

First Things – part six, with thanksgiving

12/11/2016 Andy Figueroa

*Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication **with thanksgiving** let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:4-6 ESV*

And so, with this little article we close a season focused on various aspects of Christian stewardship. Now, it is my joy and pleasure, personally and on behalf of the parish leadership, to give thanks to God and to you for your faithfulness in participating in our process and the generosity that you express therein.

Did you know that in some local churches it is almost considered an anathema to talk about money, to ask for it, or to teach Christian stewardship? In others, the parish leaders go grovelling each year begging for promises to give money (pledges) with threats about deficit budgets and cuts to popular programs, often intimidating and nothing that would elicit thanksgiving.

Instead it is our joyful obligation and pleasure to talk about money, to teach about Biblical giving that God might find faithful, that you might find fulfilling, and through which Holy Trinity might thrive. Truly, without outrageously generous giving, Holy Trinity Anglican Church would not have come into being and would not be the parish that we lovingly share today.

We do ask you to do something. We ask every household to return a *good faith estimate of their next year's giving*. A *good faith estimate* implies nothing more than just what those words mean. No future obligation is implied. We assume that your guess is better than our guess. This is a great help to the vestry as they plan to live within our means through next year's budget. More important we hope, is that in developing your *good faith estimate* you are encouraged to be thoughtful about giving.

How did we do? I will make a final report at the Annual Parish Meeting. A few parishioners have not yet participated and it is expected that most of them will. I can share with you that we are on a positive trajectory to exceed past records in both number of participants (those who returned cards) and estimated giving. Your faithfulness makes leading a stewardship campaign easy, for which I am very thankful.

Just in case, if you have not yet participated in the in-gathering this year, you may complete a card and place it in the gray box near the baptismal font. After this Sunday, just drop it into the offering. Cards may also be hand delivered to our Treasurer, Jim Robinson, or sent by mail to his attention. Nobody else ever sees them.

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