

Grace Presbyterian Church Newsletter

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www.gracechurch-pcusa.org for prayer list, sermons, and more

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An optimist thinks the glass is half full; **a pessimist** sees the glass as half empty; **a realist** knows that if she sticks around, she's eventually going to have to wash the glass.

Sunday, Nov. 7 is **Stewardship Commitment Sunday** at Grace and across our denomination. "Estimate of Giving Cards For 2011" have been sent. If you lose it, you can always contact the church office for one. At the conclusion of the service Nov. 7 we will have the opportunity to present our cards as an expression of our commitment to the work of Jesus Christ.

What's Going on at Grace? We're striving for **friendliness** with our ushers and greeters. We're **reaching out** to the Twin Cities area with our Music in the Park and blood drives and Farmers' Market. The deacons are providing **compassionate care** of the homebound, including a new ministry to those suffering from dementia or Alzheimer's – this made possible by Vicky Brown's seminary internship. Presbyterian Women and the Men of the Church have started again. We have a **new format** for Children's Sunday School and a renewed Youth Group. The Alpha Program is providing a great **refresher course** for members or a great learning opportunity for those with lesser church involvement. Adults now have access to a variety of DVD discussion courses. All this and more! **If you have been gone for a while, come check us out!**

Pastor's Column. Douglas Johnson and George Cornell in their book *Punctured Preconceptions* interviewed 26,184,335 Protestants from fifteen denominations asking this question: "**What motivates people to give to the local church?**" This is what they found and in ascending order of importance.

- 1) **Gratitude to God.** Out of thankfulness they give financially to Jesus' work out of what God has given them.
- 2) **Giving is part of their spiritual relationship to God.** They see that people are either devoted to their money or to the God who gives them their money.
- 3) **They feel privileged to serve God with their finances.** They feel that giving financially is how they grow spiritually.
- 4) **They feel that God asks for an appropriate percentage of their income.** They feel that the Biblical tithe is on target.
- 5) **They like to help other people,** which is what much of their giving goes for. Their congregation helps people on Christ's behalf.
- 6) **They want to help their church carry out its ministries.**
- 7) **They feel that giving adds meaning to life.** They want to make a difference. – D.J.

The willingness to make sacrifices is an essential part of generosity, and C.S. Lewis once said the following.

Charity – giving to the poor – is an essential part of Christian morality...I do not believe one can settle how much we ought to give. I am afraid the only safe rule is to give more than we can spare. In other words, if our expenditure on comforts, luxuries, amusements, etc., is up to the standard common among those with the same income as our own, we are probably giving way too little. If our charities do not at all pinch or hamper us, I should say they are too small. There ought to be things we should like to do but cannot because our charitable expenditure excludes them.

People rarely succeed at anything unless they have fun doing it.

Generous giving produces rejoicing in one's soul. – Frank Clark

What is financial stewardship?

- 1) It is primarily a **relationship** between a person and Jesus Christ. Each of us responds to the sacrificial love of Jesus Christ by what we give.
- 2) This response can be a **percentage of income**, which is Biblical. In the prophet Malachi's day, the standard was the traditional 10% or tithe. The people were not giving this amount, and God accused them of robbing him. Interestingly, researchers have found in recent years that if church members do not intentionally tie their giving to percentage of income, they wind up giving an amount that turns out to be only 1.5% of income. If they intentionally tie giving to percentage of income, they give on average 4.7%, or three times as much.
- 3) **Another way** of going about financial stewardship is by paying one's share. To keep the doors open at Grace, it presently costs \$45/worship per Sunday based on our average worship attendance. (\$45 for 52 Sundays/year, i.e., \$2,340.) Paying one's way, plus helping pay the way of others who aren't able, or paying as large a portion of one's way if one is on limited income, is a responsible thing to do.
- 4) Financial stewardship is **one of the ways we grow in faith**, as is worship, Bible study, prayer, volunteering, etc. There is integrity in giving as large a percentage as possible, or paying what one can to keep the doors open, and trying to increase this one year to the next.
- 5) Your financial commitment to Jesus Christ can be reported **on the 2011 Commitment Card** on Sunday, **Nov. 7**. The only person other than you who will know this amount is church secretary, Liz McClain.
- 6) After we have informed Liz of our financial commitments, she will add it all up and give the total to the session, who will then finalize **the budget for 2011**.

Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, and honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.

-Leo Buscaglia

