

Gifts to the King | Frequently Asked Questions

Grace Church Family,

As we consider all that God has in store for us over the next several months, we thought it would be helpful to answer some of the questions that may come up as you review the Gifts to the King document.

We're going to continue to add to these FAQs over the next few weeks, so if you have any additional questions, please let us know. There's a good chance you're not the only one with that same question, and we want to provide as much clarity as we can. If you have any further feedback or input, we would love to hear from you.

-Team of Elders

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: During this season where COVID-19 is such a significant concern, shouldn't we be looking for ways to scale back and keep our expenses to a minimum?

A: This is a great question. As expressed in the opening letter that accompanied the Gifts to the King materials, this is something we've been seeking the Lord about for the last several months. Throughout this season, God has repeatedly given us a vision for flourishing and growth at a time when our natural instincts may be to pull back and do less instead of more. Barry spoke to this in his message on Sunday (11/22) as he talked about our desire to see the Kingdom of God advancing in the midst of turbulent times.

Throughout history, God's people have stepped up and stepped in to the challenges of their day, boldly proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ and doing whatever they can to serve their communities in practical ways.

Through much prayer and wrestling, we believe God is calling us to move forward and advance his kingdom in the season ahead, becoming much more purposeful and intentional in our outreach while also addressing some practical and tangible needs over the next 12-16 months.

Q: Why not just do the minimum at this time and focus on additional needs at a later date?

A: This summer and fall, we've spent a lot of time figuring out what is needed in order to complete the renovations to the exterior of the building, many of which are long overdue. We also have some practical needs in a few of our ministries where those teams have been making due for several months now with equipment that has outlived its useful life-span. These are areas we consider 'essential' at this time, as they will ultimately need to be addressed in the next 12-16 months.

The updates to the exterior of the building and aging ministry equipment are things that have been delayed during past giving projects in order to focus on more immediate needs at the time. In many cases, these are areas that simply need to be addressed in this next season. In that sense, we've included them in the current giving project because we know that, one way or another, we're going to need to find a way to address these needs.

With that in mind, there are also some things that go beyond what is minimally needed at this time. Throughout this process, we've also tried to consider new opportunities over the next several months. We've worked through a variety of scenarios that range from what is absolutely essential to a broader vision that includes some things we would love to address if finances were not an issue. As with most things in life, we've landed somewhere in the middle, outlining the work that will absolutely need to be done over the next year, while also considering (within reason) a few areas that will allow us to take some new steps forward in terms of Discipleship and Outreach in this next season.

Q: Is there anything else we can do as a church to minimize our regular expenses to help cover these anticipated expenses over the next year?

We have been very diligent over the last several years to track every expense and minimize any/all additional expenses that are a part of our regular operating budget. We regularly review these expenses and make adjustments to ensure the faithful giving of the saints at Grace Church is both honored and stewarded to the very best of our ability. With that in mind, there isn't much more we can do at this time to 'tighten our belt' further, but we are once again reviewing each of our regular expenses with our accountant, Steve Johnston, and we will make adjustments wherever we can.

It's also important to note that, by not raising pastoral salaries for a number of years (and lowering them in some instances), all in all we are paying the equivalent of 15% less in salaries since 2010.

Q: What are we going to do if we don't raise all of this money?

A: We're committed to doing the very best we can with the funds that are available. Like each of you, our leaders will bring these needs before the Lord in the coming days/weeks and leverage whatever we can in this season in order to give sacrificially. As we get a better idea of what those in the Body feel they can commit to giving in faith, we will prioritize the most essential needs and make adjustments where needed. Since the church was founded, we've always trusted God to provide for our needs...and he has! In this new season, we are gladly looking to God and trusting in his provision.

Q: Who came up with this list or priorities?

A: The practical ministry needs have primarily flowed from those who are faithfully serving and leading in each of our ministries. The needs in terms of the exterior renovations and resurfacing the parking lot are things we've been aware of since we first purchased this property and the amounts we've budgeted are based on the cost of materials and previous estimates. The areas that are more strategic in terms of part-time staff members and outreach to the community are priorities our Leadership Team felt were important enough to share with the Body for consideration.

Q: Are you open to input and feedback?

A: Yes, absolutely! As you pray about the needs and opportunities ahead of us and consider these things in earnest before the Lord, we would appreciate any input or feedback you may have. We will continue to seek the Lord and refine these needs and priorities over the coming weeks. If you are aware of any additional needs that you believe we need to consider, please let us know. If you have questions about any areas in particular, we would be happy to answer those and give you as much information as we can.

Q: It seems like these needs are pretty well defined and set in stone at this point. Shouldn't you have asked for input before sharing these with the larger Body?

A: Nothing included in the current Gifts to the King offerings is set in stone and/or unable to be modified or updated. As mentioned previously, some of the areas in this current offering are things that will simply need to be done one way or another. That being said, this current offering is about more than just tangible, practical needs; it represents a vision for the next 12-16 months for our church. This vision will continue to take shape as more and more people join us in prayer and share their perspective.

In terms of getting feedback, we are (and will continue to be) open to feedback and every step of this process. We are more than willing to reconsider any of the areas outlined on our current Gifts to the King priorities. With that in mind, we also felt it was important as leaders to do some due diligence in order to bring a vision to the Body that incorporates the work that absolutely needs to be done, while also putting forth a broader vision that we can pursue together.

Q: It seems like we are doing just fine with staff we currently have in place. Do we really need to hire more staff?

A: Since the church was founded, we have been primarily a volunteer-driven ministry. As the church continues to grow, this will continue to be our model. With that in mind, however, there have been multiple times throughout the history of our church where we have felt led of God to make a strategic investment in some additional staff positions to (1) free up those who are serving faithfully so that they can focus more intentionally on the ministries they are leading and (2) allow us to take some new, intentional steps forward in those ministries.

In our early days, our ministry was largely supported by several 'staff' members who made about \$150/week at the church while also going to school and/or working part-time in the community. While this is, by no means, a liveable wage, it is enough to allow someone to devote more of their 'work' hours to discipling others, leading their ministries, and helping to grow the church. We have most recently seen the power of this on a little bit larger scale by bringing Ryan on part-time and freeing him to focus more on the work of the ministry.

Scott Koefoed was also another huge asset to our Leadership Team for many years as a full time staff member who focused on finances, community and campus relations, discipleship, answering phones, connecting with new members, premarital counseling, etc. Since his passing in 2013, all of those essential duties have been covered by others, both staff and volunteers.

Finally, we would also just add that the folks who would be considered for these part time positions are those who have been serving faithfully and sacrificially for a decade or longer. In that sense, the church has benefitted from their service for many years. The creation of a part-time staff role not only frees them up to do even more ministry, it also brings us a little more into reality and allows us to compensate them for some of the 'work' they are already doing on a volunteer basis.

Q: Do you have people in mind for these staff positions? How will you go about hiring people to fill these positions?

A: If we have support from the Body to pursue these positions, we will develop more specific descriptions about what each role will entail and share this information with those in each ministry area. Those who feel they meet the qualifications and would like to apply will be encouraged to do so. The Team of Elders will be in contact with each applicant and determine the best format for interviews.

As mentioned previously, the people who would be considered for a part-time staff role are those who have been serving in this role on a volunteer basis for many years without being asked/required to do so. These are people who are ultimately serving 'volunteer staff' already. In that sense, the interview process is a little bit unique because they are people we know very well.

It's been quite some time since we've hired for positions like this, so we definitely will need to develop some new processes to ensure those who would like to be considered for these roles have the opportunity to express their interest and talk with the leaders.

Q: Our finances are pretty tight right now, but we want to be a part of this. How else can we give?

A: This is one of the more challenging things for us as leaders when it comes to sharing a new giving project with the Body. The church has always been supported by the faithful, sacrificial giving of God's people. We are in a great place as a church when you consider the properties that God has entrusted to us and the updates and renovations that we've been able to do while remaining completely debt free. God has been faithful to provide for us as at each step of the way, and we are trusting him to provide everything we need in the season ahead.

With that in mind, we realize some of you are in a position to give at this time, while others are constrained financially, especially as COVID-19 has added to financial stress for some families.

First and foremost, if you desire to give in the season ahead, we would encourage you to pray and ask God how he's calling you to participate. He will lead you! Secondly, open yourself up as a conduit of God's blessing. Ask him to bless you so that you can be a blessing. And lastly, when his provision comes, be faithful to steward it! In particular, you may consider some of the financial blessings that we are anticipating in the season ahead in terms of Stimulus Money and Tax Returns. If you don't have room in your regular budget to give sacrificially, this may be a way for you to participate.

Q: I'm a Young Churcher. Does my giving really make a difference?

A: Yes, of course it does! As we've worked through this year's Gifts to the King, we've been reminded once again how God provided in the early days of our ministry, primarily through the sacrificial giving of High School and College Students who want to see the Kingdom of God advance among their peers.

For those of you in this Young Church demographic, we want to challenge and encourage you to stretch your faith over the next year and look for ways to invest your finances into building the Kingdom and equipping the church for the season of ministry ahead. God will bless you for it!

Even for those whose gifts will be relatively small, Jesus made it clear that it's our faith he is primarily concerned with, not the amount we are able to give.