

SGUMC Finances and Financial Giving Q&A

How is the mission of Shady Grove United Methodist Church funded?

Shady Grove United Methodist Church (SGUMC) relies on the generosity of financial giving from individuals just like you to fund its efforts to make disciples of Jesus Christ. While our church has a denominational connection with other United Methodist churches, we receive no denominational funding at the local, national or international level.

How much does it take to operate a church the size of SGUMC?

Shady Grove is a healthy and vibrant church in a growing community, that delivers an extensive range of ministries, including community outreach, missions, music ministry and discipleship opportunities for all ages. Despite the time and talent that our members, and friends commit to carrying-out these essential ministries, many people simply are not aware of the financial requirements necessary to make it all happen. General operating costs for a church of our medium to large size approach \$1 million a year, and every one of those dollars is prayerfully allocated to achieve the maximum return on our mission.

Does Shady Grove UMC hold an annual campaign for financial giving or pledging for the upcoming calendar year? Am I able to make a pledge at other times of the year?

Yes, and yes. Each fall SGUMC conducts a stewardship campaign to inform the church membership of anticipated financial operating needs for the upcoming calendar year. Contributions are requested in the form of an annual pledge to the church general operating budget. Individuals wishing to make a pledge to the operating budget at times outside the fall campaign are welcome to do so. Pledges can be made online through the church's Realm system. Pledge cards and envelopes are also available in the display racks located in the sanctuary and fellowship hall foyers. There are approximately 275 regular giving units that we rely on to satisfy our financial needs. Pledging units provide about 70% of our annual operating funds, non-pledging faithful givers provide about 15% and we rely on guests and non-regular givers for the remaining 15%

Is there an expected dollar amount or percentage of my income that I should be giving to the church each year?

There is no expected dollar amount or percentage, as each member's situation is different in terms of their financial situation, other charitable giving, as well as time and talents they provide to SGUMC. Shady Grove teaches proportional giving. Proportional giving is about offering our "first fruits," the best that we have to God who has given us all. That first portion is not an expectation but a grateful response to God and a joyful participation in God's mission and ministry. The practice of giving a set proportion, right from the start, to God is a spiritual practice that blesses the giver because it puts into perspective all that we have and all that we are. Shady Grove depends on many grateful and generous givers supporting the incredible number of ministries of our church community.

Are there controls in place at Shady Grove UMC to manage the financial gifts received?

SGUMC works diligently to maintain best practices for the handling of money both on Sunday mornings and in the church office, led by our staff Financial Administrator. Additionally, an independent accounting firm is engaged annually to perform agreed upon procedures in accordance with attestation standards established by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants.

The financial strength of our church is overseen by a Finance Team comprised of lay leaders within SGUMC and the Lead Pastor. This group functions within the parameters established in our denomination's *Book of Discipline*. Each year, the Finance Team works with church staff to prepare an annual operating budget. Then, throughout the calendar year, the Finance Team reviews anticipated income and expenses against actual income and expenses. Financial status is communicated monthly to the church membership through a narrative report distributed by email.

What forms of payment are available when making a financial gift?

There are a number of options available for making a financial gift to SGUMC.

- 1) Cash or check gifts may be placed in the collection plate during Sunday morning worship. Offering envelopes with your name and giving number are available upon request through the church office; or, you may use a generic offering envelope located in racks on the back of each pew.
- 2) Credit/debit card payment or electronic funds transfer (EFT) from your checking or savings account, at a 1% to 3% cost to the church, may be made through Realm Connect. Financial gifts may be set up as one-time or recurring. (For more information on Realm Connect, please visit the church website www.shadygroveumc.net/realm)
- 3) Individuals desiring to use recurring or periodic EFT payments may contact the church office to set up the transfers.
- 4) Secure financial giving is also available through text. Simply text SERVE to 73256 and provide your credit/debit card information.
- 5) Transferring stock or utilizing other tax strategy options is a great way to make a financial gift that benefits both you and SGUMC. To learn more about these options, please pick up a copy of our *A Guide to Christian Giving* brochure located in the display rack in the sanctuary foyer or on our church website www.shadygroveumc.net/give and then click the link to download the brochure.

How do I obtain a year-end financial giving statement?

Access to your individual financial giving record at any time, including a year-end statement, is available through Realm Connect, SGUMC's church management system. To ensure the privacy of your financial information a user id & password is required. For information on obtaining access to Realm Connect, visit the church website www.shadygroveumc.net/realm. Statements are also mailed a couple of times each year to givers who are not connected to Realm.

What is the annual apportionment that Shady Grove United Methodist pays?

Through our affiliation with the United Methodist denomination, SGUMC is connected to a global United Methodist Church which is comprised of local churches throughout the world. Connectional giving in the form of an annual apportionment (our local church share) enables the global United Methodist Church to cover administrative expenses and accomplish missionally what no local church could ever accomplish on its own. For additional information on where apportioned funds are distributed, please visit the United Methodist website at www.umc.org/en/how-we-serve

Why does the church have General Operating and Caring for Our House Funds?

The General Operating fund exists to pay all costs associated with operating SGUMC on a daily basis. This includes expenses incurred for music & worship; pastor & staff salaries and benefits; Christian formation; mission & evangelical outreach; administrative support and ongoing facilities maintenance. Income to offset these expenses is received through financial gifts pledged as part of SGUMC's annual stewardship campaign as well as non-pledged financial gifts received through the Sunday morning offering and at other times throughout the year.

The Caring for Our House Fund (formerly Building Fund) exists to separately raise funds for the purpose of making mortgage payments and paying for periodic large maintenance expenditures such as new roofs, HVAC unit replacements, painting, etc. necessary to properly care for and maintain our existing facilities.