

The Rector's Stewardship Appeal for the Year 2017

My dear sisters and brothers in Christ Jesus, grace and peace be unto you. November is the month for giving thanks and remembering how truly blessed we are by our extravagant, loving and merciful God. An attitude of gratitude can help us deal with the difficult and ugly realities of life; the impossible situations that confront us, and help us make the seemingly impossible become a possibility with God's love and grace. An attitude of gratitude is what we are called to inculcate in our lives as stewards.

As you by now are aware, it is that time of the year for us to formulate a budget for the mission plan of St. George's for the year 2017. In order for us to accomplish this, it is time for us to rededicate ourselves to God, by making our financial pledge for 2017. The Stewardship Committee is working feverishly to ensure that each of you receive pledge cards, and urge you to prayerfully consider the Biblical tithe of 10% of your gross income as your pledge for next year, or, begin to work towards the tithe as your standard of giving.

I know that it is very difficult for the church to talk about money – yet the reality is that the church cannot effectively accomplish the mission entrusted to us without your faithful and dedicated tithes and offerings. Just recently, a colleague of mine mentioned something about tithing that I believe is very profound and goes to the heart of the understanding of Christian stewardship. She said a priest remarked 'that all of us place a lot of time planning, preparing and paying into our retirement for the future.' She went on to say that, 'we should also pay just as much attention, and pay as much into our "spiritual retirement" as we do for our retirement. Many of us will probably not reach the point of our physical retirement. However, we are sure about our spiritual retirement. In the final analysis, what really counts, is preparing for our "spiritual retirement." The life of stewardship is a life of securing for our spiritual retirement, and how well we retire, depends on how much we are willing to put into it. Think about it!

It was John Wesley who said, "Make as much as you can, save as much as you can, and give as much as you can." From what do you give to God, from your abundance or from your all? Mark 12:35-44 reminds us, "For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on." This story called The Widow's Mite reminds us that true giving is giving from our abundance. It is tempting to give to God after we have paid all the bills and whatever is left over we give to God- somewhat like a tip!

Like the Widow, real giving is giving from one's all which means that we give to God and the spread of God's kingdom first. When we give in this way it becomes an act of faith. We do not give because it is our "fair share" or because we expect to get a tax write-off, nor do we give to support a favorite program at the church. **Giving from one's all is about understanding that everything we have, everything we use to make our livelihood – our minds, our strength, the materials, even the time we have to work-is a gift from God.**

Your completed pledge cards will be collected on **Harvest Sunday, November 20th at the 10:00 AM service**. As you consider your pledge to St. George's for 2017, I hope that you will approach it with an attitude of gratitude. Remember how richly God has blessed you, remember that this is God's Church and God's mission, and then return a portion of your treasure and time to God, in thanksgiving. If we feel truly blessed, it is important for our spiritual health, to give back some portion of all that God has given us. Help me, as we work together to build the Kingdom of God in this place and find new ways to share the kingdom and spread the Good News to the world around us.

To make this year's Harvest Thanksgiving a memorable one, the Chancel Choir of St. George's is hosting "*An Evening with the Ancient & Modern Hymnal*" at 3:00 pm. This "sing-a-long" will commemorate the Feast of St. Cecilia the Patron Saint of Musicians and is given in thanksgiving to the memories of Frank & Norma Powell – two faithful and devoted choristers who have now joined the heavenly hosts of angels and archangels.

I am asking each of you to submit **two** of your favorite Ancient and Modern hymns by title to be sung during that evening's celebration and encourage and invite as many of your friends as possible to celebrate the life of both Frank and Norma by singing those hymns that have withstood the test of time. A flyer is enclosed for your information and posting.

I thank all of you for the effort you made this year that allowed us to accomplish great things for God. Let's do even more in 2017! Do remember, I love you, I thank you, and may God bless you. Think on these things!

Very Rev. Canon Miles†

Canon Miles†

Attachment