

Most Recent Church Giving Trends Key Ideas and Observations

The data presented is from Giving USA, with 2019 being the most current year available. 2020 results are expected to be published in the summer of 2021.

Total Charitable Giving (measured in dollars) has increased in almost all non-recessionary years since 1979 to almost \$450 billion in 2019.

Giving in Recessions tends to fall along with the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and usually takes several years to recover.

GDP contracted by 4.4% in 2020, which was the largest annual fall since 1946. While there is no accurate data to confirm this, giving in 2020 is unlikely to have fallen as significantly as the GDP because households in the upper third of wage earners, who provide the majority of charitable contributions, tended to have fared well in the second half of 2020. Your church's giving was likely impacted by the percent that comes from the upper-third of wage earners and those in the bottom two thirds who have shouldered most of the economic loss in 2020.

Giving as a Percent of Disposable Income has remained nearly constant over the last 40 years between 1.8 - 2.2%. Which means that rising total giving is not a reflection of growing generosity, but rather a growing affluence and flat giving as a percentage of disposable income.

Religion Receives the Largest Share of All Charitable Giving at 29% of every dollar given in 2019, but this is a much smaller percentage than in the past.

Religion was one of only two major giving categories to see declining giving from 2017-2019. Giving to religion, in inflation adjusted dollars, fell 1.7%, while eight of the other ten categories saw increases from 2.7 – 14.4%.

The church is receiving only about half of the percentage of charitable giving it did 30 years ago. Giving to religion has fallen from 56.4% of total charitable giving in 1989 to just 29% in 2019.

When moved by a compelling vision, giving to the church will increase.

There is a strong correlation between engagement and giving patterns. Donors actively engaged in small groups/Sunday school, or who served regularly in a ministry, give 3-4 times the amount of those who attended worship one time per month, but who were not in small groups or serving. Households who attend worship twice or more give twice as much as the donor who only attends once per month.