

WHO KNOWS HOW MUCH I MAKE AS A PLEDGE?

There are very few who know what individuals or families give, and they treat it with the utmost confidentiality. Other individuals such as the official leaders of Church Council and Finance occasionally receive data such as the total number of pledges received, distribution of pledges in certain dollar ranges, etc. Needless to say, we take the confidential nature of these records very seriously.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I MAKE A PLEDGE BUT FOR SOME REASON CAN'T FOLLOW THROUGH ON THAT COMMITMENT?

Your quarterly giving statement is not a bill, but an accounting of your financial commitment to the ongoing ministry of Jesus Christ at Carmel UMC. If circumstances change and you cannot fulfill that commitment, then you cannot fulfill that commitment. A note or call to our Financial Secretary would be a helpful courtesy in order to make the necessary adjustments.



WHY DO I ALWAYS FEEL GUILTY OR 'FUNNY' WHEN WE TALK ABOUT MONEY AT CHURCH?

Good question. Some would say that when a pastor preaches on money, she or he has quit preaching and 'gone to meddling'. This probably has its roots in various abuses in the past and present in the ways some churches or evangelists have asked for and/or used money. Talking about finances probably hits a little too close to home for others, and guilt easily gets mixed into the equation. The perception is that people get defensive and offended more readily about money than any other spiritual reality in their lives.

And yet Jesus never shied away from it. Money and possessions were front and center in his preaching and teaching, despite the fact that many of the folks he was preaching to were far from affluent. In our day and with our standard of living, it would be terribly negligent not to put a strong emphasis on sacrificial generosity and the corruptive influences of wealth. It is a sign of a healthy church to talk about the sharing of our finances, time, and talents in a non-defensive, unembarrassed way.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Regarding Giving to the Church



WHAT IS A TITHE AND WHY WOULD I WANT TO DO IT?

A tithe is the biblical model of returning to God a portion of what we've been given as a concrete statement about God's priority in our lives. From Abraham to Jesus, giving one tenth has been the faithful standard—a way to say that all we have comes to us by the grace of God and ultimately belongs to God.

Historically the tithe has been the first and the best of one's flocks or fields. Giving the first ten percent to God was never intended to earn us anything. We don't give in order to be blessed; rather we are blessed in order to give. The sharing of our financial gifts always flows out of our gratitude for all that God has already given us.

People tithe for all sorts of reasons: to make it clear that God is sovereign over our finances, to remind ourselves that all we have is a gift from God and belongs to God, to fight against the prevalence of materialism and greed in our society, to make a difference in the lives of others, to give thanks and express joy over God's continued generosity.

DO YOU TITHE ON NET OR GROSS?

That's up to you. It's certainly more straight-forward to use gross, but those who attempt to tithe on their 'take home pay' are not necessarily less faithful. The only danger is in defining 'net' as the resources left over after everything else is taken care of. Giving God leftovers is not what is meant by a tithe.

IS A TITHE JUST WHAT I GIVE THE CHURCH OR CAN IT INCLUDE OTHER BENEVOLENT GIVING?

As long as what you give is honestly given to glorify God or further the cause of Christ, what you give beyond the church might well be considered part of your tithe.

Charitable giving is almost always a good thing, but it is not always the same as giving first priority to God. You may love NPR or PBS and want to contribute to their worthwhile programming, but worthwhile programming does not necessarily further the cause of Christ.

This is your church
Pledges can be made
online using this form:



WHAT DO I DO IF TITHING SEEMS OUT OF REACH?

For some, the whole idea of giving 10% to the ministry of Jesus Christ seems hopelessly unattainable. The challenge for them would be to figure out how they can move closer in stages to a faithful standard. It might mean intentionally asking, "What can I do to become a tither over the next 3-5 years?" One thing is certain; you will not become a tither if you do not make a conscious commitment to do so. The world has been blessed by very few, if any, accidental tithers.

Committing a percentage of your income to God—at whatever level you decide on—is the best way to start down this path. Percentage giving is a measurable way of giving that allows you to track your giving the true nature of your generosity.

WHO OVERSEES THE MONEY THAT COMES INTO THE CHURCH?

As a congregation, we strive to be transparent in regards to where our money goes, frugal in how it is spent, and yet discrete about who it is that gives that money to us. Our budget is based on what it costs to maintain the facility, support our paid staff, and carry out the ministries we believe God is calling us to. To do this, we have lay people who act as Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Audit Committee, and an active and able Finance Committee.