

Frequently Asked Questions: Pledging the Budget

Dear Church,

As our church looks toward the coming year, we are encouraging every member and household to prayerfully make a financial pledge to give to the budget in support of our church's ministry during 2027. The goal is to see you grow in faith, strengthen our shared ministry, and help church leadership make thoughtful decisions about the future.

We long to see our church be a place where your growing faith produces growing generosity which fuels an ever-expanding gospel impact. Our greatest desire is that our church would experience more of what it means to trust Jesus, surrender their lives to Him, and discover the joy of investing in things that matter for eternity.

We want every person at Faithbridge to understand that their generosity matters—not merely because it supports a budget, but because it allows us to participate together in what God is doing in our church, throughout Jacksonville, and around the world.

The purpose of these FAQ's are to help everyone understand why we are asking, how pledges help, and how this can become an opportunity for your spiritual growth.

WALK BY FAITH is a spiritual invitation for every member of Faithbridge to take a meaningful step of faith, trusting God with their lives, their resources, and their participation in the mission He has entrusted to us through ADVANCE 2031. We are not simply asking people to pledge a budget. We are inviting you, our church family, to take the next step in a faith journey that will shape our lives and expand our impact.

*With love,
Your Pastor and Elder body*

1. What is a church pledge? A pledge is a prayerful response to God's leadership regarding the financial contribution you intend to make to the church during the coming year. It is a tool to help you seek the Lord, consider what faith will look like then track your own progress throughout the year.

2. Why is the church asking us to pledge? Psalm, 76:11 says, *Make your vows to the Lord your God and perform them ...*

Spiritually: as believers in Jesus, we seek to continue growing in faith from year to year. Asking God what He wants you to give, then trusting Him to provide as you do so, is one means to personal spiritual growth.

Practically: God gave us a big vision with ADVANCE 2031, and we now have a growing ministry that requires more resources. By pledging the budget, you are helping our church leaders plan for the future with greater clarity and confidence.

3. Is a pledge the same as a donation? Not exactly. A donation is a gift you make, while a pledge is an intention to give over a future period of time. You can fulfill your pledge weekly, monthly, quarterly, or according to whatever giving schedule works best for you.

4. Is the pledge different from what I already give? If you already contribute regularly, ask God if this is something He wants you to change. Your pledge simply helps you put that commitment into a plan for the coming year. You may decide to pledge the amount you currently give, increase it, or choose a different amount based on your circumstances and prayer.

5. How is pledging related to my faith?

Growing Faith → Growing Generosity → Growing Impact

They gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us. 2 Corinthians 8:5

Christian generosity is about more than money. It is an expression of gratitude, trust, stewardship, and love for God and neighbor.

Prayerfully deciding what we can give encourages us to consider how our resources reflect our values and faith. Pledging can help make generosity an intentional part of our spiritual lives rather than something we do only when a need arises.

6. Does the Bible tell us how much we should give? The biblical pattern for our giving begins with the tithe, or tenth. God's design is for us to give to Him first and in proportion to what He has given us.

Walking by faith always means trusting God to provide what we need as we step out in faith and trust Him.

You may be overextended and need to get your financial house in order as you move toward giving the tithe. (Look at Malachi 3:8-10; Matthew 23:23; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2)

7. How much should I pledge? Regardless of where we are regarding our giving, generosity is evidence of the work of God in our lives and something we ought to value and seek to grow in. A pattern for growing in generosity was developed by our Stewardship Team and is included in the WALK BY FAITH document on the website. We encourage you to use this to model to take your next step as you grow in this area.

8. What if I cannot afford to give very much? Your participation matters regardless of the amount. A modest pledge made with sincerity is just as welcome as a larger one. We recognize that people have different incomes, expenses, family responsibilities, and financial challenges. Any pressure to give should come from the work of the Holy Spirit in your life and not from the church.

9. Why does the church need pledges to prepare its budget? A budget is a plan for how the church will use its resources to carry out its mission. Before making that plan, leaders need an estimate of the income they can expect.

Pledges provide an important source of information. They help leaders make informed decisions about staffing, worship, programs, outreach, facilities, and other ministry commitments. Without that information, planning can become more uncertain, making it harder to determine which ministries the church can responsibly sustain or develop.

10. What decisions will pledges help church leadership make? We are asking God to provide an additional \$100,000 in giving in 2027. The bulk of this will go toward the salary and benefits for an Associate Pastor. Pledge information helps leadership answer important questions, such as:

- Can we afford to hire an Associate Pastor to oversee operations, adult discipleship, and community ministries?
- What new ADVANCE 2031 initiatives can we launch?
- How can we provide additional resources for our church ministries, support our mission efforts and our church plants?
- What building repairs, maintenance, or improvements can we responsibly undertake?

11. Is my pledge a binding financial contract? The church's pledge is intended as an expression of your intention, not as a contract or to pressure anyone. Your commitment is being reported to us but is between you and the Lord. Life circumstances change, and we recognize that a pledge may need to change as well.

12. Do I have to pledge even if I already give regularly? We encourage everyone who is able to participate in the process of prayer and pledging because of its impact on your spiritual life and the help it will provide our leadership in planning more effectively. If you already give regularly, pledging is a way of formalizing your existing commitment.

13. Will my pledge amount be kept confidential? The church will handle pledge information with the same care and respect for privacy we do throughout the year. Access to specific giving information will be limited to our financial secretary in order to administer giving.

14. How do I fulfill my pledge? You can fulfill your giving pledge through the church's standard giving methods such as checks, cash, or electronic giving. Physical checks can be mailed to the church or dropped off on Sunday mornings in the offering receptacles outside the worship center. Electronic giving can be done through the church website or App.

15. What if I forget how much I pledged? Each year, the church provides quarterly giving statements to all members. Starting in 2027, these will include a notation of what your pledge amount was for the year so you can track your progress.

16. What happens after we submit our pledges? Church leadership will review the pledges alongside other anticipated income and expenses to develop the coming year's budget. The resulting budget will help determine how resources will be allocated to support the church's mission.

The congregation will then have the opportunity to review and vote to affirm the proposed budget and its priorities at our January 27, 2027, business meeting.

17. What if total pledges fall short of what the church needs? If expected giving is less than anticipated expenses, leaders will make decisions about priorities, expenses, reserves, and potential adjustments to ministry plans.

For this reason, pledges are valuable: they help identify financial realities early so the church can respond responsibly.

18. What if I am not ready to make a pledge? The purpose of this process is to encourage thoughtful participation, not to create guilt or pressure. Please look over the enclosed materials and, if you still have questions, please ask a church staff member, your deacon, or CG Leader.

19. What is the most important thing to remember? A pledge is more than a number on a form. It is an opportunity to connect our faith with our actions, our gratitude with our generosity, and our individual commitments with our shared mission.

When we participate in this process together, we help our church plan wisely, serve faithfully, and prepare for the future with greater confidence.

20. How and when do I make my pledge? On our church App there is a tile called WALK BY FAITH. If you click on that tile, you will find the following pledge card.

If you prefer to submit a physical pledge card, then please use the one enclosed in your quarterly giving statement or pick one up from the Preschool Desk.

We are asking everyone to MAKE THEIR PLEDGE BY NOVEMBER 1

(Example Pledge Card)

MY 2027 GENEROSITY PLEDGE

Growing Faith → Growing Generosity → Growing Impact

They gave themselves first to the Lord... 2 Corinthians 8:5

Name(s): _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

After prayerfully seeking the Lord, ...

1. I desire to Advance on the giving Pathway to (circle one):

Emerging

Growing

Faithful

Generous

2. I desire to take the following step of faith in my generosity for 2027. My intended giving amount to the church budget is: \$_____