

Temple Talk 2023 June 25

The Offering Plate

What do you think of when you see an offering plate?

What feelings do you associate with passing offering plates?

The practise of weekly offering and offering envelopes has its origins in two transformations of the 19th century: the separation of church and state and the industrial revolution. States ceased to fund churches and workers began to be paid weekly – cash in an envelop. Church leaders began to encourage members to give weekly offerings.

We have continued the practice of passing the offering plate down each row of pews during worship, and families have placed an envelop in the plate every week.

There are good reasons for maintaining the practice of a weekly offering:

- Weekly giving reminds us weekly that everything we have is a gift from God. It is a way to show gratitude for what we have.
- Envelopes encourage a giving plan.
- Offerings carry strong symbolism of our relationship to our God. In addition to monetary gifts, our offerings include time and abilities used to support the mission of the church.
- Carrying the offering plates to the altar each week reinforces that we are a community and that our mission is to serve what and who God created and loves.
- Our weekly offerings are a symbol that our community receives gifts from God and that we turn our gifts over to be used in the community.

In more recent times, we have been encouraging members to use PAR or e-transfer. PAR is an automatic deposit from your bank account to the church bank account. It enables regular planned giving even when you are not able to attend worship in our building. An E-transfer can be used to give your offering much the way cheques have been used.

We want to continue to reinforce our sense of a community acting together as our offerings are brought forward each week. As you enter the worship space your offering envelope may be received in the offering plate. Or, you may place a card in the offering plate symbolizing that your offering is presented through e-transfer or PAR.

References:

- separation of church and state <https://letterjacketenvelopes.com/tithing-and-tithing-envelopes-where-did-they-come-from/>
- Industrial revolution and the weekly pay packet <https://www.rainapp.com/us-blog/people-used-to-get-paid-daily-what-happened>