

About Pledging

What is a pledge and why does it matter?

A pledge is a commitment of financial support for the upcoming fiscal year. Typically pledges are paid in increments—weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually. You can give to the church without pledging, of course. Some people put money in the offering plate at worship each week. Others give in a lump sum at the beginning or end of the year. But we encourage annual pledging because making and keeping promises is an important spiritual discipline that fosters faithfulness and mutual responsibility. Pledges also help us plan more wisely.

How much should I give?

There are many ways to decide how much to give. One traditional way is “percentage giving,” calculating your pledge by a percentage of your annual income. This is a biblical practice—dedicating the “first fruits” of one’s labor right off the top, rather than offering what’s left over after all other expenses are taken care of. Traditionally, a “tithe” is understood to be 10%. Some people at Immanuel give at this level, but not everyone is able to do so. If you are a first-time giver, you might be comfortable giving 3-5%. If you already give annually, challenge yourself to raise the percentage of your giving with each new year. No matter what you give, the point is to discover and commit to a level of giving that honors God’s generosity to you and that increases your joy.

Why do we give?

How much you give matters; but the *why* of giving also matters. Here are some reasons people at Immanuel give:

Belonging—Immanuel is not a charitable organization in the ordinary sense. It is our spiritual home. It makes a difference in our lives in a way that other causes, worthy as they are, may not. Therefore, we give our fair share, and don’t take a “free ride.” We give to us, because we belong to each other.

Saying thanks—All we have comes from God and belongs to God. We are only caretakers of what we’ve been given. By giving back generously, we thank God for his loving ownership in our lives and we dedicate what we’ve been given to God’s purposes. Giving is a practice of thanksgiving that over time makes us even more grateful. It opens our hearts to the awareness that all life is a wondrous gift.

Practicing trust—Giving generously teaches us to trust God’s promise to care for us and the world. We want to see how much we can live without so that we can finally discover that what we really need most is God and each other! In turn, this leap of faith bestows many wonderful blessings—sometimes a simpler lifestyle, frequently strengthened relationships, always greater hope and deeper awareness of God’s presence in our daily lives.

Nuts and bolts—Immanuel is self-supporting. Salaries, ministries, building maintenance—all are paid for from pledges, other financial gifts, and income from building use. It costs a lot to support our community, carry on our ministry, and care for our buildings and grounds. And so we give!

Is the money I give used wisely?

We may not always agree about spending priorities at Immanuel, but financial decisions are always made democratically, after prayer and deliberation. Each year our books are independently audited. Financial data are always open to scrutiny and are analyzed regularly by the Finance Committee and by the Session. We are working conscientiously to balance our budget, support our ministries, care for our buildings and grounds, and plan for the long haul.

How do I make a pledge?

Each fall a pledge card will reach you by mail. If you are not on our mailing list, call the church office at 520-296-2253 or email the church office (lois@immanuelpc.org) and request a card. When you have prayerfully decided how much to pledge, fill out the card and bring it with you to Commitment Sunday, usually held in mid-November. If you miss Commitment Sunday, drop your card in the offering plate the next time you’re at worship, or mail it to the church office, to the attention of the Finance Committee.