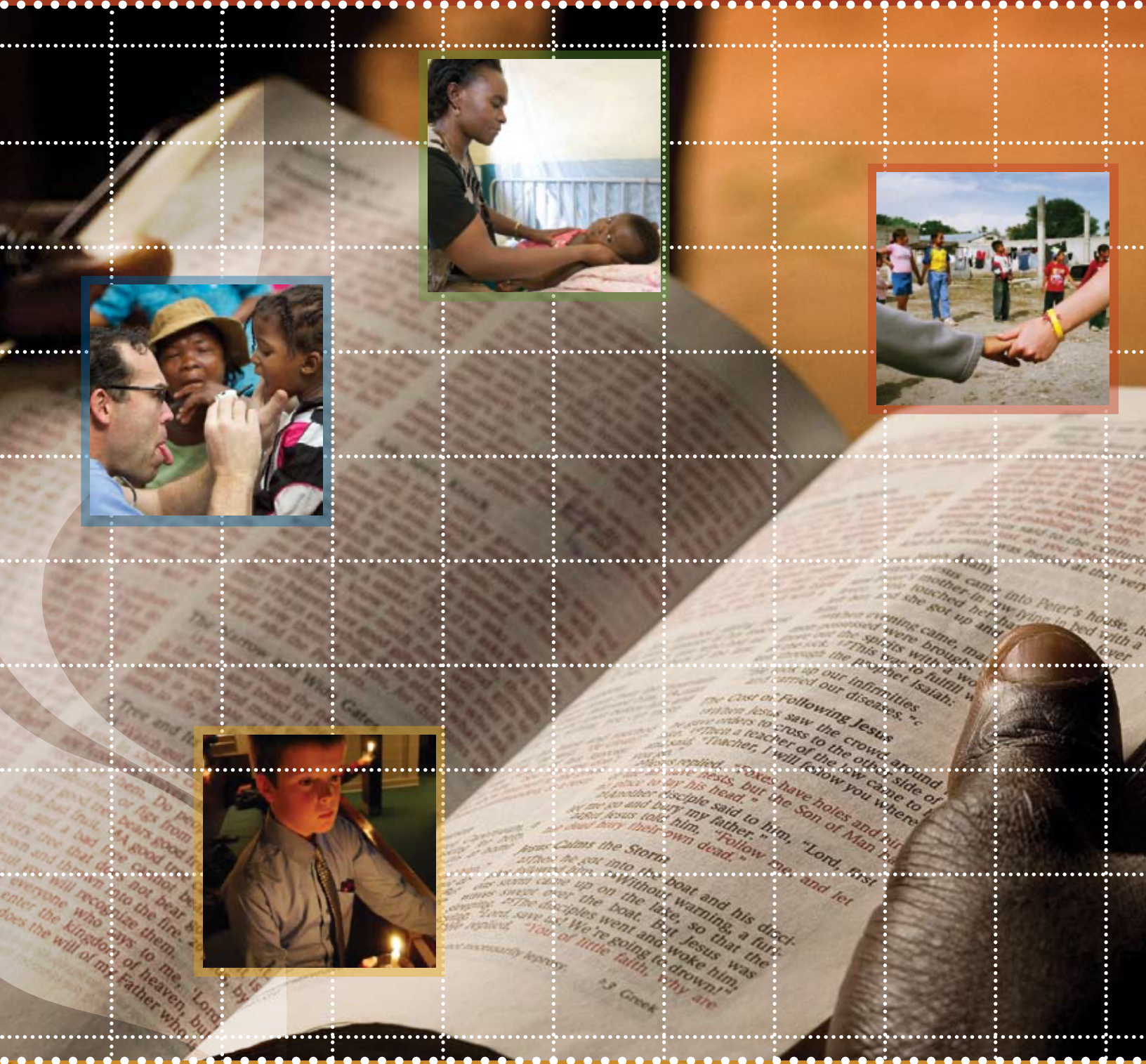


WHY WE GIVE



Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.

The people of The United Methodist Church™

WHY WE GIVE

“I give because giving makes me become more like Christ. I give because giving gives me joy incomparable.” —The Rev. Gina Kim, Korean Community United Methodist Church, Englewood, N.J.

Christians give through their church for many reasons, including—but not limited to—the following:

- We give because God first gave to us.
- We give because we love God.
- We give because it is what Christians do.
- We give because it is what *United Methodists* do.
- We give to make ministry and mission happen.
- We give because, together, we can do what no one individual or congregation can do separately.

WE GIVE BECAUSE GOD FIRST GAVE TO US.

That is the most basic of all reasons we give. You know the Bible verse, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life” (John 3:16, NRSV). That is the greatest gift God has given us. In addition to the promise of eternal life, God has given us this life and so much more.

What are the truly good things you enjoy in life? Contemplate those good things for a moment. Where did they come from?

WE GIVE BECAUSE WE LOVE GOD.

United Methodists are expected to live according to John Wesley’s “General Rules,” which Bishop Rueben Job summarized in his *Three Simple Rules* (Abingdon Press, 2007):

1. Do no harm.
2. Do good.
3. Stay in love with God.

Giving to God is a way to build a closer relationship with God. We give because it is one way to stay in love with God. Giving of our substance is a spiritual discipline in which we trust God will provide us with enough.

As we give, we stay in love with God.

“Our diseases of ‘affluenza’ and ‘creditis’ (enjoy now, pay later) evidence our lack of trust in a God of abundance. When the people of Israel wandered in the wilderness, God provided just enough manna for each day....The early church was founded on the concept of sufficiency: the people had all they needed, so they shared it. God is sufficient. God will guide us through.” —Bishop Susan W. Hassinger, Albany Area

“I give because God saved me through Jesus Christ, and he gives me the grace at every moment to live in the light of the Holy Spirit.” —Grace Song, St. Luke United Methodist Church, Killeen, Texas

WE GIVE BECAUSE IT IS WHAT CHRISTIANS DO.

We read in Acts 2:44-45, NRSV, “All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need.” In Acts 4:36-37, we learn that Barnabas “sold a field that belonged to him, then brought the money, and laid it at the apostles’ feet.” The apostle Paul took up a collection among the Gentile congregations to help the Christians in Judea, who were suffering from famine.

“When times are tough, more people go to churches asking for help... Continuing to give when times are tough helps me grow in faith. It’s easy to give when there’s plenty, but when I give out of lack, I am placing my trust even more in God’s hands.” —The Rev. Nancy Neelley, Sixty-first Avenue United Methodist Church, Nashville, Tenn.

The finest hours of being a Christian occur when we respond generously to help persons in need.

WE GIVE BECAUSE IT IS WHAT *UNITED METHODISTS* DO.

Did you know that giving generously to help persons in need is something Methodists, United Brethren and Evangelicals—the three roots of The United Methodist Church—did from their beginnings? John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement and a primary influence in the founding of the United Brethren in Christ and the Evangelical Association, urged the practice of sound financial stewardship. He expected his followers to do three things:

- Earn all you can.
- Save all you can.
- Give all you can.

Wesley modeled this stewardship. When his income increased, he continued his simple lifestyle and gave the surplus money to Methodist efforts to spread the gospel and help persons in need. We continue that tradition of stewardship and generous giving.

“I give because I cannot waste any penny that I have earned with so much blood and sweat. I want my money used in the best way for the best cause.”

—The Rev. Sungho Lee, Korean United Methodist Church of Santa Clara Valley, Cupertino, Calif.

WE GIVE TO MAKE MINISTRY AND MISSION HAPPEN.

“I developed the habit of offering as part of worship as a child. The local church has supported me in my journey—providing a place to know and to worship God, to fulfill God’s call, and to receive inspirational biblical messages for life. As I give, I support both the local ministries and the work of God through the church worldwide.” —The Rev. Aida Luz Beltran-Gaetan, retired elder, North Georgia Conference

In the days after his Resurrection, Jesus said to Peter and every disciple after Peter, “Feed my lambs” (John 21:15c, NRSV). Our discipleship is about fulfilling Jesus’ command. We want to do good because Jesus told us to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. We should want at least as much good for our neighbors as we want for ourselves.

Our congregations exist for making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. That is a gigantic task! However, it is not impossible because all things are possible through Christ!

In our time and place, little happens without money. Certainly, we can and should give of ourselves in nonfinancial ways. Face-to-face, person-to-person ministry is where much of the most significant, most substantial transformation of giver and recipient—of co-ministers—occurs. However, so much more needs to happen, much of which requires money.

When we give money through our church, not only does it pay for our pastor’s salary and for our church’s bills; it also does good beyond our congregation and even far beyond our community. The money we give helps to develop the next generation of principled Christian leaders for the church and the world. It builds new churches to bring new persons to Christ, and it teaches and coaches lay and clergy leaders how to revitalize existing congregations. It engages directly in ministry with persons who are impoverished. It combats devastating diseases around the world, such as malaria and HIV/AIDS.

“Giving is from the heart. Your first fruits go to God. When I was laid off from my job from June 2002 until September 2003, I never missed a Sunday of tithing....

I tithe to support my church; that is, the administrative side and any outreach efforts. My giving has never caused me to go without; and yes, there were times it was returned many times over.”
—Audrey Dowlen, Banks Chapel United Methodist Church, Springfield, Tenn.

“Giving is an attitude. When you give, you bestow freely without receiving a return, confer without receiving compensation, devote, surrender and yield. We rob ourselves of many things simply because we fail to give. God so loved the world that God gave. It’s time to take on the attitude of God. It is time to ask, ‘What can I give to the Lord? What can I give to others?’ That is giving at its maximum.” —The Rev. Eva Mudambanuki, Patterson Memorial United Methodist Church, Nashville, Tenn.

WE GIVE BECAUSE, TOGETHER, WE CAN DO WHAT NO ONE INDIVIDUAL OR CONGREGATION CAN DO SEPARATELY.

What if it were up to you alone to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ and to help form new churches among believers within the countries of the former Soviet Union?

What if you alone had the responsibility to address in Christ's name the causes and effects of malaria throughout Africa?

What if you alone were expected to ensure quality higher education was funded and available to Christians in the United States and throughout much of the world?

What if you alone were expected to develop and provide resources for a wide range of individual and congregational needs?

What if you alone were expected to arrange for the pensions of retired pastors and bishops who have given much of their lives to serve Christ and his church?

What if you alone were expected to do these things—and much more—all at the same time?

You could not do it. These efforts would be impossible for any single individual or congregation to accomplish alone.

However, as we give to the various offerings and apportionments of The United Methodist Church, we can share our resources to accomplish these otherwise impossible ministries and missions and much more.

United Methodists find strength and new possibilities in our connection. We do mission and ministry best when we do it together. We give to make this happen.

Why do *you* give?

“Every day, we hear more and more disturbing news about the U.S. and global economy. The problems and threats are real. In reality, in hard economic times, the ministry of local congregations and of United Methodists connectedly is needed even more, not less.” —Bishop Gregory V. Palmer, Illinois Great Rivers Conference

TO WHAT DO WE GIVE?

“Everyone is God's steward. One receives from God more than what one gives to God. Like good stewards, we must give according to how God has prospered us, not according to what we have left over. Give according to what we have felt in our hearts. To give is a privilege. God will provide and multiply. God wants us to give, not because God is poor or needs it, but because God wants to bless us.”

—Ivette Perez, Asbury United Methodist Church, Camden, N.J.

We give so our congregations can be in ministry and mission. We also give for the ministries and missions that we only can do together, or that we do better when we do them together. Our giving through the connection of The United Methodist Church takes many forms. Among the most significant are:

- Apportionments
- The Advance
- World Service Special Gifts
- Churchwide Special Sundays with Offerings

Apportionments

Apportionments are our first mile of mission giving. They form the framework for the rest of our connectional ministry and mission. When we give our money so our congregation can pay its apportionments, we give to these causes:

- **World Service Fund**—The World Service Fund helps to build new churches, pay missionary salaries, expand Bible studies, provide leadership for youth ministry and much more. World Service is the financial lifeline to a long list of Christian mission and ministry throughout the denomination. By giving to World Service, we each play our part in doing God’s work in the world.
- **Africa University Fund**—Africa University 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 27 countries in Africa receive postsecondary education and postgraduate degrees. When we support the Africa University Fund, we nurture students in Christian values and develop visionary leaders.
- **Ministerial Education Fund**—This fund is essential for The United Methodist Church to continue its commitment to recruit and educate quality pastoral leadership. Helping to defray the steep costs of getting a seminary education, the Ministerial Education Fund is one way The United Methodist Church supports those called into ordained and licensed ministry. The fund also equips our annual conferences with local-pastor courses of study, continuing education and many other efforts to recruit, educate and support people called to ordained and licensed ministry.
- **Black College Fund**—Through the Black College Fund, The United Methodist Church helps the 11 historically Black United Methodist-related colleges and universities to maintain solid and challenging academic programs, strong faculties and well-equipped facilities. Their graduates—teachers and doctors, ministers and bishops, judges, artists and entrepreneurs—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 and covers office and travel expenses. It also provides their pension and health benefit coverage.
- **Interdenominational Cooperation Fund**—The Interdenominational Cooperation Fund enables United Methodists to have a presence and a voice in the activities of several national and worldwide ecumenical and interreligious organizations. It provides the United Methodist share of the basic budgets of these organizations and pays travel expenses of United Methodist representatives to meetings that advocate for unity among the worldwide Christian church.
- **General Administration Fund**—This fund attends to the business of The United Methodist Church by ensuring trustworthy systems of oversight and financial accountability are executed and followed. The fund finances the administrative activities of the church, in addition to underwriting the basic costs of General Conference, funding the Judicial Council’s work, maintaining United Methodist official documents and historic artifacts, and designating historic shrines, landmarks and sites.

Designated Giving

- **The Advance**—Through The Advance, individuals, groups and congregations may choose to donate to any of many ministries and missions in the United States and around the world. The General Board of Global Ministries approves all projects, and 100 percent of all donations goes directly to the cause, with administrative costs paid by World Service.
- **World Service Special Gifts**—World Service Specials provide the opportunity for “second-mile” giving to special projects of general church agencies—for instance, the Africa University Endowment Fund, the Methodist Global Education Leadership Development Fund, the National Anti-Gambling Project and the Leonard M. Perryman Communications Scholarship for Ethnic Minority Students. Again, 100 percent goes to the selected projects.

Churchwide Special Sundays with Offerings

Six churchwide special Sundays provide for churchwide offerings to express our commitment: Human Relations Day, One Great Hour of Sharing, Native American Ministries Sunday, Peace with Justice Sunday, United Methodist Student Day and World Communion Sunday. These special Sundays approved by General Conference are the only Sundays with churchwide emphasis.

Human Relations Day—Human Relations Day is one of the opportunities for United Methodist churches to celebrate our connectional work. This day of social action and raising awareness aims to heal social ills at the national level through three programs.

1. Community Developers Program—Local congregations initiate the work of a community developer, create effective responses to specific community needs, create a network of community developers that offer resources to one another and provide training and resources for them.

2. United Methodist Voluntary Services Program—Seeks to be in supportive relationships with community organizations that work through volunteers to challenge oppression and injustice and to improve the lives and fulfill the potential of those whom Jesus called the “least of these.”

3. Youth Offender Rehabilitation Program—Supports ministries to nonviolent young offenders through education, advocacy or leadership training and development.

- o Sunday before the national birthday observance of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

One Great Hour of Sharing—The United Methodist Committee on Relief works to alleviate human suffering—whether caused by war, conflict or natural disasters—with open hearts and minds. Because UMCOR does not receive World Service funds or any other apportionments, the costs of doing business are underwritten by the One Great Hour of Sharing offering. This means that all gifts designated to specific programs can go 100% to those programs because UMCOR’s basic expenses are covered.

- o Fourth Sunday in Lent

Native American Ministries Sunday—Native American Ministries Sunday recognizes and supports the contributions of Native Americans to the church and society. Native American Ministries Sunday gifts help develop and strengthen Native American ministries within the annual conference if the conference has Native American ministries. If an annual conference has no Native American ministries the offering is used to expand the number of target cities in the Native American Urban Initiative. It also provides scholarships for Native Americans attending United Methodist schools of theology and other schools approved by the University Senate of The United Methodist Church.

- o Third Sunday of Easter

Peace with Justice Sunday—Peace with Justice Sunday offerings support programs that advocate for peace and justice at home and around the world. Because half of the offerings collected stays in the annual conference and is retained to fund local peace with justice programs, one can see a difference made locally. The other half of the offering is remitted to the General Board of Church and Society to help fund U.S. and global work in social action, public policy education and advocacy.

- o First Sunday after Pentecost

World Communion Sunday—World Communion Sunday funds World Communion Scholarships with at least one-half of the annual amount reserved for ministries beyond the United States. Gifts also provide for U.S. ethnic scholarship and ethnic in-service programs.

- o First Sunday of October

United Methodist Student Day—United Methodist Student Day supports United Methodist scholarships and the U.M. Student Loan Fund. Annual conferences participating in the Rebate Program may award one or more merit scholarships to United Methodist students. Participating conferences may award scholarships to U.M. students who reside in the conference and who attend or will attend a U.M.-related college or university.

- o Last Sunday of November

Churches may select to celebrate Churchwide Special Sundays on alternative dates.

RESOURCES THAT EXPLAIN WHY AND WHERE WE GIVE

The United Methodist Church: Making Disciples for the Transformation of the World (also known as *The United Methodist Handbook*). Available from United Methodist Communications. Product #84200209. Order online at www.umcsgiving.org or call (888) 346-3862.

“Together We Can DVD” *Stories of United Methodist Connectional Giving*
Product #421209. Order online at www.umcsgiving.org or call (888) 346-3862.

Why We Apportion Booklet. Product #420410. Order online at www.umcsgiving.org or call (888) 346-3862.

Web sites:

www.umcsgiving.org. One-stop site for information on connectional giving. Includes pages on apportioned funds, churchwide Special Sundays with offerings, The Advance, connectional giving programs, where the money goes, and Mission Moments and More. Resources are available on connectional giving for church members, church staff, clergy, church leaders and conference leaders. Resources include presentation materials, how to motivate giving, sermon starters, Special Sunday talking points and video clips. Includes a section for the “First-Time Visitor.”

Connectional Giving Facebook page. Connect with us online and let’s chat at www.facebook.com/umcsgiving.

www.connectionalgiving.blogspot.com. Shares connectional giving stories, particularly on how connectional giving changes lives.

www.umcom.org. For a free, basic, online course on “Connectional Giving,” go to <http://umcom.org/cg101>.

www.gbod.org/stewardship. Web site of the Center for Christian Stewardship, General Board of Discipleship. Provides resources and suggestions for providing stewardship—financial and otherwise—within personal lives, families and congregations.

<http://new.gb-gm-umc.org>. Web site of the General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church. Provides a wealth of information on United Methodist missions, including details on projects supported by The Advance.

SHARING
GOD’S
GIFTS

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To order printed copies of this resource, visit www.umcsgiving.org
or call (888) 346-3862

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