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## 2021 Giving Pledge FAQs

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Through the 2021 Giving Pledge, Elmwood members are asked to make a financial commitment to support the Church's ministry, operations, and transformational mission to engage, equip and empower our members and our community.

We hope each member will prayerfully consider pledging at a level of generosity that flows from the outpouring of God's grace and blessings in their life.

The **Frequently Asked Questions** below provides information about the 2021 Pledge and the importance of member participation.

### **What is a pledge?**

A pledge is your giving commitment to Elmwood for the year, which you can fulfill weekly, monthly, quarterly, or annually. Your pledge amount may be changed -- increased or decreased during the year -- should your financial circumstances change.

### **Why is it important to pledge?**

The tradition of giving back to God and to the church comes from the Biblical practice of tithing, which means to return a tenth of our earnings to the Lord. Financial Stewardship is an important component of our life in Christ. Returning to God a portion of what He has given us, is a tangible way to express our faith.

When each of us give as we are able, together we can continue to sustain our ministry, transform lives across our congregation and community, and do God's work and will in the world.

### **Why does the church need my money?**

God does not need your money, but the Church does. As a not-for-profit organization, Elmwood needs your financial support to fund our worship, Christian education, congregational support ministries, and community outreach programs. Your gifts also are used to cover our administrative expenses such as church staff salaries -- including our senior pastor's -- utility bills and other operating expenses. Additionally, we have been able to address several critical, costly building renovations and repairs -- such as the Narthex project -- through your financial support.

### **Do I have to pledge?**

No church member is required to pledge to be a part of Elmwood, and you can give to Elmwood without pledging. However, when you make a pledge, you enable us to better plan and manage our finances and, in turn, strengthen the life, ministries and mission of our church.

### **Does it matter how much I pledge?**

Some members may choose to tithe, by giving 10% of their income to the Church. Others will give a different percentage, and still others will give as they are able. Every pledge makes a difference, regardless of the amount.

We love and accept people at Elmwood regardless of how much they pledge. We simply hope that all our members will give faithfully in gratitude for all they have received from God and as a sign of their commitment to the mission and future of Elmwood.

### **How is pledging different from giving money to the offering on Sunday mornings?**

While donations via the weekly offerings or on special occasions are used to support the Church and are greatly appreciated, they are unpredictable and can cause cash flow challenges.

Conversely, committed pledges and consistent giving make it possible for us to sustain our vital ministries and help us develop and maintain a financially sound Church budget.

### **What does the Annual Giving Pledge mean if I already tithe?**

If you currently tithe and are blessed to be in position to do more in 2021, we hope you will prayerfully consider pledging a beyond-the-tithe amount.

### **Do I no longer give directly to the various ministries I regularly support?**

We hope members will continue to give generously to ministries that depend on your support to carry out their missions, such as the Deacon Fund and Scholarship and Youth ministries. Your contributions to these and other Elmwood ministries are not included in the Church's general operating budget; rather are designated solely for use by the respective ministry.

### **If I already give regularly, must I submit the pledge form?**

All Elmwood members are encouraged to complete and return the pledge form regardless of their current giving level or frequency. By submitting your pledge, you better enable us to sustain and grow our ministry, serve our community of believers, and answer God's call to work and witness in all that we do.

### **How do I pledge?**

To make your financial commitment to Elmwood, complete and return the Annual Giving Pledge form. You can fill out the pledge form online, request a hardcopy of the form be mailed to you, or simply email your pledge information to [elmwoodpledge@gmail.com](mailto:elmwoodpledge@gmail.com).

### **How do I pay my pledge?**

There are several ways you can pay your pledge:

- You can make an on-line contribution by visiting our website [atthewood.org](http://atthewood.org) and click on the "Donate" button. There you will find information on how to give via PayPal, Givelify, and CASH APP;
- You can mail your check to the Church office; or
- You drop your check through the Church's mail slot.

Whichever way you give, please use the comment section to indicate your envelope number, your full name, and how you are designating your funds.

### **Can I change my pledge if my financial circumstances change?**

Yes. We understand that circumstances in our lives change and you may want to change your pledge, either up or down. Simply contact the Church Treasurer with your updated information.

A pledge is a promise, not a contract, but letting us know of your need to change your commitment helps us anticipate our cash flow and better manage our budget.