

STEWARDSHIP WEEKEND – 27 AND 28 OCTOBER 2018

What is Stewardship (or Thanksgiving) Weekend?

Giving is a part of Christian living. We are only stewards of what we have. Everything comes from God and it is important that we give thanks for this, both in the way we lead our lives and also through our offerings, to ensure His work can be done here in Brighton. Stewardship involves our time, our talents and our money but on Stewardship Weekend we will focus on financial giving.

On 27 and 28 October, at each of the services, you will have the opportunity to give thanks for all that you have received from God by pledging, or promising, to give a set amount to St Andrews over the coming year. You will be provided with a pledge card, on which you will be able to state how much, in monetary terms, you are willing to give St Andrews each week or month to ensure that the work performed by our Vicar, Associate Clergy, Organist and Lay team can continue. The amount that you promise is known only by you and our Pledge Recorder, Philippa McKenna. No one will question you about the amount, or insist that you give a higher figure.

We have been blessed by many in the congregation giving in this disciplined way for a number of years. Those new to the pews see the bowl that is passed around for monetary offerings at each service and may be confused about the need for pledging if they contribute to the collection plate whenever they are in church. Surely they are doing their bit?

By giving regularly, and promising to give whether you are in Church or not, you are ensuring that the Wardens and Parish Council can plan the use of those resources to build God's Kingdom in Brighton under the leadership of our Vicar. Pledges represent almost 40% of our total anticipated income for the year.

Over the next few weeks we will provide further insights about Christian giving. We encourage you to prayerfully consider what you may be able to contribute and come prepared to give thanks to God by filling in a Pledge card. If, after prayer, you would like to fill in a card before, or after, Stewardship weekend you can collect one from either the Church Office or the Pledge Recorder, Philippa McKenna (M: 0409 260 801).

For God loves a cheerful giver.

2 Corinthians 9:7

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Why should I give financially?

Most of us worry about whether or not we can pay all of our bills on time. Why should we add to the burden by promising an amount to St Andrew's?

Everything we have and everything we own comes from God. So, by giving a small proportion back we are only offering a portion of all of the abundance he has already given us. Giving is an expression of our thankfulness, a grateful response to the generosity of God. At the same time, it is giving praise to God and showing that He is the Lord of our lives.

2 Corinthians 8:3 says ‘...they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability.’ A little later, in 2 Corinthians 9:6-7, Paul says, ‘Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.’

St Andrews receives approximately 40% of its income from Pledge giving. Of our total expenses, over half go to paying for 'those who labour amongst us in the Lord'. To achieve our Vision “To be a growing, vibrant, joyful and welcoming Christ centred community, reaching out and nurturing all in their journey of faith” we all need to respond to the generosity of God in our lives.

We have been blessed with the generosity of the past but we must prepare for the future. We can all do this by contributing through voluntary service, in areas that interest us, as well as through pledges. Our church, is more than just a beautiful building, it is a living community serving the Brighton area.

Imagine Brighton without St Andrews. Imagine Brighton without any...

- Services in the church – weddings, funerals, baptisms, Christmas and Easter services.
- Pastoral care within the parish – ministry to the elderly and the sick, parents with young children and school children.
- Church Choir and Organist.
- Sunday School Programme.

For where your treasure is there will your heart be also

Luke 12:34

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How much should I give?

In the Old Testament, God's people were commanded to give a tenth ('tithe') of all their produce to God. The New Testament doesn't mention percentages. However, the more fundamental question to ponder is: how much have we received from God?

Paul provides some practical examples for the Christians in the church at Corinth:

1. On the first day of each week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come, no collections will have to be made. (1 Corinthians 16:2)
2. Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. (2 Corinthians 9:6)
3. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly, or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. (2 Corinthians 9:7)

We are asked to give proportionately according to our income, regularly, secretly and joyfully. Paul urges that we set aside an amount at the

beginning of each week, as it is easy to put our giving at the bottom of the list after all of our other day to day needs have been met. By committing to a pledge you are ensuring that you are giving regularly, whether in church that week or not, at a level that you are comfortable with.

We should give generously; in proportion to the financial blessing God has given us, with a goal, but not an obligation, to get to a tithe of 10% of our income. You may feel that you already give to the maximum level you can afford, but can you stretch your giving by setting aside the money you would normally spend on a cup of coffee in Church Street?

We should give secretly as our giving is between ourselves and God, nobody else. Once you join the Pledge programme your giving is known only by yourself and the Pledge Recorder, Philippa McKenna.

We should give joyfully because we know that we are more blessed to give than receive.

Next weekend you will be asked to complete a pledge card during the service. Prepare yourself in prayer.

Bring the full Tithe into the store house ... test me and see if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows

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FAITH AND GIVING

Today, during the service, you will be asked to consider how much you would like to commit to the work of God in Brighton.

You may have read the words explaining what giving is, why and how much you should consider is appropriate in the pew sheet or newsletter over the last few weeks. You may be dreading this weekend and even considered staying away because you are unsure what you should do. You are not alone in this. Many of us are concerned about our financial future and worry that by giving money away we may find it hard to meet our own financial commitments. What happens if I lose my job or something happens which means my regular source of income disappears?

This is where faith steps in.

In calculating the amount to give, make allowance for:

- Providing for you and your own family (1 Timothy 5:3-8) - needs rather than wants (1 Timothy 6:6-8)
- Paying your taxes and debts (Romans 13:6-7)
- Being prudent for the future (Proverbs 27:23-27), but not greedy or anxious (Matthew 6:19-34)

Your pledge can be changed whenever you wish during the year to reflect a change in circumstances.

As you fill out the pledge card this week consider how you might grow in faith this year by taking a further step to trust God with the needs of your life.

*Consider the lilies, how they grow: how they neither toil nor spin;
but I tell you, not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself
like one of these ... how much more will he clothe you*

Luke 12:27, 28

