



RESPONSIBLE STEWARDSHIP NEWS

JULY 2021

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Topic: Property and Liability Insurance

Date: August 10, 2021

Time: 11:00 a.m. (MT)

Guest: Pamela Keeser, Sr. Account Manager - Church Mutual Ins. Co.

To Register: [CLICK HERE](#)

Please Note: A Zoom link will be emailed the day before the webinar.

Discipleship Ministries July & August Webinars

July Webinar

Title: The Generosity Audit

Date: Tuesday, July 13, 2021

Time: 6:30 p.m. CDT

Presenters: Rev. Ken Sloane and
Rev. Clayton Smith



As we work our way out of the pandemic, things will look different. While the UM Book of Discipline requires an annual financial audit, this summer might be an ideal time to start a Generosity Audit. Join Rev. Ken Sloane, Director of Stewardship & Generosity and his guest, Rev. Clayton Smith, author/pastor and former Executive Pastor of Generosity at the Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, Kansas. Clayton will walk us through a process of assessing your church's strengths and weaknesses, to see what opportunities this strange time of isolation has brought us, and what pitfalls may be lurking just beyond our sight. What has worked in the past may not be what will carry us into the future. You may decide it is time for your church to do a stewardship reset!

To register for this webinar, [CLICK HERE](#).

August Webinar

Title: What You Really Need to Know about Housing Allowances

Date: Tuesday, August 10, 2021

Time: 6:30 p.m. CDT

Presenters: Rev. Ken Sloane & Bryan Mills



Each year when we do the special clergy tax webinar, we get more questions about the Housing Allowance than any other topic. And the questions come not just from clergy, but from Finance Committee members, Treasurers, and SPRC chairs as well. So for the first time, we are going to offer a webinar for laity and clergy to help churches better understand this special provision and how it can be a blessing to everyone! Join Ken Sloane, Director of Stewardship & Generosity and his guest Bryan Mills, General Counsel for the UMC and head of the legal staff at the General Council on Finance & Administration.

Something New: We will be offering an opportunity to send in questions ahead of time with your registration!

To register for this webinar, [CLICK HERE](#)

Risk Alert:

Catalytic Converter Theft Continues to Rise

The frequency of catalytic converter thefts has increased sharply nationwide since the onset of the pandemic.

According to the [National Insurance Crime Bureau](#), an average of 282 catalytic converters were stolen every month in 2019; in 2020 the average jumped to 1,203. In

December alone, 2,347 catalytic converters were stolen. Church Mutual saw a 350% increase in catalytic converter theft claims in 2020, and we're on pace to see even more in 2021.

To read the full article from Church Mutual, [CLICK HERE](#)





Wespath

BENEFITS | INVESTMENTS



50 Ways to Support Your Pastor's Well-Being

This article outlines great suggestions to help you fully support your clergy, particularly for new appointments. To read or download the article, [CLICK HERE](#)

Saving Grace Introductory Events Coming in July



Wespath wants to empower clergy and local church leaders to teach financial well-being skills to their congregations—and the wider community—so it is offering two information events about [*Saving Grace: A Guide to Financial Well-Being*](#). A biblically-based, Wesleyan tool, *Saving Grace* can help pastors and laity reach financial well-being goals.

Each event provides an overview of the curriculum and features presentations from the content experts featured in the *Saving Grace* videos. Clergy who successfully led groups through *Saving Grace* will also share their insights.

There will be two virtual events. Both events will cover the same material, so pick the date and time that best suits your calendar:

- **Tuesday, July 20 from noon to 4:00 p.m., Central time, **OR****
- **Monday, July 26 from noon to 4:00 p.m., Central time.**

The registration fee is \$15 for the first person and includes one workbook. Each additional person is just \$10 more, and all registrants will receive a workbook. [Register here](#) for the day that is best for you.



Congregational Giving

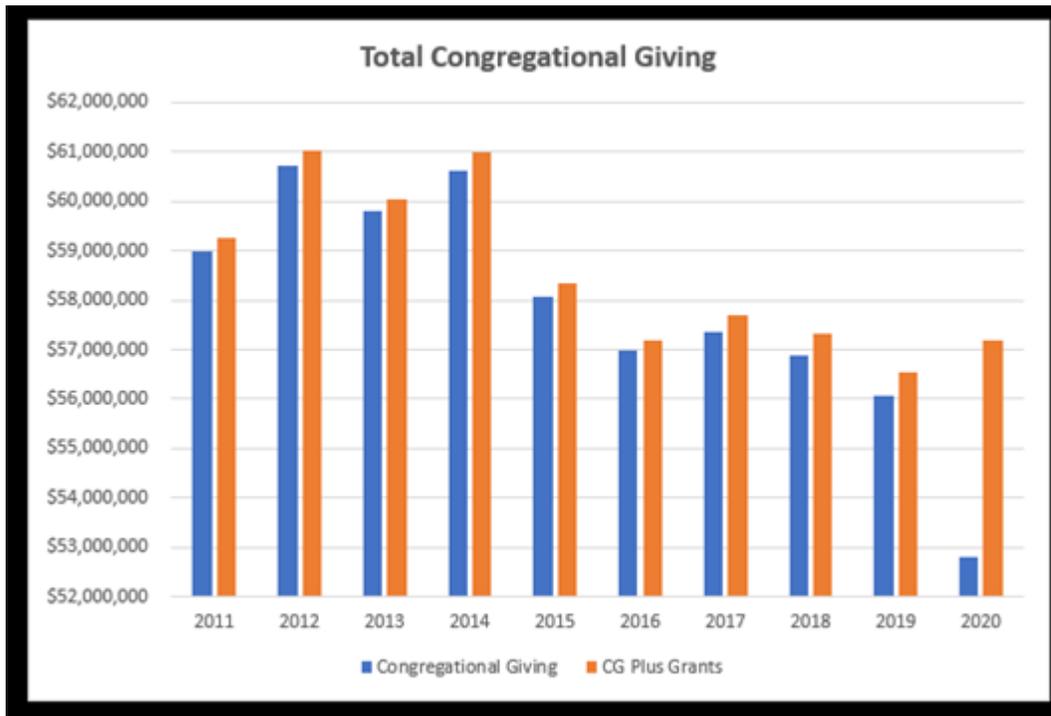


Dennis Shaw, MSC Statistician

Our year-end statistics for 2020 are going to be unusual. In the narrative of numbers, we sometimes refer to outliers, those numbers which lie outside the normal pattern. Outliers will define much of 2020. The world-wide pandemic led to a radical change in how we “did” church for most of 2020. Comparing many, but not all, statistics for 2020 with earlier years will be challenging at best.

One question that consistently emerged in 2020 was how well local churches were being supported by their membership even during the pandemic.

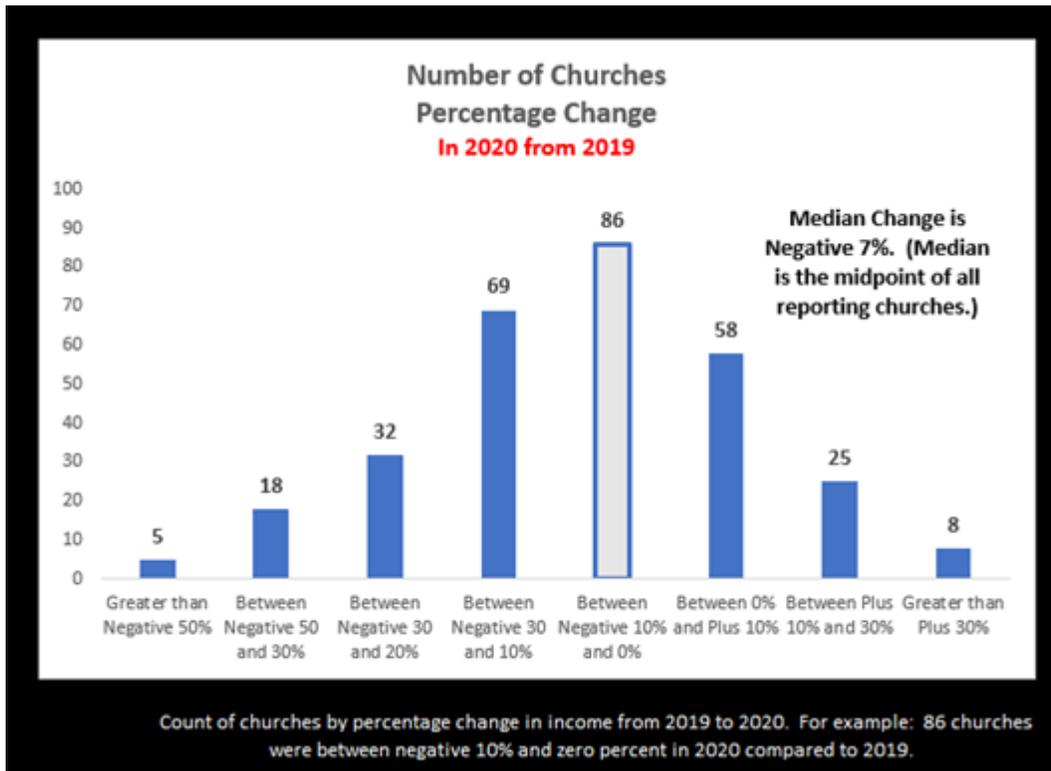
This article includes two charts. The first chart shows at the Conference level the annual totals for 2011 to 2020 for congregational giving. Also included in 2020 was the opportunity to apply for Federal Grants under the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). The annual giving from 2011 to 2019 were relatively stable in constant terms. There was a 7% reduction in giving for 2020 compared to 2019 which was in the aggregate offset by the cumulative effect of PPP. Said another way, if we look at congregational giving and add in “grants” (which includes PPP), 2020 was slightly higher in 2019.



Conference Congregational Giving

The second chart looks at the over 300 churches who reported within year-end statistics detailed congregational giving numbers for both 2019 and 2020. There is an assumption here that the 50+ non-reporting churches look like the 300+ that did. That is probably an optimistic assumption.

The second chart breaks percentage change into clusters. For example: All churches that were down (without PPP) by between 10% and approaching but not reaching 0% were placed into a cluster and counted. As in the aggregate, total number comparison, the average down was 7% with the mid-point in the data being in that range as well.



Percentage Change in Giving: 2020 Compared to 2019

In total candor, the expectation in March 2020 was that congregational giving was going to plummet and we were decidedly mistaken. People can look at the first chart and see a radical downturn, but I would offer that the chart shows a more optimistic story: The church was supported well during an economic downturn. The second chart does demonstrate that 2020 was not uniform in how well churches were supported but overall, the support was quite positive.

The Conference Office Has Moved!



Please send all mail to:

Mountain Sky Conference
PO Box 462200
Centennial, CO 80015

Please Note: With our work-at-home model, we are no longer able to accept mailed paper copies of local church newsletters. Please scan and send your newsletters to communications@mtnskyumc.org or to specific conference staff members.



Thanks for helping us 'go green'!



Mountain Sky Conference

<https://www.mtnskyumc.org/responsiblestewardship>

Mountain Sky Conference Ministry Financials

<http://umcdata.net/sky>

UMC General Council on Finance & Administration/group ruling

<https://www.gcfa.org/services/legal-services/group-ruling/>

Church Mutual Insurance

<https://www.churchmutual.com/>

Wespath Benefits / Investments

<http://www.wespath.org/>

Discipleship Ministries

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/equipping-leaders/stewardship?>

Your Responsible Stewardship Team



Angela Thomas
CFO/Conference Treasurer
athomas@mtnskyumc.org



Deirdre McGee
Property & Liability Insurance Coordinator
dmcgee@mtnskyumc.org



Jana Collins
Benefits & Human Resources Manager
jcollins@mtnskyumc.org



Julie Gladney
Administrative Support Services Manager
jgladney@mtnskyumc.org



Laura Winberg
Senior Accountant
lwinberg@mtnskyumc.org



Pam VanAlstyne
Accounts Payable Coordinator
accountspayable@mtnskyumc.org

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The Mountain Sky Conference of The United Methodist Church
PO Box 462200 | Centennial, CO 80015
303-733-3736 | www.mtnskyumc.org