

Christmas means extra giving for churchgoers

December 4, 2025

BRENTWOOD, Tenn.—For many churchgoers, Christmastime means giving time. Most say they regularly donate money and items to their churches as well as to local and national ministries and nonprofits.

Churchgoing adults in the United States are likely to make financial and item donations during the Christmas season, according to a [Lifeway Research study](#).

More than 4 in 5 U.S. Protestant churchgoers say they typically make an extra monetary donation this time of year, while 3 in 4 usually give new items to help others.

“Many Americans traditionally give presents to others at Christmas, so we wondered if they also gave to charities during this season,” said Scott McConnell, executive director of Lifeway Research.

“There is no shortage of opportunities and numerous requests for donations at Christmastime, and most churchgoers do give charitably at this time of year.”

Christmas bonus

Average Protestant churchgoers say they typically make financial donations at Christmastime to two types of causes, in addition to any regular giving they do, with 84 percent saying they make at least one additional donation this time of year.

Half of churchgoers (49 percent) say they give to their church’s efforts to

help those in need. More than one-third (37 percent) donate to their church's missions offering.

More than a quarter give directly to a person or family they know who is in need (29 percent) or an extra financial gift to their church's general fund (26 percent).

One in 5 (21 percent) donate to a local Christian ministry. Fewer Protestant churchgoers use this time of year to give to a nonprofit that isn't a Christian organization (15 percent), a national Christian ministry (15 percent) or their church's capital or building campaign (14 percent).

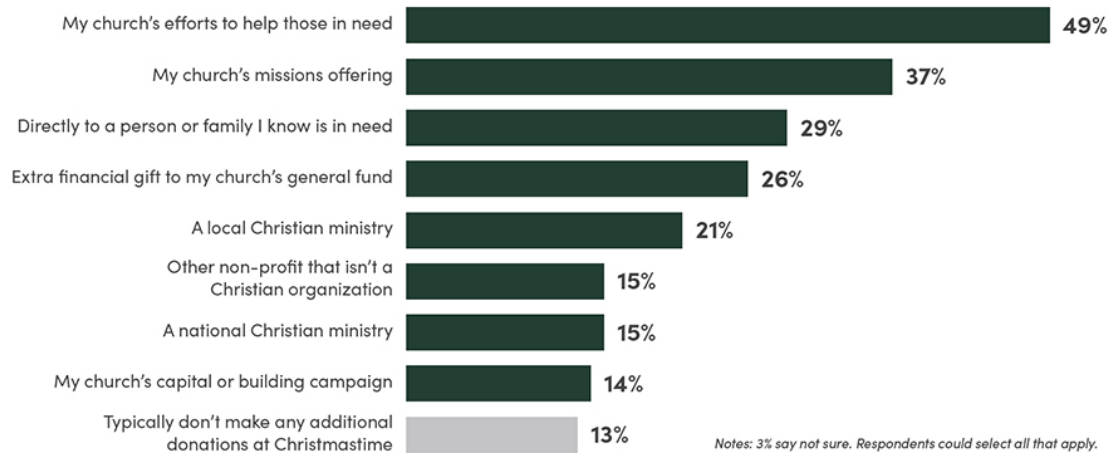
Only 13 percent say they typically don't make any additional donations during this season, while 3 percent aren't sure.

"Since almost all Protestant churchgoers [attend at Christmastime](#), it is not surprising that they participate in financial giving opportunities at their church the most. And in the giving spirit, gifts in which the church helps others are far more popular than things that benefit the operation of the church itself," McConnell said.

Churchgoers typically give financially to two extra causes during Christmastime

Among U.S. Protestant churchgoers

"To which, if any, of the following causes do you typically make financial donations at Christmastime in addition to any regular giving you do?"



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Male churchgoers are more likely than their female counterparts to give to their church's mission offering (43 percent v. 32 percent), make an extra financial gift to their church's general fund (31 percent v. 21 percent) or contribute to their church's capital or building fund (18 percent v. 10 percent).

Women at church are more likely than men to give to a nonprofit that isn't a Christian organization (17 percent v. 13 percent).

Those under 50 (35 percent) are more likely than churchgoers ages 50-64 (26 percent) and those 65 and older (23 percent) to give directly to a person or family they know who is in need. Churchgoers 18-29 (26 percent) and 30-49 (27 percent) are more likely than those 50-64 (16 percent) and 65 and older (17 percent) to say they give to a local Christian ministry.

Churchgoers 65 and older (16 percent) are among the most likely to say

they typically don't make any additional donations at Christmastime.

Lutherans are among the least likely to say they give to their church's efforts to help those in need (36 percent), to their church's mission offering (21 percent), directly to a person or family they know who is in need (13 percent) or to a local Christian ministry (11 percent).

Nondenominational churchgoers are among the least likely to say they give to their church's mission offering (27 percent), an extra financial gift to their church's general fund (18 percent), to their church's capital or building campaign (11 percent) or to a local Christian ministry (19 percent).

Nondenominational churchgoers (21 percent) and Lutherans (19 percent) are more likely than Baptists (9 percent) to say they typically don't make any additional donations at Christmastime.

Presents under someone else's tree

On average, U.S. Protestant churchgoers also donate a new item to at least one ministry or charitable organization during the holiday season. Three in 4 (76 percent) say they made a physical donation to at least one cause last year.

Churchgoers are most likely to have donated food for a local food bank (45 percent) or items collected by their church to help others (40 percent).

One in 4 Protestant churchgoers (25 percent) gave a shoebox item for Operation Christmas Child, a ministry of Samaritan's Purse. Around 1 in 8 (13 percent) donated Angel Tree gifts for Prison Fellowship.

Some say they give items to a local Christian ministry (18 percent), to a nonprofit that is not a Christian organization (16 percent) or to a national Christian ministry (11 percent).

Around 1 in 5 (19 percent) say they didn't donate items at Christmastime last year, and 4 percent aren't sure.

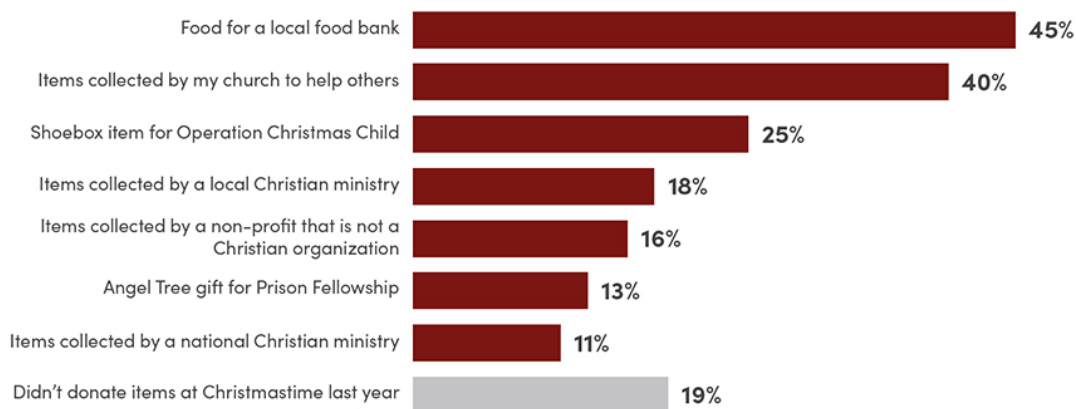
"Donating items to charitable causes at Christmastime may not be as efficient as financial gifts to the charity, but it is a fun way for people to be involved in the cause," McConnell said.

"Donors spend time as well as money purchasing items, so they are likely thinking longer about those they are helping. They are also often rewarded by seeing the collective donations of everyone, which affirms that they were part of something bigger than their own gift."

On average, churchgoers donated items to two organizations last Christmas

Among U.S. Protestant churchgoers

"Last year, to which, if any, of the following causes did you donate new items at Christmastime?"



Notes: 4% say not sure. Respondents could select all that apply.

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Churchgoers with evangelical beliefs are more likely than those without to say they typically give items to Operation Christmas Child (29 percent v. 20 percent).

Those without evangelical beliefs are more likely than those with such

beliefs to give items to a local food bank (51 percent v. 41 percent).

Older churchgoers are less likely to have donated items last year. Those 65 and older (25 percent) and 50-64 (21 percent) are more likely than those 30-49 (15 percent) and 18-29 (14 percent) to say they didn't donate items at Christmastime last year.

Lutherans are among the least likely to say they donated items to a local food bank (37 percent), Operation Christmas Child (14 percent), Prison Fellowship for Angel Tree gifts (6 percent) or a national Christian ministry (2 percent).

Nondenominational churchgoers are among the least likely to have donated items to a local food bank (42 percent), their church to help others (32 percent), Operation Christmas Child (22 percent) or a nonprofit that is not a Christian organization (13 percent).

In addition, nondenominational churchgoers (29 percent) are among the most likely to say they didn't donate any items last Christmas.

The online survey of American Protestant churchgoers was conducted Sept. 2-7 using a national pre-recruited panel. Analysts used quotas and slight weights to balance gender, age, region, ethnicity, education and religion to reflect the population more accurately.

The completed sample is 1,200 surveys. It provides 95 percent confidence the sampling error from the panel does not exceed plus or minus 3.2 percent. Margins of error are higher in sub-groups.