



We have reached another milestone in our Stewardship Life campaign! Today is Commitment Sunday, a day when we can celebrate the blessings our Lord has showered upon each of us. The word “commitment” may cause an uneasy feeling among some. It can be intimidating to commit to something, not knowing what the future may bring. We, as Christians though, have the assurance that our Heavenly Father has also made commitments to His bride, the church.

Joshua 1:9- Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

Joshua 21:45- Not one word of all the good promises that the Lord had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass.

Isaiah 41:10- fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Matt. 11:28-30- Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

John 3:16- For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Romans 8:38-39- For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

God blesses us with everything we need. We are **entrusted with** these blessings, **not entitled** to them. How are we to return thanks to God for all we have? Here is some guidance on planning your giving from Rev. Heath Curtis, LCMS Stewardship Ministry Coordinator:

1. Receive God's gifts. If you have not been faithfully attending worship to hear God's Word, receiving His forgiveness and partaking of His body and blood for the eternal benefit of your soul, then by all means repent and come receive the gifts of our Lord Jesus! God does not want your money — He wants you, all of you.
2. Pray. Go to the throne of grace and ask for strength to follow the Lord faithfully.
3. Consider what the Church does. The Church is called to spread the Good News about Jesus Christ by preaching the Gospel to all who will hear it and administering the Sacraments to the faithful. You are a part of God's Church on earth. This is your mission and the mission is for the life of the world — that for which Jesus laid down His life and took it up again. The Church cannot complete its mission unless all members of the Church, those who have benefitted from the Church's mission, faithfully support the Church.
4. Examine yourself. Consider the commands of God from the New Testament about supporting the work of the Church and examine your own giving. Are you: a.) giving of your firstfruits (that is, does your offering come out of your paycheck first, not just what's left over?); b.) giving voluntarily and cheerfully; c.) giving proportionally; d.) relying on God's promise to provide for you? If not, then repent and trust in God's provision.
5. Decide on your proportion. Now you are ready to consider what proportion of your income you can give faithfully, proportionally and cheerfully. A good place to start is 10 percent. That is what my family gives, and it makes for easy math — just move the decimal point and that's your offering for the week. But if you can't give 10 percent voluntarily and cheerfully, then pick another proportion: 7, 5 or even 1 percent. But just follow the guidelines from Scripture and faithfully give a voluntary firstfruits portion of your income.

To God be the Glory!

As our prayer today, let us reflect on the Offertory of Divine Service I, based on Psalm 116.

What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits to me? I will offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving and will call on the name of the Lord. I will take the cup of salvation and will call on the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows to the Lord now in the presence of all His people, in the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of you, O Jerusalem. (LSB p.159-160)