



## Helping Churches Reopen Amid COVID-19

### Giving

Because we have not been able to gather safely for in-person worship, some congregations are experiencing financial woes. Churches can provide alternative ways for members and others to make financial contributions beyond the Sunday offering plate.

Congregations with a history of excellent stewardship are not experiencing financial problems from this downturn. One of the keys of successful stewardship is to help the congregation experience the joy of giving. Most people give to the church because it feels good to do so. The Christian understanding of stewardship is an important part of our [UMC membership vows](#) – in which we pledge to support the United Methodist Church with our prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness.

- One way to start making up ground on giving is to preach the joy of being a generous giver. Educate your congregation that giving is a spiritual discipline that leads them closer in their walk with God. Not sure where to start? [Download this resource from Discipleship Ministries.](#)
- This is also a prime opportunity to overcome the hesitation by many to give to the church [online or via smartphone giving apps](#). This hesitation seems more prevalent in rural churches and in those with older congregations. Some also will balk when they see that online giving often comes with an administrative fee (usually about 2 percent).
- We need to educate those who are hesitant about how they can give electronically and the benefits of doing so. (Are we really going to turn away a \$100 donation because \$2 of it covers the cost of the transaction?)
- We know younger members are more comfortable with electronic giving. We also know they will give on a regular basis, but many are not able to donate large amounts at a time.

- There are many options for online giving. Start with the bank your church already has a relationship with, and ask them what online bill paying options they provide. These are typically free services.
- Since a lot of us seem to live on our smartphones, a church giving app is a good alternative. We have collected links to some of the best apps in the [Giving Section of the UMCSC Coronavirus Resources](#).
- Once you start offering ways for members to donate online, don't forget the traditional methods.
  - Let your members know they can mail a check to the church.
  - Some churches also are providing a secure lockbox where members can drop off their donations.
    - If your church offers this, make sure you are doing so safely – no personal contact and no handing off checks to a person.
    - Health experts recommend leaving checks and cash in the lockbox for at least two days before removal.
    - Make sure bonded persons count and take money to the bank.