

Finance and Giving



www.lswmethodists.org.uk

Finance and Giving

A very important part of our Christian discipleship are the decisions that we take concerning our finances and especially our giving. Such decisions often describe our real priorities far more clearly than other similar decisions. This leaflet is offered in order to provide you with some basic information about the Church's finances and to begin gently challenging you to consider carefully your giving.

How much does it take to a local Methodist Church for a year?

Answer: It depends on the size of the building and congregation

Churches must find funds for
Running costs of the building: [utility bills, repairs, insurance,]
Circuit assessment: [mission, worship, ministers and manses]
Charitable giving and local mission work.

How do local Methodist Churches raise money?

Sacrificial Giving,
Fundraising and Donations,
Rents, Lettings and Leases,
Legacies

How much should I give?

This is a difficult question to try and answer. Theologically the answer is quite simple. We should give freely and cheerfully in proportion to the gratitude we feel for what God has done for us in Jesus Christ. We should also take seriously the biblical teaching, but what does this mean in practice?

Sensible Giving

The old Methodist membership card committed members to sensible giving and left it to each member to decide what this meant. This was an evasion of the issue and pretends that this decision is a personal decision taken without reference to Christian teaching. In practice it allowed generations of Methodists to ignore their responsibilities and the call of God.

Serious Giving

Many Christian people believe that Christian giving should begin with the biblical idea of a tithe, or ten percent. Jewish believers were expected to pay ten percent of their income to the temple. In some years this was used for the relief of poverty in others for maintaining the temple and the priesthood. In some years no tithe was taken.

Today the idea of a tithe is interpreted in different ways. Some tithe their gross income, some tithe their net income, some their disposable income (net income minus rent/mortgage and main bills.)

At the heart of this idea is a serious commitment to allowing God to shape our financial commitments and values. The financial discipline of the tithe taught people to trust God and not to be obsessed with money. What could be afforded was worked out only once the tithe had been paid!

Sacrificial Giving

As incomes have risen, many Christian people have come to realise that the giving of a tithe is not very difficult. After practising it for a while many people hardly notice it. They have discovered that Christian giving is not just about being serious it is fundamentally about being sacrificial.

The offering of sacrifice in the Bible was, in part, about offering to God something significant and costly, the best that we have. Thus sacrificial giving seeks to increase giving above the initial tithe until it makes an impact on our daily lives. This is sometimes called the graduated tithe.

This practice also works the other way round. For some on low incomes sacrificial giving may mean far less than the 10% of one's income. Perhaps the best biblical example of giving is the widow in the story of the widow's mite. Luke 21:1-4

How much should you give?

In the end only you can decide. Please take seriously the challenge to serious and sacrificial giving above. These are basic biblical teachings with which we should all be familiar. Whilst you may not be able to move towards such practices right away, why not plan to increase your giving slowly but significantly in line with these teachings.

Please also consider the practical challenges that we face. Currently we just about make ends meet, however we are unable to put aside extra money towards future mission projects and property demands. If we wish to grow and develop this must change.

We also operate an envelope scheme in many churches for those who find it helpful to be reminded of the regularity of their giving and to assist the church with tracking Gift Aid eligible donations. Others may prefer to set up a standing order to ensure that they do not forget to give, even if they are away.

For further details about any aspect of Church giving please contact either the Minister or the Circuit Treasurer.

Giving Tax Efficiently

Gift Aid increases the value of your donations and means we can benefit even more **at no extra cost to you.**

If you are a UK taxpayer, you can complete a one-off gift aid declaration for all your regular giving or just add it to a single donation if you prefer. This declaration allows us to reclaim the basic rate of tax on your gift - that's a whopping 25p for every £1 you give.



Higher rate tax payers can claim additional tax benefits for donations they make to charity, which you can keep or pass on to any charitable organisation. Simply indicate how much you have donated when completing your tax self-assessment form.

Even those who don't pay tax can help us by supporting the Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme. We are able to claim a top up payment in addition to the main scheme, regardless of the donor's tax eligibility. Donations (which may be anonymous) in cash of £20 or less, up to £5000 qualify for this (as at 1/9/15). So if you can only give smaller amounts, making these qualify by ensuring they are £20 or less in cash, will assist in achieving this total.

If you would like to complete a Gift Aid form you may use the declaration at the end of this document and pass it to our treasurer.

Legacies

In times gone by it was traditional that churches were remembered in the wills and legacies of Church members but for many reasons this has long ceased to be the regular state of affairs. Whilst there may be some embarrassment at such a request we would like to take this opportunity to gently challenge you to consider remembering your local Methodist Church in your will. We would offer you at least three reasons why you should consider this:

Firstly it is our duty as Christian disciples to exercise our financial affairs mindful of Christian teaching and the Mission of the Church. Such responsibilities include what we choose to do with our estate.

Secondly, we live in world where a great many of our children, grandchildren and great grandchildren know a prosperity unknown in previous lifetimes. For many there is no longer quite the same need, as once there was, to support new generations financially. Indeed it could be argued that there is a need to protect them from the dangers of too much wealth.

Thirdly, the Church requires significant and serious financial support if it is to survive and develop in the years to come. New mission initiatives need to be funded and the simple demands of our buildings will continue to grow.

What we are not asking!

We are not asking you to leave us all your money!

We ask you to prayerfully consider making a provision in your will, mindful of the responsibilities of Christian discipleship and bearing in mind the biblical teaching on significant, serious and sacrificial giving contained within this leaflet. We would suggest that 10% be considered the maximum appropriate donation in such a circumstance.

For what might my Legacy be used?

You may of course specify precisely how you wish your donation to be used. We would however ask you to be careful. The Church's needs will change over time. We would suggest that you consider two types of gift.

The first might be dedicated to Mission and Outreach and be used to support new mission initiatives to be decided by the Church Council. For example the employment of a youth worker or the equipping of a scheme for the community might fall into this category.

The second might be dedicated to the Maintenance and Development of the property, its fabric and its furnishings. Such a gift might be offered for a specific project or for the general upkeep of our buildings.

A bequest on the model trusts of the Methodist Church Act 1976 ensures that the gift will not be lost to Methodism should the original purpose have ceased. It will be used for a purpose as near as possible to that stated in the will. Further details on wording are available upon request.

Contact

Rev Jo Lightowler
Superintendent Minister
07528 359341
jolightowler@gmail.com

Miss Cathy Boocock
Circuit Treasurer
0113 2794816
cathy@lswmethodists.org.uk

Gift Aid Declaration

Please treat as Gift Aid donations all qualifying gifts of money made
(tick ALL relevant boxes)

Today in the past 4 years in the future

I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand the Methodist Church will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give on or after the 6 April 2018.

Please complete in capitals

Date:

Church Name:

Title	Initials*	Forename(s)	Surname*
Address* (House Number and first line of address, that is Road or Street Name are mandatory)			