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**Stewardship Ministry**

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

**What is Stewardship?**

According to Merriam-Webster’s dictionary, stewardship is the conducting, supervising, or managing of something; especially the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care. When we talk about Christian “stewardship,” we are saying we believe that God owns everything, and we are simply stewards, taking care of the blessings He has placed in our hands. We bring nothing into the world, and we will take nothing out; we are just taking care of what already belongs to God.

In our church life, “stewardship” refers not only to the offerings we give to support the work of Christ, but also to *all the gifts of God’s people through their time, talent and treasure.*

*Biblical references: Psalm 24:1, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, Deuteronomy 8:18, Leviticus 25:23*

**What is pledging?**

Pledging is the act of promising, by faith, a monetary sum to God for His work and for the work of His Church over a specific period of time. At FPC, we pledge by filling out a pledge card and submitting it to the church. Pledges can be changed if circumstances change. Pledging is an act of faith. We give with gladness and thanksgiving!

*Biblical references: 1 Corinthians 16:2, Exodus 3:19, Deuteronomy 26:1-4, Proverbs 3:9, Luke 6:38*

**Why pledge?**

Pledging helps us to approach God in prayer and seek his guidance in managing our money. It shows that we acknowledge that our blessings flow from God and that we want to say thank you. (Most of us acknowledge this but spend money like it is our own.)

Pledging shows that we have moved from FAITH in God to TRUST in God. We trust God to help us meet our pledge to His church AND to provide for our personal needs.

Pledges are an important source of information for FPC’s budget. They help your Session make responsible financial decisions about the people and programs that bring the good news of Jesus Christ to us and to our neighbors.

*“Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the Lord your God has blessed you.” – Deuteronomy 16:17*

**How much is “appropriate” to pledge?**

In the Bible God asks His people for the first tenth or 10% of the harvest. The act of giving one tenth is called “tithing.” However, tithing is not the “required” or “right” amount for everyone. While tithing is something to strive for (some even exceed this giving proportion), the amount an individual or family pledges is dependent on personal circumstances and on what God leads them to give.

The concept of tithing provides a good model for giving: instead of giving a set dollar amount, members can pledge a proportion (percentage) of their weekly, monthly or yearly income. For some, proportional giving means 1% or 2% or 8%; others try to take a “step up” to the next percentage each year. Regardless of method, it is more important to pledge an amount, any amount, than to not pledge.

*“Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” – 2 Corinthians 9:7*

*Biblical references: Leviticus 27:30-32, Malachi 3:10*

**What benefits do I derive from pledging?**

By pledging, church friends and members derive spiritual and practical benefits.

The simple act of prayerfully considering your gratitude to God and making a pledge to show your love and thankfulness with your offering will grow and strengthen your relationship with Him. Pledging for the first time or increasing your pledge also requires that you take a leap of faith, really trusting God to provide. It gives you an opportunity to witness the miracle of God’s faithfulness. Regular giving serves as a continual reminder that all things come from God and prevents from allowing money, either through worry or greed, to control our loves. You will find that no one can out-give God.

From a practical perspective, pledging can become an important part of personal or family budgeting. Electronic giving options can reduce the sometimes frantic rush of getting to church on Sunday mornings. Pledging in a structured fashion allows you to track monetary donations and provides a legitimate receipt for income tax deduction purposes.

*“Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use it, it will be measured to you.” – Luke: 6:38*

**What benefits does our church receive from pledges?**

Pledges are the financial cornerstone for all the ministry planning that goes on in FPC. Pledges, unlike the more fluid but nonetheless important unstructured gifts, gives the Session a solid basis from which to map out programs and ministries for the coming year.

**How does the pledging process work?**

New Members are provided with a pledge card and envelopes upon joining. FPC also offers an annual stewardship campaign. The Stewardship Ministry Team with support from Session sends information and pledge cards to all church members each fall. After prayerful consideration, families and individuals fill out a pledge card specifying the amount of their pledge, the frequency of their pledge, etc. On Stewardship Pledge Sunday (also called Giving Sunday), families and individuals can bring their pledge card forward during the last hymn and deposit it in the locked pledge card box for dedication to God. Some choose to mail their pledge card to the church office, put it in the offering plate, or deposit it in the locked deposit box in the church office.

*For where your treasures are, that’s where your heart will be.” – Matthew 6:21*

**What methods are available for paying my pledge?**

FPC provides traditional offering envelopes to every family after the Stewardship campaign. These envelopes allow families and individuals to enclose cash or a check and deposit them in the offering plates on Sunday.

FPC also provides electronic giving options through automatic debits from checking or saving accounts, as well from credit cards. These periodic donations can be set up by visiting our website [www.myfpc.org](http://www.myfpc.org), selecting the “Give” tab and the drop-down item “Donate,” or by contacting the Church Business Administrator.

**Who at FPC knows how much I pledge?**

Only two people know this sensitive information – the Session’s Finance Elder and the Church Business Administrator. Both are sworn to secrecy. No one else in the church including the Pastors know the amount pledged by any church member or church friend. Obviously, God knows our hearts and what we give.

**What if I can’t honor my pledge?**

There are times where things do not go quite as planned and trying to maintain a pledge becomes difficult. Likewise, there may be cases where God blesses someone with an unplanned abundance! In either case, families and individuals should make their own prayerful decision about what to give to the church, and can change their pledged amount at any time by contacting the Church Business Administrator Sue Gade in the church office.

 ***“****If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.” – James 1:5*