

Giving Guide

This year we invite you to celebrate the joy of belonging to each other through generosity as you offer your estimate of giving card for 2018. We encourage you to think of your financial commitment as a creative expression of your faith, finding ways to engage in ministry by putting God first in your giving and living. We also hope that you will experience the joy that comes from knowing your gifts honor God and change lives. Our challenge as Christians is to find ways to grow deeper in our faith. One way to do this is to offer our financial blessings to God through our giving. Through our offerings, we invest in God's vision and mission and create an opportunity for God to work through us. Our gifts to God each week are an act of worship. Our offerings are crucially important if we are to create a vital community encountering Jesus Christ, and living abundantly through service to God and neighbor.

Why is giving important?

The Bible has much to say about wisdom and finances. Over 2,300 verses that tell us to be generous and good stewards of our resources. Jesus taught generosity and sacrifice. He called his followers to serve not wealth but God. In the parable of the talents he taught that God will hold us each accountable for what we do with all our earthly possessions.

What is expected of me?

The Bible teaches us to give a tithe, or the first 10 percent of what we earn, to God and the church's work. For some, giving one tenth is a very

difficult goal. For others, it is the starting point, and their giving far exceeds 10%. The important thing is to start somewhere. Give in proportion to your income. Let your giving reflect an appropriate offering to God given your means, and let your offerings express both your desire to serve the Lord and your investment in God's work. Begin by determining what percentage of your income you are already giving to God. If you are not yet tithing, consider taking a step toward tithing this year. If you now give 3% of your income, consider increasing your gift to 4%, adding 1% each year until you reach the tithing goal. Our prayer is that everyone will grow in his or her faith through giving financially to the ministries of the church and experience the joy and blessings that come from financial generosity.

Continue to Pursue Doing Good

"So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up. So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all..."

—Galatians 6:9-10

Why do I need to return an Estimate of Giving card?

There are two reasons why it is important that every member of our church family return an estimate of giving card. First, the process of prayerfully asking God to guide your decision and then making a commitment to serve the Lord with your financial gifts is an act of worship, an expression of gratitude and praise to God. Second, on a more practical note, your commitment allows our church to budget and better plan for our ministries, key objectives, and mission outreach programs.

What if financial hardship prohibits me from making a commitment this year?

Don't let your inability to give at this time keep you from worship. Remember that God honors your faithfulness. Your acceptance at Seaside United Methodist Church will never be based upon your capacity to give. We ask that everyone return an estimate of giving card even if it is a limited financial commitment at this time. You can always increase or decrease your commitment if your situation changes by calling the church. Also, be sure to let our pastoral staff know of your situation so that they can pray for you and support you during any difficulty. From time to time we also offer classes to assist members to become better managers of all that God gives them. For additional information, call the church office at 910-579-5753.

We reap what we sow.

"Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for you reap whatever you sow. If you sow to your own flesh, you will reap corruption from the flesh; but if you sow to the Spirit, you will reap eternal life from the Spirit."

—Galatians 6:7-8

Why do I need to turn in a new commitment card each year?

First, it is a renewal of your statement of faith and your commitment to God and His church. In addition, financial situations change from year to year, and if we are growing in our faith, our annual commitment should likewise reflect that giving growth. Each year, our church budget is based upon the growing commitments of our congregation.