



PREPARING A PLACE

STEWARDSHIP 2020

Frequently Asked Questions about Giving and Stewardship at Westminster

Scripture calls on us all, as followers of Christ, to offer a significant portion of what we are given in service to God. This act of faithful discipleship carries the power and the promise to prepare a place for God's Kingdom here in our world and in our lives as we grow in the teachings of Jesus.

Why do we give?

We were created by a generous God to be a generous people. When we give, it is good for us and bolsters our spirit. Giving increases our trust in God, as we lean into God's promises for abundant life. Giving transforms who we are and connects us to the broader work for God's kingdom.

All that we have, and all that we are, comes from God. – Psalm 24

“The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it.”

We live out our faithfulness, not out of worry, but in trust. – Matthew 6:25-30

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body...”

Acts of stewardship, of shared living, have long been a part of the Christian church.

“Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul... everything they owned was held in common.” – Acts 4:32-34

How much should I give?

Our Christian life is an offering of ourselves to God. In the Lord's Supper, we are presented with the self-offering of Jesus Christ for the life of the world. As a people who have been claimed and set free by Christ's grace, we respond with gratitude, offering God our lives, our spiritual gifts, and our material goods. We give our tithes and financial gifts as an act of thanksgiving and a sign of our trust in God and God's perfect will.

In Deuteronomy 26, Moses reminds the people of God's faithfulness to them in bringing them out of slavery. In grateful response, as they come into the land, the people are called to offer their first fruits (the first portion of their harvest) to God, one-tenth (a tithe) of their income. These gifts sustained the life of the temple from the earliest days of the Israelite community. The biblical model of the tithe – 10% of one's income – should be our goal.

What percentage of your income, however you calculate it, do you offer in faith?

How are you called to strengthen the kingdom of God through faithful tithes and offerings?

How You Gave for 2019

Westminster relies on your pledges to plan, budget, and provide the resources that allow us to prepare a place for faith, worship, community, and Christian service to our neighbors in Durham and across the world. Our total budget in 2019 was \$1,196,645. Last year, **259** families/individuals made pledges, which constitutes **59%** of WPC households. Over the last five years, approximately **90%** of Westminster's operating budget was secured from your pledges.

Given Faithfully, Managed Faithfully

Amidst the many opportunities to give generously and to many good causes, consider for a moment how your gift of faith multiplies and helps prepare a place for the love and mission of God to be carried out at Westminster. Here is a breakdown of how your pledges help fund Westminster's missions and ministries:

29% Worship Music, pastoral leadership, nursery/childcare

19% Outreach Local and global missions, mission trips, Presbytery support

19% Property Insurance, utilities, building and grounds maintenance

17% Education & Nurture Church School, Bible studies, youth ministry, congregational care, new members

16% Administration Technology, phones, office equipment and supplies

Remember... Your pledge allows Westminster to direct much needed funding to 18 Durham agencies that provide vital services and support to our neighbors in need. As we have for many years, we send those payments out first, at the beginning of the month, so those agencies have what they need.

How the Church Budget is Created

In the early fall, Westminster's treasurer reaches out to all committee chairs and church staff requesting information on expenses they anticipate for the coming year. The Finance Committee then compiles all of those requests and – after Stewardship season concludes in October – reviews the funds pledged in light of the budget needs for the coming year. Adjustments are made as additional pledges come in and as we get a better sense of what the church can reasonably afford. The new budget is then finalized and sent to the Ways and Means Commission, then on to the Session for review and approval at its January retreat. Westminster's budget is based on the calendar year and has remained steady at \$1.1 – 1.2 million for the last five years.

Special Considerations for 2020

Our 2020 budget will be similar to years' past but will include a few modifications to that of the previous year, primarily related to staffing. The church's personnel-related costs were notably lower during the time we've had interim staff in place, haven't had a second Associate Pastor, and experimented with "outsourcing" our bookkeeping functions. The Session took four months last fall to consider and craft what they felt was the most appropriate staff structure to meet our congregation's needs for the future. They then rigorously examined what the appropriate salary ranges would be. This, coupled with the build-out of a robust business/finance management team, means that our total staff compensation will be about \$45,000 higher in 2020 than in 2018, which was our last year with a full staff. This increase is a combination of appropriate increases for existing staff in 2019 and 2020, as well as the salaries for our new staff.

Additionally, we need to ensure we are taking care of our aging campus (even with recent improvements), and we continue to place a high priority on essential mission giving in our community and the world. There are so many needs in our community, and we **must** be in a position to step forward in response. With your help – with everyone's help – we can.

About the Making Room Capital Campaign

Last year we conducted our Making Room Capital Campaign. The overall goal was to "make room" for mission, community, and faith. We sought to raise funding to renovate the Fellowship Hall, perform needed maintenance on our Sanctuary and Mission Center (including upgrades to our heating and cooling system to make it more energy efficient), and pay off the mortgage on the property adjacent to our campus, which we purchased in 2015.

The response from this congregation was extraordinary: By August 2018, we had received 186 gifts and pledges totaling nearly \$2.25 million. These funds will be used to build our new Fellowship Hall and make needed repairs and updates to our campus, including the addition of updated, accessible restrooms in our education building, an AV technology upgrade for our Sanctuary, and property grading and maintenance. Completed campus improvements in this project to-date include a refurbishment of the Sanctuary, new roof on the Holderness Mission Center, and clearing of the property next door.

For More Information

Do you have a question about your 2019 pledge or contributions you've made over the last year? Want to find out how much is remaining on your pledge to the Making Room Capital Campaign? Please contact Sharon Morgan, Business Manager, at sharon@wpcdurham.org or 919-489-4974, ext. 122. If you have a question about Westminster's budget or budget process, please contact Judd Staples, Church Treasurer, at juddstaples@gmail.com.