



Easter Offering Survey Responses

Thank you to all who participated in the recent Marble Easter Offering Survey. Since 1968, Marble has used its annual Easter Offering to raise funds which are awarded as grants to nonprofit organizations answering Jesus' call to feed the hungry, give shelter to the homeless, welcome the stranger, and care for the needy among us.

In the past few years, we have received feedback offering different perspectives on this outreach effort and so we sent out a survey to the entire congregation to help us determine how to best move forward. Below are the results of that survey.

Please know we took all of your answers into consideration when we crafted the direction of the 2024 Easter Offering and will continue to do so as we move forward into the future.

Q1. Do you give to the Easter Offering?

75 – Yes

4 – I have in the past but not in recent years

Q2. If you don't give to the Easter Offering, can you share why not?

5 comments:

- I have been giving to the Easter Offering for many years.
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- I have given in the past. I gave to live streaming last year.

I made the choice because the communication around the Easter offering was unclear. It seemed that there were too many grantees when Marble is in such financial despair.

- I will not give this year because of changed financial circumstances. I will give in the years to come.
- Too many organizations I am uncomfortable with, and we don't know them all right away.

Q3. Marble has been giving grants to an average of 40 to 60 nonprofit organizations each year. Would you like to see that number:

47 – Decrease
6 – Increase
26 – Stay the same

Q4. Our grants have averaged \$5,000 to each organization in past years. Would you like to see that number:

2 – Decrease
46 – Increase
3 – No response
28 – Stay the same

Q5. For many years Easter Offering grants have been to local, national and international organizations. Would you like to see this:

29 – Focus more on local organizations
9 – Focus more on U.S. specific organizations
5 – Other
36 – Stay the same

Other Comments (17):

- Approx 25% of the Easter Offering should be provided for Marble's Ministry. There are Christmas/Easter congregants who may come few other times during the year and may not understand that their contribution on Easter Sunday will not support Marble directly and does not count toward their pledge, if any. A large portion of the remainder should be used to support and leverage the vision of the Strategic Plan. For example, how can we use grants to increase our involvement in the neighborhood? Can we expand the definition of our neighborhood to include NYS and NYC. How do we define and care for the neighborhood of our on-line members? Maybe involve them in the process -- i.e. allocate some percentage for worthy groups identified by the on-line congregation.
- Decrease the number of organizations and increase the \$\$ donated to each. Keep the current balance.
- Focus on organizations close to Marble, definitely! A way to grow Marble's impact on neighboring institutions, with the added benefit of developing joint projects and/or

volunteer opportunities. For me, "close to Marble" means the NoMad, Mid-Manhattan area.

- I already give to national and international organizations. I increased my pledge to Marble, so I have less to give to duplicate organizations.
- I feel we should focus on faith based organizations that aren't eligible or are not supported by big corporate grants. We should choose no more than 10 maximum to make a significant impact to the organization.

Last year, for example, UNICEF was on our list of recipients. As great an organization as UNICEF is, it is the recipient of millions of dollars, and our meager amount is like a "drop in the bucket!"

- I love Rural Migrant Ministries and Housing Plus!!!
- I would like to see fewer organizations so they can receive \$10,000. Also, while I sound like a broken record, I would like to know ahead of time the organizations you are considering so when I make my independent giving choices I don't overlap with them. I also would like a report on the final giving and to whom Marble was able to give. I still haven't seen the final giving results for 2023. If I don't know in advance your plans, I will no longer give to the Easter Offering and will do my own thing totally. Thank you.
- Perhaps you could consider giving 50% to local organizations, 30% to U.S. specific organizations and 20% to international organizations or something similar.
- Seeds of Peace seems incredibly appropriate right now.
- The current balance is good.
- US & local for now. I'm not sure of the international candidates, particularly long running relationships such as sister churches.
- US specific organizations would be acceptable as long as they serve clients in the New York metro area.
- We should NOT be giving money to organizations that receive either city, state, or federal funding. Providing funds to organizations with operating budgets of 6 or 7 figures is ridiculous.
- Also, some should go to Marble which needs it right now.
- For #3 & #4 - You shouldn't decrease the number of organizations by that much. I just feel that 40 is better than 60 (that's a rather large "window"). If we gave to 35-40, the amount could increase a bit. ... And they don't necessarily have to be the same organizations each year. Some could alternate.
- The need is great everywhere though I'd like to see US based organizations with an emphasis on local needs.
- With so many migrants on NYC there should be an emphasis of focusing help there

Q6. We have given to organizations engaged in efforts around Hunger, Shelter (homelessness and housing), Education, Health (including mental health), and Social Justice and Empowerment. Would you like to see changes to these areas?

58 – No

18 – Yes

3 – No response

Yes Comments (17):

- All of these are wonderful and necessary. The question: do we want to spread grants over many needs with potentially less impact or do we want to focus on a smaller number too need areas to potentially have a bigger impact in that area. I believe more focus on fewer need areas will allow us to develop a reputation as an impact player in an area identified in the strategic plan.
- Concentrate on Hunger, Shelter, Education and Health only.
- Considering the financial bind Marble Church is in, for the year 2024, we might consider allocating some of the Easter Offering, perhaps up to 50%, to our own needs, in house programs, staff salaries, etc. The other 50% to the type of organizations mentioned above.
- Fewer causes would allow for more significant, focused support to be provided.
- Focus on hunger and shelter.
- I believe Marble should focus exclusively on Shelter, Hunger, Education and Health; those are the areas where Marble can make a discernable difference.
- I like the diversity. Not sure that the same amount to each group is the best measure. If we estimate the amount to be raised - then look for the best use of the money - maybe half as many organizations. We need to know what RCA supports, what does UCC support. Tell us how we are aligned by denomination. Or tell us why each organization is chosen.
- I think that GIFTS had, with all good intentions, brought in a group that provided inclusion for POC in the LGBTQ+ community. They were singers - unfortunately, I didn't think the quality of the music was up to the church's usual excellence. While the group itself had admirable intentions - bringing ministry to younger LGBTQ+ of color, their skills as musicians/singers left something to be desired. I don't say this to sound hurtful, just to make a point and a friend of mine in GIFTS who is involved in some manner in the Easter offering agreed with me.
- I would add organizations related to Early Childhood Mental Health and Parenting. I agree with all the above-mentioned organizations.
- I'm not sure: although the areas sound fine, I really do not what the process is for determining who should receive grants or how the amount granted to each is determined. Kindly clarify. For example, do agencies in need apply to Marble with a dollar amount or, do people at Marble hear about a group / organization they would like for Marble to help?
- Is there accountability?
- Keep it local. With the migrant issues, perhaps this would be a good focus in all of those categories as it pertains to them until things normalize.
- More transgender support. The average lifespan is 35 years of age according to UN Commission on Homophobia & Transphobia which I attended years ago with Marble GIFTS leadership colleagues. Due to discrimination in 5 areas. 2023- US 320 transgender person murders (likely more due to misgendering and failure to report) according to Forbes.
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jamiewareham/2023/11/13/beaten-stabbed-and-shot-320-trans-people-murdered-in-2023/>
In general regarding annual benevolence activities, I have recommended in the past

inclusion and integration. For example, backpack drive, Santa letters, hats/scarfs/glove donations etc. through the year to include low income, need based populations including LGBTQ populations. In an effective impactful way. Generally good job. Glad to see coat donation revived mainly because I have a lot to donate this year. Unusual circumstances. Thanks for asking.

- Perhaps we can sponsor something long term year over year?
- Would like to see us identify a signature area to concentrate on.
- Less political in nature
- I would like to see added to the list organizations like Ethos farm which does regenerative farming, Also has a plant-based medical practice. Organizations that are plant forward to help save the planet, our health, and the animals. Life on earth

Q7. Is there anything else you would like to share with us about the Easter Offering grant-making process?

Comments (43):

- As much as I love the Easter offering, the change in our personal and financial situation has made it more difficult to contribute. We will continue to contribute, but unfortunately, in a smaller amount.
- Because the bar of the goal to be reached is set so high, I feel the pressure to give. I'd like to feel less pressure, ergo, please make the goal more reasonable. I'd advise lowering the number of organizations to whom we are giving.
Thanks.
- Change is scary so please show us why this change is exciting. I think it is!
- Given Marble's current financial reality, I think it needs to significantly reduce its fund-raising goal for the Easter offering to no more than \$100,000. This year was very uncomfortable being asked to contribute to an EO goal that fell considerably short and asked to make a separate but equal contribution to Marble. This is a time when Marble just like an individual or a family needs to reign in its spending even for something good like the EO.
- How much of the offering goes for administrative costs of these organizations?
- I believe this is one of the most important outreach programs in Marble. I have been proud of Marble's contributions for the past 45 years that I have been a member.
- I feel a large part of the Easter offering should go to Marble church itself. We are in a very different financial position now. We raise a lot of money, and it is crazy that none of it goes to our church. It's okay to take care of ourselves, so that we can be strong to take care of others. Going forward this year, I doubt that I will continue to donate to the Easter offering if none of the money goes to Marble.
- I heard you are considering Kaleidoscope Ministries. I would want to know of successes, goals, impact. I was impressed a few years ago with a group out of Chinatown area that works on conflict resolution. They spoke from chancel during Easter Offer campaign. Crossroads? So impressed with conflict resolution impact of a Harlem black boys LGBTQ bullying project called in by school and taken class out of school (due to environment) to their HQ and effective project relating their

behavior to their personal family situation to experience their own behavioral impact. We organized a GIFTS all day workshop with their leader and an Indian transgender counselor. When Chad Tanaka Pack was here. My suggestion, he did the negotiating and organizing to target to our group. Susannah is aware of the organization.

- I just responded at length and a closing question got away from me too soon. Yes, I am human!
- I marked #4 as an increase as it is something that would be great to see in the future, but with the current financials of Marble, perhaps not now.
- I really like the idea of the Easter Offering -- our benevolences. Most churches divide pledge money into the category of "immediate church needs & obligations" and "benevolence giving". I think the Easter Offering method enables all of our members and visitors to consciously give to others with extra needs. It makes giving to others a positive, definitive, religious act to care for others. My friends who visited Marble during the fundraising period loved to support our work in this way. Other than the method of raising money, there is really no information about how this happens. Who makes the decisions? How do they know about these organizations? What is the process? Once accepted for donations, are these organizations always on the list? And more...
- I trust the committee is following good practices to choose good organizations.
- I was formerly on the Benevolence committee, also as Co-chair. I prefer mostly local and lesser funded organizations where our 5K matters more. 5k is an OK grant, some could be more. Less is a lot of effort for a small grant.
- I would like a bigger donation to go to many fewer organizations. Maybe choose only five organizations. Or even 3. Then our donations could make a sizable difference. I most like thistle farms.
- I would like to have a larger amount than \$5,000 given to less organizations. Vet and limit the number of organizations and give each one more.
- I would like to know the specifics of the eligibility process and what branch of the church decides who receives, or does not receive, grants.
- I'd like to see more reps from various organizations come to Marble and tell us about what they do. It's incredibly helpful to understand where our money is going and how it's being used and changing lives. We've heard powerful testimonies from leaders and individuals before (Seeds of Peace had very powerful presentations, I recall, with Israeli and Palestinian youth sharing how they became friends determined to shape a new future). Otherwise, the Easter Offering is just this Marble tradition we're asked to engage in and in recent years I feel we've lost touch with the reasons, the meaning, and the positive effects our offerings actually have on others. Let's hear testimony from those whose lives have been changed. Thank you!
- I'm not sure if the number of organizations should increase, decrease, or remain the same. I think Marble should give to worthy organizations that generally do not receive large charitable donations from grant makers and the amount granted is sufficient for the organization to actually help those the receiving organization serves, e.g. a specific program within an organization.

- If I remember correctly, we do not always know the recipients ahead of time. It might spur me to increase my offering if I knew this in advance. I may be wrong but seems we get a list after all is said and done.
- In the near future, is Marble going to have in person volunteer opportunities like what Marble had pre pandemic aside from tutoring at PS30? E.g. building homes with Habitat for Humanity, cleaning the parks with NY Cares, delivering food for the home bound on Thanksgiving/Christmas, etc.
- In these tough economic times, Marble should continue doing the best possible with the Easter offering outreach! I wish we could increase everything! Maybe increasing the goal would help people reach further.
- It will be hard to tell the existing organizations that we are making changes, and they will not be receiving the \$5,000 this year. That letter should be going out soon. We should also not make the organizations jump through so many hoops for our grants- we are a church. The proposal they would submit, intense questionnaire and interview was very time consuming. We went way overboard and were acting like the Rockefeller Foundation and not a church.
- It's my understanding that currently the Easter Sunday Collection is allocated entirely to the Easter Offering. For me it makes sense to allocate a portion of that Sunday Morning Collection, at least half, to Marble's annual budget.
- Keep it going and let's pray that other funders can help save Marble and the financial debacle.
- My concern about the Easter Offerings is accountability on the part of the organizations to Marble. How does Marble know that the grants are being used appropriately, for the intended purposes? Perhaps, if we decrease the number of organizations, the programs selected, will receive a larger grant that can help them reach their goals, a little faster.
Another thought - when a church member makes an Easter Offering can they note on their check, the organization they want their money to go to?
- No.
- None at this time
- Not really. Don't know enough about it.
- Only that we can't give to every non-profit that applies for help. We need to use discretion in which organization and how many we choose to support.
Also, that we research the organizations we do support to ensure that they are using the funds wisely.
- Perhaps a shelter for homeless and abused animals
- Perhaps offer \$10,000-15,000 to 10 local organizations. I don't think it is necessary to keep increasing the total every year under the circumstances.
- see above.
- The current process of awarding many small grants is exhausting for the Committee and potentially not meaningful for the recipients, who are asked to supply lots information and have an interview for a small grant. I also believe that we should not be offering grant money to huge charities with multimillion dollar budgets, no matter how good their work. They simply don't need our congregant's grant money as much as smaller, community focused grass roots organizations. Finally, we should make the application process electronic and simple.

- The need should be real and immediate. It should not be organized like last year with 40+ organizations. Select 3-5 orgs maximum and strive to make a meaningful difference. Also encourage volunteer opportunities for those who do not have the financial means to contribute.
- Think we're in a different time with changing priorities, one of which is the survival of Marble. Would like to consider making Marble a recipient of a portion of the offering. Think congregants are feeling tapped out, so goal should not increase. Also, some of us give to organizations apart from Marble.
- This program is truly 'Christian' in nature. We have surplus and give to those in need. Its a 'unique selling proposition' when inviting church seekers to join our membership ranks.
- To me it is important to make the best choice of organizations. We still have a recognized voice in our community so we should model thoughtful giving. Same \$ amount to all organizations reads like we have not put enough thought into our grant making. Perhaps say that we will give a larger amount locally, then give a portion nationally and another amount internationally. I think it is very important to set out an option for Marble and/or Marble endowment. Connecting giving to actions we can take by ministry group or full congregation is meaningful too. We need to understand the cost of this effort - what does it cost to research and select organizations? How many people are involved? Does that cost come out of the offering? How much volunteer and staff time/expenses is involved?
- What you do is very important and I'm happy to be a part of it.
- Who decides what charities to give to and how are those decisions made?
- With the extraordinary influx of immigrants, perhaps a one-time shift in monies to help support organizations who help them would be good.
- Would appreciate more information on the process and criteria for evaluating organizations and awarding grants. Having reps of organizations speak at Marble is very helpful.
- Please include Seeds of Peace (Seeds for Peace?) this year - it is so very needed. I'll never forget the founder who came and spoke to us many years ago.
- More transparency on who is on the committee that ultimately decides on grant awards.