GENEVALUTHERAN

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF GENEVA
ENGLISH-SPEAKING CONGREGATION

Stewardship in Our Community

What does this congregation mean to you?
In what ways does the church provide meaning and hope for your life?



It's about all of life

Our congregation understands stewardship to be about the ways we care for all that God has entrusted to us: our time, our personal gifts and talents, and our money. It is our firm belief that all of these things are not for our use alone but are entrusted to us for the sake of others. We talk about stewardship and practice stewardship because it is foundational for all of Christian life.

What's happening this fall?

Each fall, as we begin planning for the new year, our congregation engages in a stewardship emphasis for several weeks. It's a time to reassess our many gifts and what God may be calling us to do with them.

What is asked of me?

When we join this congregation as members, we promise to participate in the community's life by giving our time, talents, and money to support our mission and ministry together. This fall, we are each encouraged to reflect on what we can offer for the coming year.

Part of this reflection has been taking place in worship. But this process truly bears fruit when it engages your understanding of the gospel and how you live in response to God's love. As a community we offer some suggestions, outlining needs and opportunities to serve. You may also have new ideas and are invited to add other options to which you feel called. Each of us also is invited to make a financial estimate of giving for the coming year. More information is on the back of this page.

A time for giving thanks

The fall stewardship emphasis is a time to give thanks for the many gifts around and within us, and to offer them with joy for God's work in the world. We're glad you are here to join with us in this time of giving together.

Basics of Financial Giving

Why give?

The simple answer is that our congregation is completely self-sustaining—meaning there is no source of funds for our ministry beyond our members. No government or church body or external fund supports our church monetarily; that is the task of our members. Our annual expenses currently amount to about CHF318,000.

But the deeper answer, and the more important one, is really a question. What does this community mean to you? Why do you make time in your busy life to be part of it? In what ways does the church provide meaning and hope for your life? The answers to those questions are the real reasons to give.

Why make an estimate of giving?

We encourage members to make an estimate of giving each year—that is, a written intention to give a certain amount. There are several reasons for this practice. First, it helps the congregation to plan: we need to have a general idea of what to expect in terms of income as we prepare the budget for the coming year. More importantly, writing down our personal plans and sharing them helps us each to be intentional in our giving, building it into our budgets and into our lives. You can always change your estimate of giving if circumstances change.

How much should I give?

There is no easy answer to that question. It's a personal decision that no one can make for you. However, scripture and Christian tradition do give us some guidance.

The biblical model of giving is a tithe—ten percent of one's income. The Bible constantly reminds us that all that we have actually belongs to God; specifically designating a portion to give away is a way of naming that affirmation and allowing it to shape how we live.

So we encourage you to consider thinking of your giving in terms of a percentage. What percentage of your income are you currently giving away (to charities, to family members in need of support, to your church)? What portion of that total are you currently giving to our congregation? Can you increase those amounts this year? Please take the time to ask these questions prayerfully and seriously. For those with families, it can lead to a discussion about what values are held in common and the role of the Gospel in your life together.

How should I make my gift?

Many choose to make a recurring gift through bank transfer. This has the great benefit of regularity—you never forget to make a payment and don't miss giving when you are out of town. For those who prefer to give in U.S. dollars, the congregation also accepts USD checks. However we give, we must ensure that the children and youth of our community learn that giving is a basic part of our Christian commitment.

What will my gift support?

Your gift will go toward the costs of worship, pastoral care, educational programs, building, staff, and all of our ministry—sharing God's love near and far. Through those things, it will go toward the deeper work of our congregation: giving members and guests a spiritual home in Geneva; enabling rich and creative worship; introducing children to Christian community; deepening faith through classes, service opportunities, gatherings, following together the Christ who gives himself away.