

SNEUCC Proportional Giving Slides: Notes

Slide1: An Introduction

Who are we? It is important to remind ourselves who we are, what our mission, vision, and core/essential values are before we talk about funding.

The Southern New England Conference. Our United Covenant: *Living the Love and Justice of Jesus*

We – the members of the United Church of Christ in Southern New England – declare **these values essential to our shared ministry together:**

1. We understand the local church exists to **make disciples of Jesus** and we welcome all people unconditionally to share in this calling.
2. We commit to **making God's love and justice real** by loving our neighbors, children, and all of creation through our collective work, such as seeking racial, economic, environmental, and LGBTQ justice.
3. We believe God calls us to **bring new life as agents of change** and so we embrace and encourage adaptive and transformative leadership wherever the Body of Christ is gathered.
4. We encourage local congregations and varied ministry settings, inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit, to **form covenant partnerships with all who work for the common good** in their local communities and throughout the world.

Slide 2: What is Proportional Giving?

Bullet Point 3) PG is responsive to changes in your congregation's financial strength. Because a church's PG contribution is based on a percentage of its Total Income, the PG contribution will vary as its Total Income varies. If your congregation's Total Income decreases from the previous year, then its PG contribution would go down (provided all other factors are held constant). If your congregation's Total Income increases, then its PG contribution would go up (again, all other factors being held constant). It is important to note that PG is much more forgiving with respect to a church's budget when a church's income declines than the constant/flat per capita dues method is. With per capita, when a church has fewer resources because its income is lower, the church still owes the same per capita dues. Not so with PG. The church contributes less PG if/when its income is less.

Slide 3: Why Proportional Giving?

Bullet Points: 1) PG is biblically and theologically grounded, and thereby sets us apart from other philanthropic organizations (see Deut. 8.17-18; 1 Chron. 29.10-14; Lev. 27.30-33; Matt. 6.19-21; Luke 12.13-21; 2 Cor. 8.1-15, 9.6-15; Acts 2.43-47); **2) Best Practices:** Leadership guru, Jim Collins, writes in *Good to Great in the Social Sectors* that "the financial engine of a nonprofit should be in alignment with its mission and reflect its values." Proportional Giving does this very well and much better than our previous funding methods. **(3) Reduces confusion:** currently there are multiple ways of giving to the wider church due to the merger of CT, MA, and RI. PG gets us all on the same "Giving" page for

the Conference and National. It is also easier to understand as it mirrors what we ask individuals to do regarding giving to their local church; that is, to give a percentage/proportion of their income to the local church – to tithe. **(4) More equitable/just** (“justice” is a part of our United Covenant and an essential/core value). We all contribute in proportion to the resources God has given us, not according to the size of our church’s budget or the number of members. **(5) PG is covenantal** and supports our shared ministry together, which is a foundational principle for our Vision Statement; closely related to this, PG clarifies that giving to the conference goes to implement our United Covenant’s four essential values.

Slide 4: Don’t Worry

Bullet Points: 1) As you know, we can only ask churches to give. We cannot require/demand that they give. Nor can we set the amount. Therefore, we are asking congregations to maintain their 2019 giving to OCWM and Conference dues, or to UCM (United Church Mission) for 2020. If a church can increase its contribution in 2020, that would be great, and we’d rejoice over it! For future years, we hope that congregations will increase their Giving Percentage moving toward a tithe, 10%, because they are excited about what they see happening and how the SNEC is touching and transforming people’s lives. This would set a good example for, and parallel, what hopefully happens in our local churches; that is, the church’s leadership asks their congregants to gradually increase their giving percentage toward tithing because they are excited about what they see happening in their local church and how it is touching and transforming lives. **(3)** Similarly, the SNEC will send a proportion of its income to the National setting of the church to support its work.

Slide 5: What about Associations?

Bullet Points: 1) Each Assoc. has its own means of funding itself (for example, per capita or Assoc. percentage of UCM), which is fine, but it makes it very difficult and labor intensive for the Conference to collect both Conference and Assoc. support, figure out how much goes to each entity, and then remit that amount back to the Assoc. It is also very inefficient. It is simpler and more efficient to send Assoc. funds directly to the Assoc. **(2)** This method implicitly recognizes the Association as another legitimate expression of the denomination (along with the local church, the conference, the national setting, and General Synod), each possessing its own integrity and playing an important role in the overall body; for example, ministerial authorization and standing are held at the Association expression/setting of the Church. It also strengthens the relationship/connection between the Assoc. and the local church. **(3)** Associations must wait for the Conference to remit back to them their funds, rather than having the churches send their Assoc. support directly to the Assoc.

Slide 6: Proportional Giving at Your Church

Please see the next to the last slide, slide #10, for the different ways to receive help and have your questions answered. We are here for you! If you are confused or have questions, PLEASE CONTACT US!

Slide 7: How to Begin

This slide is an example of a non-UCM church, one that knows its Conference Dues and OCWM Basic Support amounts. **For UCM churches**, your 2019 PG contribution would be your UCM minus your Assoc. Dues because UCM was comprised of: OCWM, Conf. Dues, and Assoc. Dues. We have sent to your treasurer both the amount of your UCM that went to support the Conference and National settings and the amount that was remitted back to the Assoc. so that you know how much to send directly to either the Conference and to your Association's treasurer in 2020. We have also sent the percentage of your UCM that went to the Assoc. so that you will know for future years how to determine the amount to send directly to the Assoc.

Slide 8: Then, Going Forward...

Please remember that for 2020 we are asking churches to **at least** maintain 2019 giving levels. So, in this example since in 2019 the giving level for Dues and OCWM was \$7,230, we are asking that 2020 be **minimally** the same. Please note that the language "prior" and "current" is thinking that churches will be able to determine their PG contribution no earlier than Jan. when they close their books for the prior year. For example, in Jan. 2021, the prior year's (2020's) total income would be known, and consequently, the 2021 (current year) PG contribution could be calculated. However, if the church's total income is known in Dec., then the terminology would change to "current year" and "next year" For example, the current year's (2020's) total income x the giving percentage = the next year's (2021's) PG contribution. Thus, **PG is a "lagging" amount as it is calculated retrospectively, not prospectively.**

Slide 9: What's Included in Total Income

Investment Income: for Total Income you should include your income from investments – the amount you budget for – on an annual/regular basis. However, if you are taking more than 5% of your invested assets in order to balance your budget, or because of an unforeseen/unexpected or one-time expense, such as a major capital repair like your boiler going out, you should not include the amount in excess of your 5% regular/annual draw.

Slide 10: Help for Church Leaders

There are several handouts explaining PG on the website shown in the slide above.

Slide 11: Growing in Giving

"THANK YOU!!!" to all the churches and Associations for their past, current, and future support for without you and your support there would be no SNEC. We, our people, our churches are the SNEC and we are in this **"Together, As One"**, different and equally important parts of one body, the SNEC, joined to one another by **Our United Covenant: *Living the Love and Justice of Jesus*** for the purpose of; 1) making disciples of Jesus; 2) making God's love and justice real; 3) bringing new life as agents of change; and 4) forming covenant partnerships for the common good.

I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. ~ Isaiah 43:19 ~

