

Questions About Giving at Saxapahaw United Methodist Church

- 1. Why do we collect an offering in worship?** *The people of God have brought an offering to the Lord since the beginning of time. Cain and Abel brought the first offerings to the Lord, and Noah offered burnt offerings after leaving the ark (Genesis 4 & 9). Our offering affirms that everything we have comes from God: “The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it” (Psalm 24:1). Our offering is an opportunity to express gratitude and joy for all God has given us. Today, believers offer gifts and talents, prayers, and money – relinquishing the things of this world so that God may bless them and use them for building the kingdom.*
- 2. Who funds the ministries of Saxapahaw United Methodist Church?** *The simple answer is you do!*
- 3. What types of ministry programs are we supporting financially through our giving?** *All mission and ministry flows from our worship of the Triune God. Your financial gifts help to fund worship needs, small group ministry development, ministry with children and youth, Sunday School, and various outreach activities, from VBS to our Trunk-Or-Treat to our work with BEJ Elementary School.*
- 4. What does it mean to tithe or give proportionally?** *In the days of Moses, God asked that his people give back to him the first fruits of their labors as a way to show their commitment and love for God. God required his people to give back one-tenth of all that God had given them. This amount – one-tenth – is called the tithe. If tithing is a new concept for you, suddenly giving one-tenth of your income can be very difficult. No one (God included) expects you to ignore your basic needs. If you are just starting to give regularly start with a smaller proportional amount of your income (say two or three percent) and work towards the tithe gradually. Proportional giving lets your giving grow as your blessings grow; over time you can increase the fraction that you give back to God.*
- 5. Who should give/tithe?** *All who desire to worship God and express gratitude for God’s good gifts; tithing is an act of worship. It is not a tax or an obligation, but a spiritual discipline that helps believers acknowledge, recognize, and give thanks to the One who created all things.*
- 6. How is a tithe different from an offering?** *Both tithes and offerings are used to meet the day-to-day needs of the church’s mission and ministry. The tithe is that portion you have vowed to give to God for the church. The offering is giving above and beyond the tithe. Today we have a variety of special offerings (giving beyond our tithe) so that we can show our support for SAFE Food Ministry, the BEJ Snack Pack Ministry, the SVK Scholarship Fund, and the Pastor’s Discretionary Fund. Occasionally we also take up special offerings for Disaster Relief or ZOE Ministry or some other special need.*
- 7. What is a pledge, and why should I pledge?** *A pledge is a promise to give a certain amount of financial support to the church over the course of the year. Everyone is encouraged to make a pledge because making and keeping promises is an important spiritual discipline that fosters faithfulness and mutual responsibility. It also reflects faithful stewardship of your resources as you budget and plan for the year. Pledging also enables the church to make plans for our programs and ministries for the coming year. A pledge is not a contract; it is a promise between you and God and the church.*

- 8. I am a person with very limited funds (retired, under-employed, youth, child, etc.). How can I help?** *Even if you have very little, God blesses the cheerful giver. Jesus once praised a widow who had two coins, not because of how much money she gave but because of how much faith she exercised. God calls each one of us to be generous but not foolish. There is never a bad time in life to begin to develop healthy habits of giving.*
- 9. Does my pledge make a difference?** *Whether you pledge 25¢ a week, or \$2,500 a month, your pledge makes a difference. To you, it is one way to show your commitment to God and the church. It is also an important way for you to give thanks for all that God has already given you. To the church, your pledge gives the church leadership a much better idea of how much we can expect to receive, so that we know what programs we can afford to support. Your pledge is also a very important sign of how much support we have from the congregation for our mission and ministry.*
- 10. What if I have more questions?** *Our finance team members include Lorraine McNamara, Wendy McBane, Tracey Prendergast, and Jane Cairnes. Our lay leader is Barbara Christy. Our pastor is Sue Eldon. Please feel free to ask any one of them questions – they will be glad to help you.*