



ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

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School News

K4-K5 Roundup

We're inviting parents and children who are ready for school on **Monday, February 3, from 6–7 PM**, to learn more about our K4 & K5 programs. If you know of someone that is not connected to our church, but who might be interested in a quality Christian education at St. Paul's for their child, please encourage them to attend the Roundup!

2020 Lakeshore Basketball Tournament

On **January 18-19** we are expecting some exciting basketball along with some great food and fellowship. We hope you join us for this event. Watch your bulletin!

School Choice

St. Paul's is again planning to participate in the School Choice program for the **2020-2021 school year**. Additional information about the program, income levels, the application process, etc. will be shared in the February Newsletter. Families are able to apply during the months of February, March, and April.

- ▶ December Expenses \$66,847.00 / December Income \$57,531.00
- ▶ The quarterly **Pension** payment for our called workers is \$7,900. (That is a quarterly increase of \$450 from 2019, and \$1,100 from 2018.) The WELS at Convention had increased the Pension for called workers to better help support them when reaching retirement. It had been at an extremely low amount.
- ▶ The monthly **Health Insurance** premium is now \$3,100. (That is a monthly decrease of \$1,500 from 2019.)
- ▶ A new **folding machine** was purchased for \$3,200. Our old machine (20+ years old) was no longer working well. We were using Ti-Print for some folding.
- ▶ The **Jim & Betty Keane Estate** has been finalized. St. Paul's received another check for \$9,300 to bring our total received from the Keane Estate to \$80,000. The Lord blessed the Keane's financially. They, in turn, were appreciative of their church and extremely generous to us.
- ▶ Again, we thank the Lord that we are current with all our commitments and that our weekly commitments can be covered when our weekly offerings are around \$8,000.

Financial Report

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 by God's law** to tithe. New Testament believers are no longer required to tithe, but 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 (Psalm 24:1-2)**. Americans also 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 prosperous 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 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 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!



Merry Christmas! We just celebrated the birth of our Savior. Happy New Year! The Lord has been good to us! As January 2020 takes us into a new decade, our St. Paul's family of faith will be asked to do something new, something many have not done before - make a personal plan to share their God-given blessings. God intended that our offerings be a planned and grateful response to his loving and saving care for us.

But before we are asked to do any of that, **there will be 3 weeks of Gospel-centered sermons, worship and Bible studies in January. God's wonderful Word and Sacrament will provide inspiration, motivation and guidance for you to grow in money wisdom and generosity.**

The Bible has a lot to say about money – that word occurs over 110 times. It was one of the most frequent topics of Jesus' teachings. Why? Perhaps because while money can become an addictive idol, a root of all kinds of evil (1 Timothy 6:10), the Bible repeated says that the Lord blesses his faithful people. God loves to give us things.

At the end of those 3 weeks (January 26), each of us will be asked to examine his/her own heart. Where is the Lord and his work on my list of priorities? Is my heart thankful for God's blessings? Is it centered on self? Where am I in my giving right now? Do I want to do better? If I don't, how come? If I do, how come?

Our stewardship emphasis is called: **10-for-10**. Its purpose is simple: **To introduce us, as God's people, 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 (10%) of our income for 10 weeks (February 2 – April 5). Hence, the **10-for-10** name. Our weekly worship during those 10 weeks won't focus on the **10-for-10** theme, other than a short motivational video to encourage us and help us learn how the offerings of WELS members have an impact beyond their own congregation.

Is it possible that some of our St. Paul's family members may not be able to reach the tithe because of circumstances that are known by our heavenly Father? Yes. But 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. Everyone's giving is a blessing that contributes to our St. Paul's ministry.

10-for-10 is going to encourage each of us to be prayerful, thoughtful, and intentional in our giving. God has given us his gifts. Understand **10-for-10** is a significant stewardship emphasis. It will ask us, as God's people, to consider our attitudes and action in the area of giving. Each of us alone can make a prayerful plan on how we intend to put them to work.

"And 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).

In Christ, Pastor Marshall

1010 *for* Stewardship Emphasis