

Damascus United Methodist Church

2024-25 Growing in Generosity Campaign

Frequently Asked Questions

1. The Church has not had a pledge campaign for several years. Why is there a need to have one now?

Over the past several years, we have witnessed many disruptions to the normal patterns of life. As an employer that pays payroll taxes, during the pandemic the Church was entitled to benefit from several Federal programs which served to mute the adverse impact that closing our doors had on our budget. Now that we are past the pandemic, the Federal programs have ended and our attendance, while trending upward, has not yet reached pre-pandemic levels. To properly plan our spending level in this new environment, we wish to gain more certainty over what we can reasonably expect to receive in donations. It is customary for churches to conduct campaigns seeking pledges of support from their members. The fact that DUMC is holding a pledge campaign after a break of several years is simply one sign of a post-pandemic return to normalcy.

2. Why is this campaign important?

Generosity is an integral component of discipleship as it reflects a person's commitment to follow Christ's teachings by acting with compassion and selflessness. By giving, individuals participate in God's work on earth, supporting ministries, missions, and outreach efforts. It is a tangible way to express love for God and neighbor. Financial generosity is a spiritual discipline. It encourages believers to trust God with their resources and recognize that everything ultimately belongs to Him.

Support of the DUMC's operating fund is critical to all aspects of ministry which spring from the Church. The Church functions as a center of gravity which attracts many individuals who bring a range of talents and resources. The collaborative efforts of these members of our Church family are what fuels the Church's ability to live out its vision. If the Church does not have sufficient funds to pay clergy and staff, to maintain our properties and to provide worship and educational opportunities that will draw people, then all the various ministries of the Church will ultimately suffer.

3. I am reluctant to make a pledge because I am concerned that my financial circumstances may change. What happens if I don't fulfill my pledge?

All that we can ask of people who pledge is that they make a good faith effort to fulfill their pledge. We do understand that unexpected obstacles to the fulfillment of the pledge may arise in the form of health issues, the loss of a job or other source of income, or significant new expenses. In those cases, we ask that you let the church office know that you will be amending your pledge so that we are able to maintain accurate forecasts of income. On the other hand, if you are fortunate to receive an unexpected blessing, we ask that you prayerfully consider increasing your pledge.

4. Most pledge campaigns are held in the fall and for one year. Why is this campaign being held now and seeking pledges for 18 months?

Due to the importance of obtaining an accurate picture of the likely amounts of income for the remainder of this year, we felt that it would be best to not wait until the more traditional fall time period for this campaign. Another factor in setting the timing of this campaign is to avoid a potential conflict with a capital campaign which is likely to occur later this year. To avoid the need of running concurrent operating fund and capital campaigns, we are seeking pledges covering an 18-month period now. Looking ahead, it is probable that starting in the fall of 2025, DUMC will move to a more traditional annual fall pledge campaign for the benefit of the Operating Fund.

5. If the campaign goals are met, will the Church have sufficient funds to meet all of its expenses including Mission Share (formerly known as apportionments) payments to the Conference?

While it is certainly our strong desire to pay 100% of the Mission Share assessments, with limited funds available we have prioritized meeting our payroll obligations and paying bills which are needed for the ongoing operations of the Church. Our current amended budget, which was used for setting the campaign goal, calls for paying approximately

30% of the 2024 Mission Share assessment of \$95,443. We intend to grow that percentage payment over time and hope to return to our past practice of paying 100% of the Mission Share assessments as soon as possible.

6. What will happen if we fall short of our pledge goals?

The Church Council recently enacted cuts to the original 2024 Operating Fund budget to bring spending in-line with the income expected to be produced if we achieve the goal for this campaign. Because the Church has a limited amount of cash in reserve which is not subject to restrictions on its use, further cuts may be required if we fall short of the goals of this campaign.

7. Will this campaign raise sufficient funds to pay for major repairs as needed for all of the Church's property?

This campaign is geared towards securing pledges for the payment of on-going operating expenses. It will not pay for major repairs or the replacement of significant components of the Church's property such as HVAC systems, roofs, windows, parking lot pavement, the organ, etc. The Church's Trustees group has been charged with the task of determining the scope, cost and timing of such expenditures. That information will be reported to the Congregation when that is known, and a decision is made as to the need for a capital campaign. The Church has not had a capital campaign since 2014.

8. How should I go about determining what my fair share would be in determining the size of my pledge?

All giving should be done not from a sense of obligation but from a cheerful heart. In the Bible, the law given through Moses required that the Israelites give a tithe or one-tenth of the produce of their land and livestock to support the priesthood. Today, many Christians donate a tithe, or 10 percent of their income, to support their church. We ask that you give prayerful consideration of your financial circumstances and your desire to be a contributor in support of the ministries of this Church. If it is not possible to give 10%, consider a smaller amount and then seek to increase the percentage over time.

9. Is my donation tax deductible?

While the Church is not able to provide tax advice, DUMC is recognized as a charitable organization under section 501c3 of the Internal Revenue Code and thus contributions would ordinarily qualify as deductions for Federal income tax purposes. However, you should consult with a tax professional to be sure.

10. What are the ways that I can make payments towards my pledge?

A convenient and no-cost way to make payments towards your pledge is to establish a recurring charge to your bank account. Contact the Church's bookkeeper, Mike Powers, and he can assist you in setting that up. You can reach Mike at mike.powers@damascusumc.org or by cell phone at 515-494-3327.

You can also make one-time payments or set up recurring charges to your debit or credit card through the Church's website at www.damascusumc.org/give. You may also wish to consider tax-advantaged ways of donating investment securities or direct required minimum distributions from Individual Retirement Accounts. Please contact Mike Powers to learn more about those options.

Of course, there is always the old-fashioned way of putting your donation in the collection plate on Sunday or mailing it to the Church office at:

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