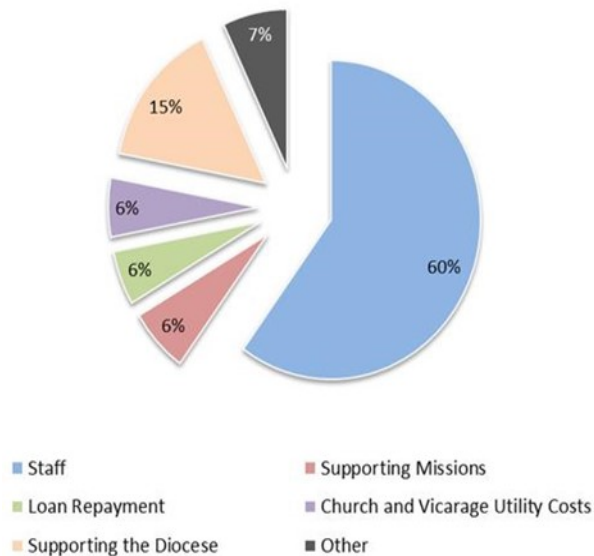


OUR SOURCES OF FINANCE

- St Michael's relies on the freewill offering of its parishioners for the majority of its income to spend on ministries, property and staff. We receive no financial contributions from government or from the diocese.
- Donations received for hall hire assist us in funding part of the property maintenance and hall hire management.

WHERE DOES YOUR MONEY GO?



HOW TO GIVE ELECTRONICALLY

Account: St Michael's Anglican Church

Account No: 10078845 | BSB: 063114

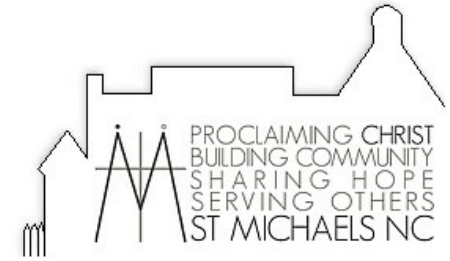


St Michael's Anglican Church
 14 McIlwraith St, North Carlton
 p. 9380 6387
 e. office@stmichaelsnc.org.au
 w. stmichaelsnc.org.au

OUR STAFF

Vicar—Steve Webster*
 Assistant Minister—Kim Messieh (ASLM)*
 Authorised Lay Minister—Roslyn Loader
 Assistant/Honorary Priests—Chris Appleby, Greg Davies
 Student Minister—Stacey Slater*
 Welcoming—Hilary Toppin
 Office Secretary—Emma Sugars*

**paid staff*



St Michael's Anglican Church, North Carlton

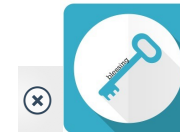
GIVING

This leaflet offers an approach to financial giving for the people of St Michael's as part of a commitment to Christ and the mission of the local church. It also explains where the financial support for this church's staff and ministries comes from and how the monies received will be distributed.



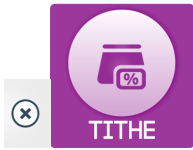
MODELS OF FINANCIAL GIVING TO THE CHURCH

The New Testament doesn't prescribe how or how much a Christian should give to their local church today. There is, however, a lot to learn about financial stewardship from the teaching of Jesus and the exhortations of the apostles. Three common, but unhelpful models of giving taught in churches today include: 1. The "Blessing" model, 2. The "Tithe" model, and 3. The "Downscaling" model.



#1 The "Blessing" model suggests Christians should prove God's faithfulness by giving with an expectation that God will "bless" them in turn with financial prosperity. Problems often follow because the focus is on individual and personal advancement. No-where in the New Testament do we find Christian leaders praying for wealth and abundance for themselves. Scripture tells us that Jesus became poor so that we might become rich (see 2 Cor. 8:9), but it does not suggest the cross of Christ is the means of material

wealth! Instead, it points to the bounty of God's mercy and grace from God toward us through the costly sacrifice Christ made for our sins.



#2 The "Tithe" model is often cited because Old Testament Law prescribed that some of God's people in ancient times were to give the "first-fruits" (a tenth or tithe) of their produce to God by supporting the Levitical priests and their system of liturgical worship. Problems often follow when such a system is simply transported into today's context. It can lead to a burdensome legalism that leads to associated guilt and a sense of conditional participation in God's church.

Nowhere in the New Testament is Old Testament tithing insisted on as the preferred model for Christian giving. Jesus even protested against the practice of religious leaders who placed such a burden on people (e.g. Matthew 23:23). Instead, he preached a more radical and challenging attitude to giving, where all of one's self and one's wealth belongs to and is in the service of God (e.g. Romans 12:1-3; Luke 12:32-34).



#3 The "Downscale" model is often aligned with Christians who long to see greater equity and justice in society, leading them to "live simply that others might simply live" as author Ron Sider once put it.

This model has some merit and reminds us rightly that there is no such thing as "private" lifestyle choices in this global economic age. Yet, our urbanized living makes for complicated economic choices far removed from the times of the New Testament. This model wisely asks, "How much is enough?" and calls Christians to a modest assessment of their own financial needs. We should note that the New Testament doesn't prescribe downscaling to any specific degree, nor does the teaching of the apostles demand that giving should cause hardship or result in poverty. The major emphasis is on richness towards God and generosity towards the needy (Mark 12:41-43; Acts 20:35; 2 Cor. 8:7; 2 Cor. 9:6-15).



A **fourth model** is the **preferred way** of viewing our giving at St Michael's. We call it **the Whole-of-life model**. It reflects teaching we find in the Bible that exhorts Christians to consider the whole of their lives as offered to God in worship and service (e.g. Rom. 12:1-2). Psalm 104 boldly proclaims, "The earth is the Lord's and everything in it". In 1 Chronicles 29 King David prayed to God and acknowledged "Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand." The salvation offered to us in Christ seeks, in part, to renew our minds about this truth. Long ago Moses warned Israelites that when they were settled and prosperous they should not become self-centered and forget that their peace and relative prosperity "now" was a result of the gracious God who delivered them from peril and poverty (Deut. 8:10-18).

Jesus too, often warned people about the lure of wealth and riches and praised those who were generous even with a little (e.g. Mark 12:41-44). He called for new orientation of one's true treasures (e.g. Matthew chapter 6). His teaching addressed use of time, resources and money in the light of God's providence to us.

In the early church, some generous believers sold properties to further the mission of the church and also to supply help to poorer members. During a collection for famine-stricken Christians, the Apostle Paul called all Christians to freely choose, under God, what they should give and urged them to act generously with a cheerful heart, but without causing unnecessary hardship (e.g. see 2 Corinthians 8 and 9).

The New Testament consistently praises generosity and warns against insincere, self-centered attitudes towards money and possessions (e.g. Acts 4:32-47; Matthew 23:23; Acts 5:1-4).

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## PLANNING YOUR GIVING

A "whole-of-life" model of giving calls each Christian to a dynamic and outward-looking attitude towards financial giving. It suggests a global view of stewardship—all of one's life and possessions as "belonging" to God and consideration of support for God's Kingdom purposes. But where does a local church fit in to this equation? No-one has the right to prescribe what a person should give or what they should share. Instead, Christians might best consider prayerfully, out of thankfulness to God, from time-to-time what they are willing to give to advance the ministries of their church and to assist the needy.

The following steps may be helpful:

1. Set aside time to pray and thankfully consider all that God has entrusted to you in your control.
2. Consider how your money, time, talents and possessions might be best used to serve God's purposes (in your church, in your work/study, for family, for neighbours, for missions, for the poor, etc.)
3. If you receive a regular income, prayerfully, freely, without compulsion, commit to give a certain amount of money regularly to support the ministries of your local church, so long as it will not cause you undue hardship. If your income is shared with others (e.g. spouse, family), be sure to seek their involvement in this process.
4. If you earn money irregularly, consider from time-to-time whether you can give a one-off offering when you receive income (with the principles of #3 above in mind).
5. 6.5% of any offerings you give to St. Michael's will go to Christian missions and some other agencies carefully selected by the parish council.
6. Some people may like to give one-off gifts to support a project or purchase equipment proposed in vision/action plans.