



God loves. God gives.

We love. We give.

Together, We Do More





Why do we give?

“Why do I give?” says the Rev. Beverly L. Wilkes-Null, directing pastor at Hope United Methodist Church, Highland, Illinois. “God loved. God gave. We love. We give. I give because God’s abundance is the source of my joy. I cannot outgive or outlove God, but I can give and love in response to God’s gifts of mercy and grace in my life.”

Pat Smith of Shepherd’s Community United Methodist Church, Lakeland, Florida, agrees. “Giving is the best way to show God how much I love him,” she says. “I could give all that I have and all that I am and never outgive God.”

“The churches outside of the United States have contributed to the Episcopal Fund for a very long time. In our European setting, it has been important that we contribute to the Episcopal Fund. Now, we can extend it to the General Administration Fund,” says Bishop Patrick Streiff, Central and Southern Europe Central Conference.

“Giving,” says the Rev. Eunice Nusa Iliya of Nigeria, “goes along with the teaching and the preaching. Our congregations know the importance of giving what we have back to God.

Rev. Beverly L. Wilkes-Null

“Giving is celebrating and showing how grateful you are for what God has given you or what God is doing in your life. It is out of that joy when you reflect on how God has graciously pulled you through, how God has been so faithful to you and how God has been there for you. So what do you give to God that God has not given to you? The joy of showing gratefulness, showing thankfulness to God. That is the secret of the joy of giving.”



Biblical Roots

The Bible is full of stories and passages about generosity and giving.

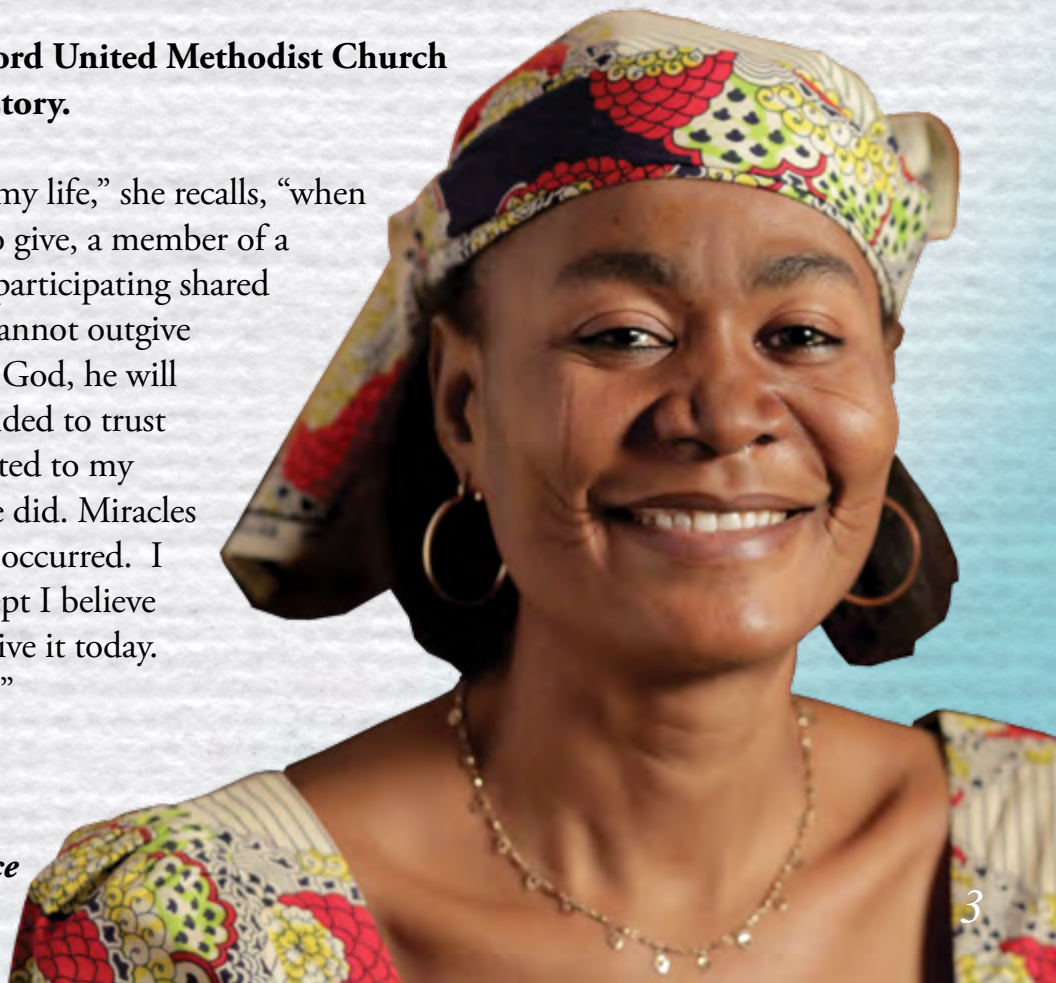
“Those who are generous are blessed,” says Proverbs 22:9, NRSV. Acts 20:35b continues the theme, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

In 2 Corinthians 8:1-7, the apostle Paul challenges the church in Corinth to give generously to mission work. Paul writes that even amid their extreme poverty, the Macedonians give “even beyond their means.” He encourages the Corinthians to give out of their abundance.

JoAnn Lamberg of Cranford United Methodist Church in New Jersey shares her story.

“During a difficult time in my life,” she recalls, “when I did not have very much to give, a member of a Bible study in which I was participating shared something. She said, ‘You cannot outgive God. Whatever you give to God, he will return in abundance.’ I decided to trust these words. I subtly suggested to my family that we tithe, and we did. Miracles — particularly financial — occurred. I have no way to explain except I believe that messenger’s word and live it today. You can never outgive God.”

*Rev. Eunice
Nusa Iliya*





What would John Wesley do?

Methodism founder John Wesley (1703-91) didn't just talk about being generous. He put stewardship into practice. In his sermon on "The Use of Money," he encouraged his followers to gain, save and then give "all you can." In 1731, Wesley began to limit his expenses so he would have more money to give to the poor.

In his journal, Wesley recorded that one year his income was 30 pounds and his living expenses 28 pounds, so he gave away 2 pounds. The next year, his income doubled to 60 pounds, but he kept his living expenses to 28 pounds. Thus, he shared 32 pounds.

This practice continued throughout Wesley's life. At his death, he had given away most, if not all, of the 30,000 pounds he had earned in his lifetime. To Wesley, spending money was a living theology in response to what God gave him.

He would have appreciated Meg Thomas, 18, a member of United Methodist Church of the Master in Westerville, Ohio.

"I would love to think that giving my time, my talents and my prayers fulfills God's call for stewardship, but it doesn't," Thomas says.

"There are people in need that I do not know and will not ever meet. The only way





to help them is through God. When I give my tithes and offerings to the church, and thus to God, I know that I am helping my neighbors in ways I cannot do in person.”

“I give as a response to a love affair that I have with God,” adds the Rev. Frank Alegria, First United Methodist Church, Duncanville, Texas. “I love my wife and children. I give them all that I have and all that I am. I should give God no less than my all, inclusive of my gifts.”

How we give today

“We give because we want to,” says Jim Ernst of Will Rogers United Methodist Church, Tulsa, Oklahoma. “God does not need our money. Our giving is an act of worship, supporting the ministries of our local church and the ministries of The United Methodist Church through apportionments.

“It is an act of faith and love that by giving, we are putting our faith in God. God always provides, and we cannot outgive God, no matter how much we give.”

All United Methodist churches are connected. That connection comes to life when we share our resources with our sisters and brothers in the Philippines, Africa, Europe and the United States. Working together with other congregations, every church — regardless of size or location — can do much more than it could on its own. Together, we do more.

The official name for our giving methodology is “connectional giving.” Connectional giving goes beyond your local church. One form of connectional giving is apportionments. United Methodists know apportionments by many names, such as “a portion meant for others” or various types of covenants — connectional, ministry share, missional giving, shared ministry and tithe.

Churches in the Central Conferences and United States collectively support worldwide ministry through apportionments.

In the past, gifts from Central Conferences contributed to the Episcopal Fund. For the first time, the 2016 General Conference approved apportionment giving from the Central Conference churches.

Beginning in 2017, Central Conference apportionment gifts will now support the Episcopal Fund as well as the World Service and General Administration funds.

“The apportionment system and the giving of connectional responsibilities is very important. It’s what defines and empowers us as a global church. We are not just isolated local churches. We are connectional churches so that our collective resources help everyone in every level of the connection from the local church to the district, annual conference, episcopal area or jurisdiction, Central Conference and, of course, the General Conference,” says Bishop Pedro Marquez Torio Jr., Baguio Episcopal area, the Philippines Central Conference.





Conference benevolences – apportionments

Each of United Methodism's annual conferences has a budget apportioned to local congregations. In the United States, these conference apportionments are most commonly called conference benevolences. Conference benevolences fund the mission and ministry of your annual conference. This often includes camping and outdoor programs, pastor salaries, colleges and universities, campus outreach, retirement and health facilities and urban and rural ministries.

"Apportionment giving supports so many important ministries here and throughout our connection. ... All this happens because people in our pews believe giving is an important part of our Christian faith," says Brian Bakeman, treasurer, Oklahoma Conference.

To learn about your conference benevolences or apportionments, visit your annual conference website or contact your annual conference communications office.





General church apportionments

Our gifts really do make a difference. United Methodists are connectional. We put into practice that if we want to give money beyond our local church and local community needs, the first place to look is our connectional system.

Apportionments form the framework for our individual and congregational participation in connectional ministry and mission.

When we share our money, a portion of which pays apportionments, we give to the following general United Methodist Church funds:

World Service Fund: Basic to the financial support of programs of The United Methodist Church, this vital fund helps to build new churches, prepare clergy and lay leaders, and increase the number of young clergy. It also pays missionary salaries, supports theological education in the Central Conferences, expands Bible studies, provides leadership for youth ministry, continues cooperation and dialogue with other faith traditions through interdenominational and ecumenical work, expresses the church's commitment to God's reign through advocacy for peace and justice and much more. World Service is the financial lifeline to a long list of Christian mission and ministry throughout the denomination.

Africa University Fund: Africa University, located in Old Mutare, Zimbabwe, is the only General Conference-approved, degree-granting institution of higher education supported by The United Methodist Church on the continent of Africa.

Men and women from more than 25 countries in Africa receive postsecondary education and postgraduate degrees. When we support the Africa University Fund, we nurture students in Christian values and expand the vision of The United Methodist Church on the continent of Africa.

Black College Fund: The Black College Fund provides financial support to maintain solid and challenging academic programs, strong faculties and well-equipped facilities for students at Bennett College, Bethune-Cookman University, Claflin University, Clark Atlanta University, Dillard University, Huston-Tillotson University,





Meharry Medical College, Paine College, Philander Smith College, Rust College and Wiley College. Their graduates — representing diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds — are leaders nationally and internationally.

Episcopal Fund: Bishops are an integral part of the spiritual and administrative leadership of The United Methodist Church. We elect and consecrate bishops to speak to and from the church. This fund pays bishops' salaries, covers office and travel expenses and provides pension and health-benefit coverage for United States and Central Conference bishops.

General Administration Fund: This fund attends to the business of The United Methodist Church by ensuring trustworthy systems of oversight and financial accountability in the United States and in the Central Conferences.

The General Administration Fund finances the administrative activities of the church, underwrites the basic costs of General Conference, funds work of the Judicial Council, maintains United Methodist official documents and historical artifacts, and designates historical shrines, landmarks and sites.

Beginning in 2017, funds from Central Conferences will also support the General Administration Fund.





Interdenominational Cooperation Fund: This fund enables United Methodists to have a presence and voice in the activities of several national and worldwide ecumenical organizations. It provides the United Methodist share of the basic budgets of these groups and pays for the travel expenses of United Methodist representatives.

Ministerial Education Fund: This fund is essential for The United Methodist Church to continue its commitment to recruit and educate quality pastoral leadership. It is at the heart of preparing people for making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. It helps support the 13 United Methodist seminaries and equips annual conferences with local pastor courses of study, continuing education and other efforts to recruit, educate and support people called to ordained and licensed ministry.

**All of this — and so much more —
is possible because when we join
The United Methodist Church, we
promise faithfully to participate in
its ministries through our prayers,
presence, gifts, service and witness.**

Questions & Answers

Q: What are apportionments?

A: We stretch our resources through our distinctly United Methodist apportionment system of giving that financially underwrites United Methodist ministry and mission beyond the local church.

Apportionments is the term we use to describe the portion that each congregation contributes to the annual conference and general church operating budgets.

Apportionments are one outward and visible sign of the connection within The United Methodist Church. This type of giving allows us to work toward our goal of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world and, like all giving to the church, is a way of sharing our blessings.

The 2012 United Methodist Book of Discipline describes the World Service Fund and conference benevolences as being “basic in the financial program of The United Methodist Church. ... Payment in full of these apportionments by local churches and annual conferences is the first benevolent responsibility of the Church.” Conference benevolences “represent the minimum needs for mission and ministry in the annual conference.” (Par. 247:14 and 812)

Q: Do churches in the Central Conference pay apportionments?

A: Central Conferences — the seven church regions in Africa, Europe and the Philippines — expressed a deep desire to support the global mission of the connection and become fuller ministry partners with churches in the U.S. For the past two quadrennia, Central Conference contributions helped support the Episcopal Fund for bishops’ compensation, housing and office allowances in the Central Conferences. In 2017, Central Conferences will also contribute to the World Service and General Administration funds.



At the 2016 General Conference assembly, delegates voted to approve an equitable Central Conference apportionment formula that would apply to the Episcopal Fund, General Administration Fund and World Service Fund.

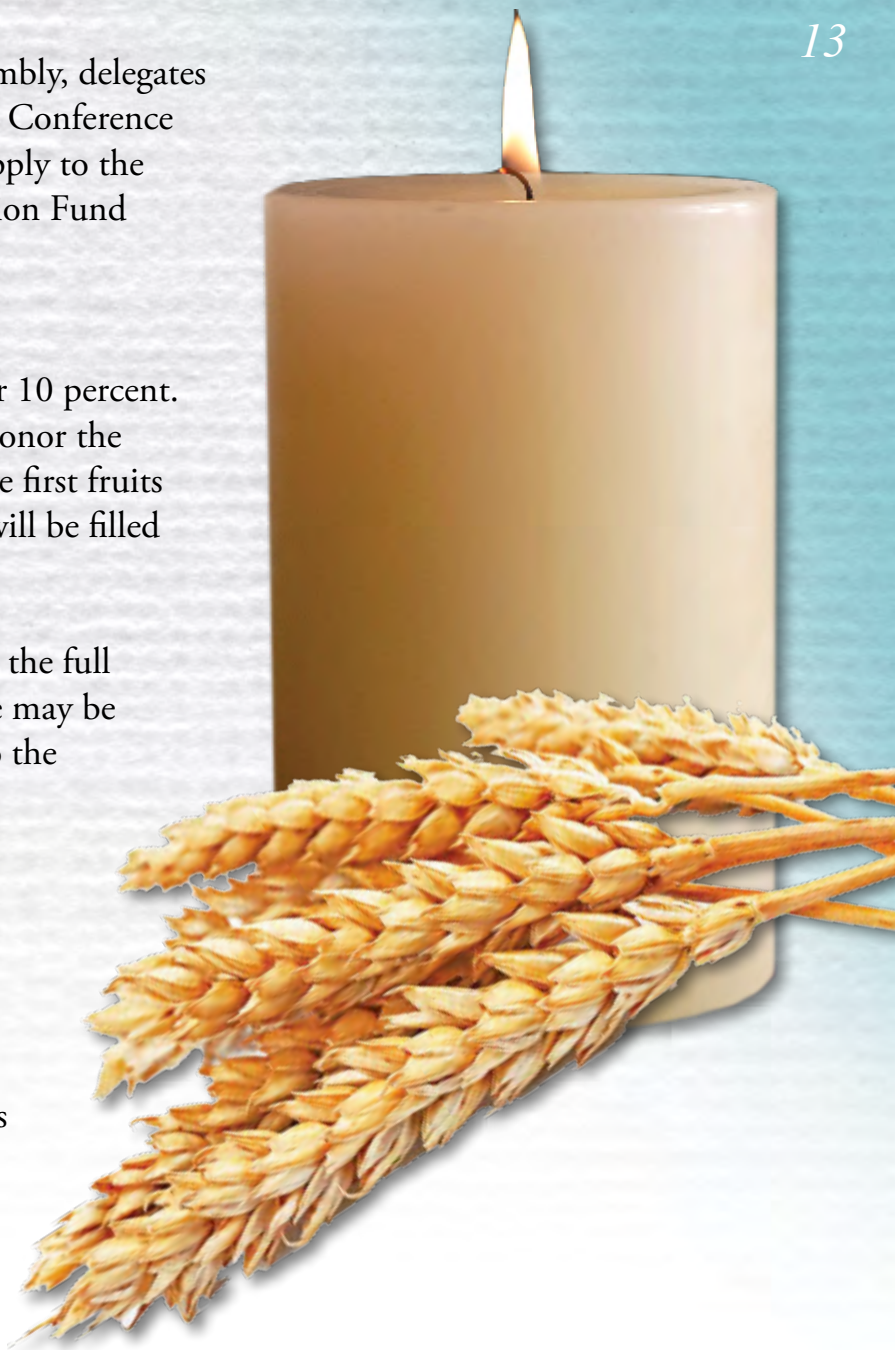
Q. What does it mean to tithe?

The Bible talks about giving a tithe, or 10 percent. Proverbs 3:9-10a encourages us to “Honor the Lord with your substance and with the first fruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty.”

And in Malachi 3:10, we read, “Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in my house, and thus put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts; see if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing.”

Q: Who determines apportionment amounts?

A: The General Conference establishes budgets for the denomination's general funds. These are divided among annual conferences, based on a specific formula. Each conference, using its own approved formula, divides these fund requests, along with conference administrative and benevolence fund requests, among local churches. Contact your annual conference for specific details.





Q: What happens if our church cannot contribute that amount of money?

A: When we pay our apportionments, we affirm that we are part of a connectional church. Any church that cannot pay their apportionments in full — and it does happen — will often have a follow-up conversation with their district superintendent or bishop to see what issues may have caused the shortfall, and what steps, if any, may be taken to remedy the situation in the future.

Sometimes, congregations who have paid their apportionment volunteer to help other churches who, for one reason or another, cannot pay.

Q: Why does the money go through the annual conference treasurer?

A: In order for your local church to receive credit for remitting its apportionments or other giving opportunities, the money must follow through the annual conference office. From there, the annual conference treasurer submits the funds to the General Council on Finance and Administration, where the annual conference is given credit for its contribution.

Q: Where can I learn how the conference and wider church use my church's apportionment payments?

A: To learn how annual conferences use apportionment dollars, simply look at your conference budget or speak with your annual conference leadership. Delegates vote on and approve annual conference budgets at annual conference sessions, so detailed reports should be easy to find.

For impact stories, information and resources, visit www.umcsgiving.org/why-we-give.





ADDITIONAL UNITED METHODIST GIVING RESOURCES AND WEBSITES

Websites and social media:

www.umcgiving.org	www.twitter.com/umcgiving
www.gcfa.org	www.youtube.com/umcgiving
www.umcdiscipleship.org/stewardship	www.facebook.com/GCFAUMC/
www.infoserv.umc.org	www.twitter.com/GCFA_UMC
www.facebook.com/umcgiving	

Resources:

Together, We Do More is a collection of “done-for-you” generosity resources and training materials available to churches. In this leader kit, you will find how-to videos, e-booklets, sermon illustrations and offering talks and inspirational social media images. These resources aim to empower leaders about generosity and giving while providing an ample overview of connectional giving. These resources are sure to help you encourage your church members to live more generously. Download the free Together, We Do More collection at umcgiving.org/togetherwedomore.

Download sermon starters, videos, generosity articles and more
at www.umcgiving.org/pastors/resources.

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offertory prayers from around the globe
at www.umcgiving.org/pastors/mission-moments.

Subscribe to the Giving Notes newsletter to receive tips and tools that support your
giving and generosity efforts. Subscribe at www.umcgiving.org/givingnotes.

You may also contact your church or annual conference treasurer to learn more about
apportionments for your congregation or area.

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