

## WHAT DOES MY CHURCH 'GET BACK' FROM OUR APPORTIONMENTS?



These are answers to the question<sup>1</sup>: "What does our church get back for giving our tithe/mission shares/apportionment to the annual conference?"

We often imagine a quid-pro-quo relationship: We should get something in return for what we give. Yet, our giving is part of a connectional giving system that goes back to the days of John Wesley.

*"We are a connectional church."  
"We can do more together than we can apart."*

In our connectional system, we give as a communal responsibility allowing every member to participate in and support ministries local and global. The common term used is "tithe." Sometimes churches use "pledge." This is a joint stewardship that is broader than the local church. With our connectional system each local church participates in ministries it would not be able to do on its own.

Instead of "What do we get?", it would be better to ask, "What resources and opportunities are opened up for us because of our giving?"

Here are a few answers to this very complex question:

- Training, credentialing, appointing, and supervising for **clergy leaders** through the conference board of ordained ministry, the bishop and district superintendents, and the Ministerial Education Fund.
- **Moving expenses** for pastors changing appointments and retiring local pastors and elders so that churches might receive new pastors.
- Information, resources, and training for **lay leaders**, and access to trained and experienced conference staff to enhance effectiveness at the local church, circuit and district levels, improve congregational vitality, identify and pursue opportunities for community engagement, foster leadership development, share effective communications practices, process and provide training in accounting, finance and benefits management, and more.

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<sup>1</sup> Many thanks to the Minnesota Annual Conference (<https://www.minnesotaumc.org/blogdetail/what-does-my-church-get-back-from-apportionments-2576392>) and the North Carolina Annual Conference (<https://nccmc.org/treasurer/2013/01/faith-and-money-what-do-churches-get-from-paying-apportionments/>) for providing a starting point for this document.

- **Eleven (11) new faith communities** have been started in our conference in the past 4 years. Almost every church was started with financial and other support from the annual conference<sup>2</sup> and/or “mother churches.”
- **Congregational Vitality Grants** for projects that help churches reach neighbors and increase spiritual vitality.
- The **Ministerial Education Fund** assists seminary students during their schooling and active clergy with continuing education.
- A conduit and system that enables churches to pool their resources toward **mission projects** around the world and at home—projects that no single church could do alone.
- **Infrastructure** that ensures 100 percent of gifts to Advance Projects, United Methodist Committee on Relief, Imagine No Malaria, Love Offerings, Special Sundays and many others benefits the desired mission or ministry.
- Partial support for the **conference campus and camping ministries**, which helps young and old meet Christ in creation and among supportive communities.
- Staff and other support for **youth events and young people’s ministries**.
- **Communications, print, internet, and social media** that provide a contact point for Mountain Sky United Methodists and anyone seeking a nearby United Methodist Church or information about The United Methodist Church in our conference, the nation, and the world.
- Support for **cultural inclusiveness** in the increasingly diverse mission field that is the Mountain Sky Conference.
- The Conference procures **insurance plans**, both property/liability and health for clergy and conference lay staff, that can be more affordable than purchasing individual plans.

**2 Corinthians 8:12-15** A gift is appreciated because of what a person can afford, not because of what that person can't afford, if it's apparent that it's done willingly. <sup>13</sup> It isn't that we want others to have financial ease and you financial difficulties, but it's a matter of equality. <sup>14</sup> At the present moment, your surplus can fill their deficit so that in the future their surplus can fill your deficit. In this way there is equality. <sup>15</sup> As it is written, *The one who gathered more didn't have too much, and the one who gathered less didn't have too little.* – Common English Bible

The truth is, all giving is a part of our faith and devotion to God. We give because we have received. We give so that others might hear and experience the life-saving love of God in Jesus Christ.

In our connectional giving, we support not just our local church ministries, but those in our conference, region and world. Our giving is one way we work together as neighbors and God’s children united in the body of Christ.

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<sup>2</sup> The Mountain Sky Conference Congregational Vitality Committee and the Superintendent of Congregational and Community Vitality provide ongoing support for new faith communities and their leaders.

## GENERAL AND JURISDICTIONAL APPORTIONMENTS<sup>3</sup>

**World Service:** “The World Service Fund is the heart of our collective Church ministry. Through this fund individuals partner with church agencies to be in mission and ministry at home and around the world. World Service ministry truly makes a difference across the globe. World Service is God’s people reaching out in love and compassion in the name of Christ. It represents a call and a challenge to each United Methodist. As *The Book of Discipline 2016* states, the full payment of the World Service Fund is each congregation’s first benevolent responsibility (§812).

**Ministerial Education:** “Its mission is to engage the membership of the Church in an effort to equip annual conferences, theological schools, and the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) to meet the need for increased resources for the recruitment and education of persons for ordained ministry.” (**Note: 25% of the amount we contribute to the Ministerial Education Fund stays in the Mountain Sky Conference.**)

**Episcopal:** “The Episcopal Fund, raised in accordance with §818.3 (*The Book of Discipline 2016*), will provide for the salary and expenses of active bishops from the date of their consecration and for the support of retired bishops and surviving spouses and minor children of deceased bishops.”

**Black College:** “The objective of the fund is to provide financial support for institutions of higher education that have historically served the educational needs of black students. This support helps the institutions maintain academic quality and financial stability while limiting individual student tuition costs.”

**General Administration:** “The General Administration Fund (*The Book of Discipline, 2016* §813) finances general Church activities that are specifically administrative in nature, as contrasted with programmatic, missional, or ecumenical in scope and purpose.” This is the fund that supports General Conferences and the Judicial Council.

**Africa University:** “Africa University’s more than 6,200 alumni have solidified the university’s status as a leadership preparation institution. They are college and seminary presidents, faculty members, district superintendents, communicators, hospital and clinic managers, farmers and agricultural extension workers, and leaders in every walk of life.”

**Interdenominational Cooperation:** “The Interdenominational Cooperation Fund allows The United Methodist Church to partner with Christian sisters and brothers throughout the world to fulfill a shared ecumenical mission. Our relationships with ecumenical partners enable us to witness together while respecting our unique traditions and distinctions and to engage in ministries that foster justice, mercy, and peace in God’s world.”

**Western Jurisdiction:** “The vision of the Western Jurisdiction is to be a home for all God’s people, gathered around a table of reconciliation and transformation, through being multicultural and inclusive, engaged in the life of its communities, with confident, effective lay and clergy leadership who, in diverse ministry settings, form disciples who live out the Good News of Jesus as global citizens.”

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<sup>3</sup> These descriptions were included in petition MSC-03 approved at the 2019 Mountain Sky Annual Conference ([https://www.mtnskyumc.org/files/content/ac2019/rules+and+petitions/msc-03\\_general+and+jurisdictional+apportionments.pdf](https://www.mtnskyumc.org/files/content/ac2019/rules+and+petitions/msc-03_general+and+jurisdictional+apportionments.pdf)). Total amounts for each Fund are included in this petition.