



▶ WHAT IS PER CAPITA?



▶ WHERE DOES THE MONEY I GIVE GO?



▶ WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR ME TO GIVE?

Per Capita Who We Are

“The particular churches of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) wherever they are, taken collectively, constitute one church.”
(G-4.0301a)

This quote from the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) makes it clear that Presbyterian churches are not simply connected to one another, but are together what the Presbyterian Church is. There is, indeed, great diversity in how the many congregations go about being the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (PCUSA) in their locations, but it is the combination of all of them that define the PCUSA.



WHAT IT MEANS

Over the years since the Protestant Reformation, Presbyterians have chosen to govern themselves as a church in certain ways. These “certain ways” are some of the distinctive characteristics we think of as “what it means to be a Presbyterian.” One of the distinctive characteristics is our system of gradually more inclusive governing bodies; several Sessions included in a Presbytery, several presbyteries included in a Synod, and several synods in the General Assembly. Each of these has responsibilities for managing some part of how we function as one church.



PER CAPITA APPORTIONMENT

Per Capita Apportionment is the system by which each Presbyterian's fair share of the cost of being part of the Presbyterian community is assessed. For 2007, the General Assembly has decided that it needs \$5.79 from every Presbyterian to carry out BEING the national expression of our church. This money goes to pay for the meetings of the General Assembly, for the ecumenical relationship of which we as Presbyterians are a part, for the staff that facilitate the operations of the Stated Clerk and Moderator, and for many other functions considered necessary to be the General Assembly of the PCUSA.

In a similar fashion, the Synod of Southern California and Hawaii has decided it needs \$2.60 from every Presbyterian within the bounds of the Synod to carry out BEING the regional expression of our church. This money goes to pay for the meetings of the Synod, for the maintenance of the office facilities, for the staff that facilitates the office of the Stated Clerk, for assisting with travel for Hawaiian participation, and for many other functions considered necessary to be PCUSA within the Southern California and Hawaii area.

The Presbytery of the Pacific has decided it needs \$22.61 from every Presbyterian within the churches of the presbytery to carry out BEING the area expression of our church. This money goes to pay for meetings

of the presbytery, rent for office space, travel support for Hawaiian participation, for staff that supports the office of the Stated Clerk, for the committees that prepare and credential ministers, for computers and telephones to enable communication, and for many other functions considered necessary to be the PCUSA within our area.

This means that for 2007, we are asking each church in the Presbytery of the Pacific to contribute \$31.00 for each communicant member for the Presbytery, the Synod, and the General Assembly to function for that year. \$8.39 will be passed on to the other governing bodies and \$22.61 will be used for BEING the Presbytery of the Pacific.

PER CAPITA Vs. MISSION

Per capita is the opportunity for all communicant members to participate equally, responsibly, and interdependently by sharing the cost of providing the structures and systems that enable us to engage in mission and to perform the ecclesiastical, legislative, and judicial functions that identify us as Presbyterian.

Mission is what the Presbyterians in a particular place choose to do to be faithful to God's call for action through the body of Christ. Mission is what the faithful do in response to God's gift in Jesus Christ. Just how that response is shaped is determined by the particular needs felt and the resources available. Per capita is the individual's share of Presbyterians being ready and organized to respond to the mission needs they perceive as a community of faith.

A FAIR SHARE

Per capita is not a tax. It is not a fund raising plot to finance wild eyed schemes, or to provide a disincentive for a behavior the church wishes to extinguish. It is the cost of being a national, inclusive church, governed as a representative democracy, brought down to the individual level.

Because our polity (how we're governed) places the responsibility for individual church members with the Session, it is the Session that is asked to contribute the Per Capita Apportionment. In early 2007, Sessions will be asked to contribute \$31.00 for each communicant member on their rolls as of December 31, 2005 (the last year for which statistics are currently available).

We all derive benefit from being members of the Presbyterian Church. Per Capita asks that we all share in what it costs to be the Presbyterian Church. Some Sessions choose to

include per capita in their budget and simply pay it from the contributions of their members. Some ask members to contribute the per capita amount on top of their support for the ministry, and operation, of the church. Some have specific fund raisers to deal with per capita.

Whether or not your Session asks, contribute your fair share. Pay your per person share of what it costs to be the Presbyterian Church. Help your Session by paying your fair share.

PERSPECTIVE

\$31.00 is not very much money in comparison to all the other things we pay for without even raising a question.

At today's rates, it is about two thirds of a tank of gas. For some, it might be the equivalent of a meal at a nice restaurant, or a week's worth of visits to Starbucks. It is near the cost of three movies in a theater or a few more rentals.