

To Tithe or Not to Tithe.....

“I want to tithe,” a man told his rector. “When my income was \$50 a week, I gave \$5 to the church every Sunday. When I was successful in business, and my income rose to \$500 a week, I gave \$50 to my church every Sunday. But now my income is \$5,000 a week and I just can’t bring myself to give \$500 to the church every week.” The rector said “Why don’t we pray over this?” The rector began to pray, “Dear God, please make this man’s income \$500 a week so that he can tithe.”

– Tattled from the Church of the Nativity, Lewiston, Idaho

Dear Friends,

This month is a whirl of activity in the Church. The Consecration of a new Bishop, All Saints Sunday, All Souls Day, the all new and improved Holiday Bazaar (*and don’t forget Preview Night!*). In the midst of all the preparation and excitement around these events, one more is with us – and such an important one: our Annual Pledge Drive.

The impression is often given that we (the rector and vestry) simply want you to give more money to support the mission and ministry of Christ Church. That is not really the case. While it is true that this year we are running with a deficit budget (but not as badly as we had anticipated) and we always welcome contributions to the Church - this is not what your pledge is about!

Your pledge is first and foremost about your relationship with God. It also reflects your relationship and care for your fellow parishioners. And it says something about how you see the world around you – do you envision how what we do here impacts our community and beyond?

This is the place from which your pledge should come. The Bible talks about the **tithe** – giving 10% of all that you receive – however large or small your income may be – precisely because it is not the amount you give (as in the story above, whether \$5 a week or \$500) but about your relationship to your money, your relationship to God, and the recognition that all you have *comes* from God. If you give less than your tithe, what exactly are you saying to God?

The **tithe** is a most wonderful biblical mandate because it is the big equalizer; it means every person is truly giving the same amount – that is, the same percentage. Whether you have a six figure income or have a much more modest living, you are each and every one expected to give the same percentage, the same share.

This year, as we prepare our program ***Come, Ye Thankful People, Come***, I urge to begin now to pray about how you will respond to our Lord’s call to you in the midst of this community. If you are not already in the practice of tithing, and you think that sounds out of your reach, please know that *this* rector will not pray that your income decreases! But I will pray that you will stretch yourself in this central part of your faith: in your giving back to God from what you have received. Resolve to step up your giving by at least 1% - and then plan to do the same next year and the next, until you reach that magical 10%. You will be surprised at how easily it is done, and you will be even more surprised to see the blessings you will receive as a result of your generosity. I know I have.

Peace,

Mother Lisa+