: if your local church has made an impact in your life spiritually and in the lives of the community around it, supporting the church financially gives it what it needs to expand and promote the work of presenting Jesus to the world.

Giving is a heart matter. Becoming more like Christ is the goal of the Christian life, who willingly laid His life down for us (John 10:11). Christ is the image of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15). The Father gave Christ on our behalf (John 3:16). Mature Christians love, forgive, serve, help, and yes, give! As United Methodists, when you join the church, we ask if you will support the church with your prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness. To answer the question, giving is a result of growth in one's spiritual faith. Giving, like living as a disciple of Jesus Christ, is a lifestyle! God does not force us to give, just like God does not force us to be in relationship with Him. However, when we say yes to following Christ, we begin to have His heart for matters, including in the area of finances. Christians gave to their church to support the mission of the church.

How much you consistently give is a decision between you and the Lord. You will often hear the word tithe, which is a Hebrew word and literally means "tenth". People of faith, dating back to the book of Genesis, gave a tenth of what they made to honor our relationship with God (Genesis 14:20), show gratitude for what God blessed them with (Deuteronomy 8:18), and support the work of those who watch over their souls spiritually (Leviticus 18:20-21). This tradition is kept by many Christians today. When Jesus came into the world, He acknowledged tithing (Matthew 23:23), however, some Christians gave much more than the tithe, out of the impact that the Lord had on their lives (Acts 2:44-45). We see that in some members of our church today, but believe that God honors all we choose to give!

Jesus said we should store our treasures in heaven where they can't be taken away (Matthew 6:19-21). Remember this always: your resources may leave your hand, but they never leave your life! When you give to a church that is producing disciples of Jesus, you are making an eternal investment! That's really good news!

2. I would love to give to the church, but I don't think we can honestly afford to give 10% of our income away. Should I wait until I can?

Great question! I would encourage you to intentionally pray with your family and decide on a percentage to give. Remember this: God does not need our money. But we are warned in the Scripture about the danger of loving money (1 Timothy 6:10). When we love God, we will use resources to honor God and bless others. When we love money, we will devalue relationships with others and find reasons to not give, regardless of whether we have a lot of money or not enough of it.

I can testify personally to not having a lot and hearing about giving or tithing. I began to give what I could consistently. I gave my time and talents to the church as well. I served in ministries and missions. I began to see the Lord increase me in many areas of my life, including my finances. I can truly say I haven't regretted or missed anything I gave to honor my relationship with the Lord. My piece of advice: start giving and witness how God partners with you in this area of your life!

3. Am I not loved by God when I don't give?

We don't give because we are trying to earn God's love...we have it already! We give because we **are** loved.

4. I struggle to give to the church because I don't agree with some of the things we do with the money or some of the organizations we must support with the money by being a part of the United Methodist Church. If I give to another entity or organization, am I not being a faithful Christian?

I want to answer this question in a few different ways. It is wonderful that you give to organizations and Christian ministries. It also is not the same as giving to the place that sows spiritually into your life. To withhold resources from where you're growing in your faith is comparable to expecting a chef to work for free that you depend on to cook for you consistently. This is a new way to communicate what the Apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians about supporting your spiritual leaders (1 Corinthians 9:7-12). These verses and many more share that Christians should sow into the place and people that watch over their souls. I encourage you to search the Scriptures on this particular issue!

One of our mandates as a church is to be missional. One of our ministry goals is to give more of our financial budget to missions. When we give to the organizations we want to support, we can collectively send a bigger message than we can individually. We let the organizations know that we are a body of Christians who live what we talk about. Also, we open the pathway for discipling opportunities to the people they serve! I would encourage you to join our Missions Committee and continue to advocate for our missions budget to increase. We truly can make a bigger impact together!

I also understand that by giving to our church, you are giving to the United Methodist Church, which means you are supporting an entity that you don't fully agree with. You may not fully agree with how the global church is managed. But you can trust that our church is managed well. Withholding your offering to our church may hurt them a little, but it hurts us tremendously. We will all stand before God one day and be judged by what we did (Acts 10:42). I want to encourage you to do what God challenges us all to do, which is to trust Him. Don't let what others may or may not be doing stop you from doing what you know the Lord wants you to do. Of course, my door is always open to talk more about this and pray with you.

5. Is 10% the limit to what I can give to the church? Do I give 10% based on take home or gross?

Once again, this is another question that's more about what's in your heart from communing with the Lord. One of the great things I get a chance to do is to tell people that we **are** hearing from God. There is no mandated limit to the amount you can give. It is truly better to give than it is to receive (Acts 20:35) when you realize your Father owns it all and you are a joint heir with Christ (Romans 8:17)!

6. Bottom line?

You should be giving in some way. But tithing is more of a spiritual topic than a financial one. It's not about the money—it's about the heart. It's about living with the attitude that we've been blessed to be a blessing.

"Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:7).