The Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme (GASDS) allows charities to claim top-up payments from HMRC on small donations that they receive. The scheme applies to cash donations of £20 or less and also contactless card donations of £20 or less. Donations paid by cheque, credit card and standing order are not eligible and must not be claimed.

**Eligibility:** Your Church must have claimed Gift Aid:
- in the same tax year as you want to claim GASDS.
- without incurring a penalty from HMRC in the previous 2 tax years.
- in at least 2 of the last 4 tax years (without a 2-year gap) if you’re claiming on donations made before 6th April 2017.

Your GASDS claim can’t be more than 10 times your Gift Aid claim. e.g. if your church has received £100 in Gift Aid donations you can claim £1,000 worth of non-gift aided donations through GASDS in the same tax year.

- there must be at least ten people attending services.

From 6th April 2016 each Church can claim up to £2,000 in a tax year (on donations of £8,000) or £1,250 for earlier years (on donations of £5,000).

**Donations:** Must be:
- small - £20 or less in coins or notes and from 6th April 2017 contactless card donations can be included. Chip and pin or other donations which record card details are not eligible.
- giving/donations only. Money from raffles, sales and other income that would not qualify for Gift Aid cannot be included.

Cash collections received during services will be the most common examples of qualifying donations for churches and will be received either as loose cash (collection plate) or regular envelopes from donors who haven’t signed a Gift Aid declaration.

**Best practice for handling cash:**
- cash received should be collected, counted and recorded by two unrelated individuals, wherever possible.
- when it is counted, a record should be made of the amount received by denomination of coins and notes for reconciliation purposes.
- cash should be banked as soon as possible.
- cash should never be left unattended or in an unattended environment.

**Keeping records:** You need to record the:
- total cash donations collected and by denomination. There should be separate record showing loose cash collected as this provides evidence of the donations that are eligible for a top-up payment. From 6th April 2017 you will need to keep records of any contactless card donations that you’ve taken, for example receipts from a contactless payment facility of a card. Chip and pin or other payments which record card details are not eligible.
- date of the collection.
- date it was paid into a bank account.
- an estimate of how many people were at the event (as there must be a minimum of 10 people attending).
- Records should be kept for a period of 6 years after the claim has been submitted to HMRC.

**When to claim:**
- All GASDS claims must be made on a tax year basis and not based on the accounting period of your church.
- Your church must make a claim for top-up payments within 2 years at the end of the tax year in which the donation is received.

Any Gift Aid queries should be directed to Mrs Donna Ahrens/Mrs Carol Gilmore (giftaid@irishmethodist.org) or 028 90324554