



1332 Arrowhead Road, Grafton, WI 53024
Church 262-377-6363 Fax 262-377-9045
School 262-377-7780 Fax 262-377-9045
Church Office osloffice@wl.rr.com
www.OurSaviorGrafton.org

Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

Mark C. Wagner, Pastor oslc@wl.rr.com
Thomas P. Hering, Staff Minister oslcm@wl.rr.com
Joel A. Grulke, Principal osls@wl.rr.com

January 20, 2020

Dear Friends,

The Lord has been so good to us! Over the past three years, our mortgage has been cut in half, our church and gym have a new roof, and our flooded basement has been fully restored. Through good times and bad, the Lord continues to bless His people.

Beginning in February, our entire Our Savior family will be asked to sharpen their pencils and make a personal plan to share their God-given blessings. We (the pastoral team and leadership) want every member involved, responding to God's incredible grace and not just to a need or budget or capital appeal. Each of us will be encouraged to examine our hearts. Where is the Lord and his work in the every day order of my personal priorities? Is my heart thoughtful and thankful for all God's blessings? Or is it centered on itself? Where am I right now in my growth in the grace of giving? (2 Cor. 8:7) Can I, under God's blessing, do better? Much better? Do I want to do better? If not, why not? If so, why so? May God bless you with answers to these questions—and more like them—in the weeks ahead!

This stewardship emphasis is titled *10 for 10: Teaching a Lutheran Perspective on Tithing*. *10 for 10* is meant to be an enhancement to our regular, weekly giving. Its purpose is simple: *To introduce members to the biblical practice of tithing with a goal toward continued growth in giving*. *10 for 10* will ask each of us to consider offering a tithe of our income for the period of ten weeks. Hence, the name—*10 for 10*. The people of God have found great joy in the practice of tithing over the years. Have you ever met a brother or sister in Christ who regularly exercised their faith through tithing and regretted it? I haven't. Not ever. Not once.

It is possible that some members of the Our Savior family may not be able to reach the tithe because of circumstances that are known by our heavenly Father. Because the Bible teaches that our giving is to be *in proportion to our income*, these families may be able to increase the proportion of their giving. (What about raising offerings by 1-2% of one's income as a deliberate step on the way to tithing?) In other words, everyone's giving is a blessing that will enable the ministry of the Gospel to move forward in Ozaukee County.

In short: *10 for 10* is going to encourage each of us to be prayerful, thoughtful, and intentional in our giving. The generosity of God the Father will enable it! The grace of God the Son will empower it! The gifts of God the Holy Spirit will inspire it!

Whatever your prayerful decision is regarding *10 for 10*, your Our Savior pastors, teachers, and leaders pray that you will continue to give faithfully and generously. This is your ministry. God has given his gifts to you. You and you alone can make a prayerful plan on how you intend to put them to work to God's glory and your neighbor's good. "*God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work*" (2 Corinthians 9:8).

May the joy of giving increase and overflow in the Our Savior family this February! May the blessings of Jesus be yours in abundance today, tomorrow, and forever!

In Christ Jesus,

Pastor Mark C. Wagner

1010

for

Stewardship Emphasis



*Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive"
(Acts 20:35).*

10 reasons why tithing matters

*Jesus said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive”
(Acts 20:35).*

Tithing is the practice of giving one-tenth (10%) of one’s income to the Lord. Old Testament believers were **required** to tithe as a matter of law. New Testament believers may practice tithing as an expression of their Christian freedom.

Lutherans have sometimes hesitated to commend the practice of tithing. Why? Because Lutherans are careful to avoid making rules and regulations where the gospel has given us freedom. Lutherans are also careful to avoid saying **less** than what God says on an issue. It is certainly true: Christ has fulfilled the tithe as a matter of **law**. But it is also true that Jesus may inspire our tithing as a matter of **grace**. What does the Bible teach about giving in general and tithing in particular? Read on...

1. Tithing can help us recognize God as the source of all things.

“My car... My house... My children... My shoes...” Americans love to use the word **my** to describe their possessions. Tithing helps us recognize that all things are truly his: ***The earth is the LORD’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for he founded it on the seas and established it on the waters (Psalm 24:1-2).*** Americans love to speak of “self-made millionaires.” In reality, no one is self-made. They are God-made: ***But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth (Deuteronomy 8:18).*** Tithing reminds us the source of all things is God.

2. Believers practiced tithing long before God commanded tithing.

God’s promises worked powerfully in the lives of Abraham and Jacob. In thanks, they offered God a tithe of their possessions:

“Then Abram gave him (Melchizedek the Priest) a tenth of everything” (Genesis 14:20). Jacob vowed, “of all that you give me I will give you a tenth” (Genesis 28:22).

3. God commanded Old Testament believers to tithe.

In an age when most people lived a hand-to-mouth existence, God commanded his Old Testament believers to offer the tithe as an exercise of faith (Leviticus 27:30). In our age, Americans live in the most affluent country in the history of the world! Could we, just maybe, be in a prime position to give **more** than a tithe? We are free from the **law** of the tithe. Could Jesus’ **grace** therefore inspire us to out-give what was once required by law? ***You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion (2 Corinthians 9:11).***

4. Tithing helps make giving a key priority.

God is many places; may second place never be one of them! Some worship God by giving more than a tithe. Others – due to circumstances known to God – worship God even while offering less. Either way, a faith-filled heart puts the Lord first. The discipline of tithing can help make giving a priority.

5. Tithing helps us revere God.

Moses told the people of Israel that through tithing they would learn to revere God (Deuteronomy 14:22-23). It helps us to **revere** him as our gracious Father in heaven – not just with words, but in actions.

6. Jesus, born under law, upheld the practice of tithing.

Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices... But you have neglected the more important matters of the law... You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former (Matthew 23:23). Jesus didn’t tell the Pharisees to stop tithing. He did command them to start loving! It was a classic case of do the one, but don’t leave the other undone.

7. Tithing helps show gratitude to God.

“What shall I return to the LORD for all his goodness to me” (Psalm 116:12)? Jesus can never be repaid with gold or silver for his holy, precious, blood. But generous gifts are a gospel-inspired response to the treasure we have in Christ. *He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things (Romans 8:32)?*

8. Tithing helps establish a habit of giving.

Paul wrote, *On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income (1 Corinthians 16:2).* Regular tithing prevents giving from becoming something that is “hit or miss.”

9. God promises to bless those who give faithfully.

God promised his Old Testament believers that he would *pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it (Malachi 3:10).* God has graciously given us the gift of his Son. He is a God who knows how to give good gifts to his children (Matthew 7:11)!

10. Tithing gives glory to God and shows love to our neighbor.

Tithing is certainly not the only method of showing God our thanks for Christ. It is, however, a method that has been freely used by God’s people for over 4,000 years. In so doing, God has been praised, the gospel has been furthered, the Church has prospered, the needy have been helped, and greed has given way to generosity!

1010
for
Stewardship Emphasis