

An Oasis of Hope: Expanding the Vision

Tools to help you decide what to give...

We trust each individual or family to decide what they are able to give, seeking God's guidance through prayer and reflection. Below, we offer information you may find helpful as you make your decision.

Thinking about your giving in relation to your values

As we gather together to care for and expand our Oasis of Hope, we share:

- a yearning to make a difference in our world;
- a desire to bring people together and heal our divisions;
- a call to care for people in need;
- a love for beautiful, inspiring music;
- a challenge to reach out beyond ourselves with a new worship service;
- a heart for our children and youth.

When you give to Edwards Church, your gift makes these things possible. Your giving goes to support:

- Pastor who leads worship, offers pastoral care, supports the volunteers who do so much, and represents our congregation in the wider community;
- Interim director of Christian Education, and ultimately a new associate pastor for faith formation and outreach;
- Commissioned minister of music, organist and pianist to help us make beautiful music;
- Wider Mission and Faith in Action (16% of your giving goes to programs beyond our church that help heal and care for our world);
- Education and faith formation for all ages, including Christian Exploration (Church School), Bible Studies, youth programs, book groups, and more;
- Care for our peaceful, beautiful campus, where many groups meet for healing, education, and community building, including through Open Spirit;
- An administrative assistant who extends a warm welcome and helps organize the chaos!

Thinking about your giving in relation to the needs of the church

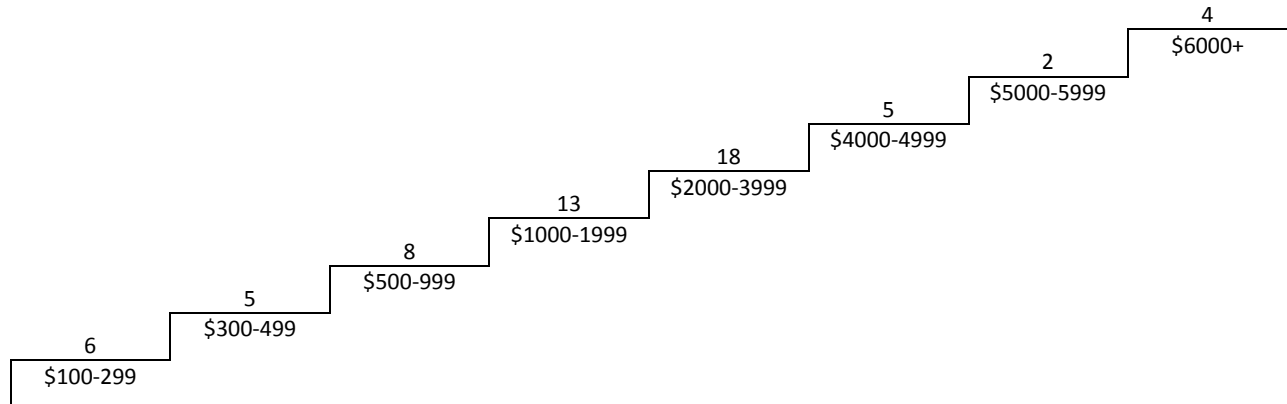
Every year, the costs of doing the work of the church go up: utilities, insurance, maintenance, and curriculum. Thanks to the combined resources and assets of our merger in 2017, we have been able to bring our staff salaries up to recommended guidelines. As we move into the future, we want to ensure that we continue to stay within those guidelines, which go up with inflation.

While we are fortunate to have some other sources of income, we rely primarily on the pledged giving of our members to enable us to sustain this and expand our ministries.

We ask you to challenge yourself, if you can, to increase your giving to the church by 4% for this coming year. That will help us cover increased costs and allow us to build on all the wonderful things that have happened this year.

Thinking about your giving in relation to what others give

Recognizing that everyone's circumstances are different, you may find it helpful to know the range of giving in our church (based on pledging for 2018). Can you consider moving "up a step" in your giving?



The average pledge to Edwards Church for 2018 was \$2440. In order to reach that average, 61 households contributed the best they were able. Each pledge matters!

Thinking about your giving in relation to what you receive

The Bible talks about giving the first 10% of what your land produces—a tithe—to God. In response, some people give 10% or more of their income to the church. Others give 5% to the church and 5% to other charities. Still others understand this text metaphorically—as a call to give of the "first fruits" rather than out of what is left over—and work to increase the percentage of their income they give each year. You might consider figuring out what percentage of your income you currently give, and challenge yourself to increase by 1%.

Thinking about your giving in relation to other ways you spend money

It may be helpful to compare your giving to the church to other ways you spend money. You might want to think about what you spend on entertainment and other activities, and ask whether you can match that with giving to the church. This could include:

- Coffee;
- Fast food;
- Dining out;
- Gym membership;
- Concert tickets;
- Cable TV or streaming video services.

Most of all, we encourage you to talk with other members of your family, to pray for guidance, and to make a decision that helps you rejoice in being part of this Oasis of Hope.

A Few Ways We Expanded the Vision of our Oasis of Hope in 2018

- We were honored as a “Level Two Green Congregation.”
- We are about to sign a contract to expand our solar panels so that we will be producing more electricity than we use.
- We have a new website, designed by Rick Seaholm with broad congregational input, that conveys who we are and what matters to us.
- After a fire in our parsonage, we worked with our insurance company and a contractor to rebuild. A Parsonage Exploration Team guided us in a process to decide how to use the building, culminating in a decision to partner with Jewish Family Service to provide housing to a Syrian refugee family.
- We bid farewell to Rev. Shane Montoya, our associate pastor for faith formation and outreach, conducted an assessment of our pastoral needs and began a search for a new associate pastor.
- We hired Dawn Sorensen to be our interim director of Christian Education, and began a creative period of exploring new ways to do faith formation.
- We worked with a local musician-pastor, Rev. Isaac Everett, to continue our Seeds of Grace worship services.
- We took three youth to the Eastern Regional Youth Event, and began preparations for a joint trip with Plymouth Church to Youth at General Synod.
- Using the Seeds of Grace Mission Fund, we supported two Stearns Farm shares (providing food to area food pantries), Open Spirit, and seven other local organizations that make a positive difference in our community.
- We renovated our historic organ, re-dedicated it, and celebrated the music of Edwards Church throughout the fall, culminating in a concert on November 3.
- Through Wider Mission, we hosted guest speakers from local immigrant communities and helped to settle and support a family that had been separated at the border. We continued to sponsor Tenzin Dayoe, a student at Tibetan Children’s Village in Dharamsala, India. We supported organizations such as Rural Water Ventures, Home2Homes, Worcester Fellowship and many more.
- We added a pollinator garden to our campus, to complement the Edible Forest Garden, Veterans Healing Garden, Seeds of Grace Herb Garden planted by our children, and Framingham Community Farm.
- We strengthened connections on our multi-faith, multi-cultural campus, with the third annual Palm Sunday parade.
- We supported the growth and development of Open Spirit, including a new Multi-Faith Collaborative doing the crucial work of bringing different faith communities together.
- We continue to host the VA Vet Center, are co-sponsoring a fourth annual Veterans Appreciation Dinner and offer weekly Veteran’s Yoga.

With so much in our world that feels desert-like, we are inspired to expand our vision of this oasis of hope, sharing our gifts and talents with the world.

An Oasis of Hope:
Expanding the Vision

EDWARDS CHURCH, UCC
GIVING CARD 2019

In gratitude for the blessings I have received, I want to continue to support the mission and vision of Edwards Church in our community ministry.

NAME(s): _____

Preferred Phone: _____ email _____

The amount I plan to contribute in 2019 is \$ _____*.

I plan to give this amount

Each week \$ _____ Monthly \$ _____ One annual check

I understand my contribution will be used to support the work of this church, including our local ministry and our wider mission.

- I would like weekly offering envelopes. (We will distribute at church.)
- I want to give through electronic debiting. (We will contact you.)
- I would like to give through a stock transfer. (We will provide the "how-to" information.)
- I would like to include Edwards Church in my will. (We will contact you.)

Comments or other information for the Financial Secretary

* This amount is an estimate of what I intend to contribute to the church for next year. If my financial circumstances change, I can change this estimate and will notify the church office.



**Detach and Keep
this bottom portion for your records.**



For the year 2019, I have estimated the amount I am giving to the church is
\$ _____ per week/month/year.

"You may deduct charitable contributions of money or property made to qualified organizations if you itemize your deductions." (IRS Publication 78) Tax id: 04-2832020.