

“Why would I give money to a church?”

It can feel weird to give money to a church. Do I trust them to use my gifts wisely? With so many charitable causes in the world, why should the church get my hard-earned money? Many of us have baggage with churches who seemed to ask for money all the time. There are understandable reasons why giving to a church might make us uncomfortable.

As with most things, there's more going on under the surface of these questions. We've worked hard for the dollars in our bank account. We want to make sure we have enough to feed our families, cover our housing, save for the future and support the hobbies we enjoy. Often our hearts then turn toward wanting our money and resources to do good in the world. But can we trust the church with our gifts?

I acknowledge the weird feelings and want to answer any questions you might have about giving at Marysville United Methodist Church.

What's a pledge? A pledge is a promise to give a certain amount of money to the church in a span of a year. Everyone has an opportunity to fill out a **pledge card** to turn in each fall. You can also fill out a pledge card online at marysvilleumc.org/2020.

Why are they helpful in a church? Our budget for ministry, staff, facilities and mission is funded by the generosity of the people in this faith community. We don't depend on any other income stream. Without pledge cards, we're unable to responsibly plan for next year. We want to be great stewards of the gifts given so your card helps us do that.

What do my gifts go towards? Your gift supports things like our preschool, communion supplies and candles, caring for our facilities, training for our staff and childcare for events so families can participate. Gifts support ministries around Washington, our home for transitional housing, our staff and pastor, offering Vacation Bible School free to our community and wildfire recovery efforts. Copies of our detailed budget are available in the church office at any time. It's pretty interesting to see the depth and variety of places our gifts make a difference.

Can I decide where my gift goes in the church? We have a strong financial and pastoral team that help discern where gifts are needed the most at certain times. We encourage people to make their gift toward our General Fund. Above and beyond a gift to our General Fund, some choose to designate their giving to a specific ministry. This can be marked on your pledge card. You can also write a check directly to a ministry fund anytime during the year (such as Kloz 4 Kidz, Miracle House, youth ministry, etc).

If I don't fill out a pledge card, what happens to the gifts I give on a Sunday? We call them unpledged gifts. They go into a special fund and we discern how to best use them at the end of each year. They're not readily available to us during this year. In other words, we're deeply appreciative of the gifts and they will do wonderful things, but we're not able to plan ministry around them for this year.

How much should I give? This is up to each person and family to discern. Each of us has a different financial reality. We are challenged to set a tithe (the Biblical word for 10% of our income) as the giving goal in our lives. Start where you can and begin the journey. Some fully tithe 10% or more than that.

Others take an incremental approach - increasing their gift by 1%, 2%, or 3% per year - to gradually move toward 10%.

Does the church record what we give? Yes, our Financial Secretary receives your gift and records it during the year. You can request an update of where you're at on your pledge anytime during the year from finance@marysvilleumc.org. You'll also receive an end of the year statement for tax purposes.

What if I make a commitment and my financial situation changes next year? If you need to change your commitment at any time, just let us know. This commitment represents your voluntary giving; it's not a binding contract. For more information, contact Scott at finance@marysvilleumc.org.

What if I have connections to another church? Will making a pledge here change that? If you are connected to another church in heart or tradition but aren't currently giving there, making a gift to Marysville United Methodist Church is a beautiful way to honor your commitment here as well. We have many people who pledge here and maintain important connections to another faith community.

How do I give the money next year that I pledge in the fall of each year? After you turn in a pledge card, you can give in three primary ways that may be convenient for you:

1. Set up a recurring monthly gift through your bank account, credit or debit card.
2. Place cash or check in the offering plate during Sunday worship.
3. Give online with credit card via website (marysvilleumc.org/give).
4. Text a gift to 425-409-2040. Indicate amount in text message area. It will ask you to connect your credit card the first time and then it remembers in the future.

We strive to be a healthy and transparent faith community. Our budget and financial dreams are public to anyone who's curious to know more. Our financial leaders serve on our Vision Team for three year terms so new ideas and energy are a part of the conversation. There are checks and balances so no single person has the ability to make financial decisions alone. We've worked hard for transparency and financial effectiveness so that all the gifts given do the most good in our community and around the world.

Marysville United Methodist Church would be simply **honored** to receive a gift from you this year. Your gift would say to us that you want to be a part of the story God is writing in and through us in this season. It will take all of us to be a part of it in the year to come!

Thinking of another question? Contact Scott McClain at finance@marysvilleumc.org or Dave Reynaud at drreynaud5@msn.com.