

Frequently Asked Questions about **Pledging at St James United Methodist Church**

1. Why is it important to pledge in advance?

Pledging allows the leadership of our church to plan the church budget more responsibly. As we have a more accurate idea of the amount of income we can expect during the year, we can budget more accurately and be more responsible to our programs, staff, and creditors. Also, pledging allows you to be more purposeful in your giving. You can seek God's guidance and examine your own situation to determine a realistic and God-honoring pledge. Pre-planned pledging is far superior to simple impulse giving, because it allows you to plan ahead of time and be prepared to give to support God's work through this local body.

2. What happens to my pledge card after I turn it in? Who sees my pledge card?

Pledge cards are tabulated by the Finance Committee and then filed in a secure, private place.

3. Will I receive a statement of contributions at the end of the calendar year?

Yes, a record of contributions will be sent to you after the first of the year. All contributions to St James are tax deductible. If you need a copy of your contribution statement at any other time, simply contact the church office.

4. What is my money used for?

Contributions from our members and attenders fund the St James United Methodist Church budget. This budget includes funding for all of the ministries and programs of our church and for the operation and upkeep of our physical plant (maintenance, utilities, insurance, etc.). A part of our budget is sent to the conference office to fund denominational efforts, which include UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief). This contribution is called our "apportionment" and is based on the total amount of our church budget.

5. Should I be cautious or optimistic with the amount that I pledge?

You should be realistic with the amount that you pledge. A pledge that is too high to be paid only hurts our budget process. However, a pledge that is only a token amount doesn't reflect commitment to God's work.

6. What should I do if my circumstances change and I cannot fulfill my pledge?

We recognize that circumstances do change. You may adjust your pledge amount simply by calling the church office or dropping a note in the Sunday offering.

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7. Can I automate my giving?

Yes, you can set up your giving to come out of your account every month, just like a direct debit payment (like your insurance, for example). The advantage to this is you don't forget and if you are away on a Sunday, your automatic gift still supports the work of the church. Go to <https://stjamestucson.com/giving/> and click on "I would like this donation to automatically repeat each month".

8. What guidelines should I use in determining my pledge?

Many places in Scripture speak of contributing a tithe, which is ten percent. While this is primarily an Old Testament concept, it is a good pattern to follow. The most complete New Testament passage on giving is in 2 Corinthians 9:6-8:

The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work.

In the passage above, Paul encourages the believers at Corinth to make up their minds ahead of time about how much they should give. This is all we are asking you to do.

Again, in 1 Corinthians 16:1,2 Paul comments on giving:

Now about the money being collected for the Christians in Jerusalem: You should follow the same procedures I gave to the churches in Galatia. On every Lord's Day, each of you should put aside some amount of money in relation to what you have earned and save it for this offering. Don't wait until I get there and then try to collect it all at once.

Paul again encourages regular, purposeful giving to the work of God.

A final thought...

The work of Jesus Christ through this local church is important. Please prayerfully and purposefully consider your pledge amount. You will be greatly enriched by your generosity!

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