



## St. Andrew's United Methodist Church

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### Stewardship Letter 2017

Dear Disciples of Christ Who Practice at St. Andrew's UMC,

This year, St. Andrew's is taking a step in faith. Instead of asking the congregation to pledge a dollar amount, we're asking only what percentage of your income you intend to give.

We have several reasons for this change.

First, it puts the focus on giving as a spiritual practice, rather than as a transaction to keep the lights on. Giving is so much more than paying bills. Generosity is a spiritual practice that helps us focus on how much God has given us, and what we can share in that abundance, instead of focusing on scarcity.

Second, it emphasizes the Biblical witness of proportional giving, and puts the standard of a tithe, or 10%, front and center.

Third, it removes the constraints of a dollar amount. Whether your work is seasonal or on commission, whether you have a banner year, or whether you meet unexpected challenges, a percentage can take all that into account.

The process is simple. If you're not in the habit of proportional giving already, the first thing to do is to decide what your current percentage is.

Next, pray about where God is leading you in generosity. Offer God all your realities, be mindful of all that God has provided, and discern what your percentage goal for 2018 might be in light of the standard of 10%. Some folks may decide to increase a half percent, maybe 2 percent. Some folks may decide that 10% is a minimum for them.

Write that percentage down on the commitment card. Seal it in an envelope. Write your name legibly across the seal. Present your envelope on Commitment Sunday, Oct. 29, or drop it in our commitment mailbox.

The Financial Secretary will record your name as a planned giver for 2018. We will then return your commitment envelope back to you, unopened, as a reminder of your intentions for the year.

We've already heard concerns about, "How will the church set a budget?" The answer is simple. We'll set a budget the same way we have for years. We'll look at the past 3 years of expenses and giving, and that will set as reasonable a standard as any for what we can plan for in 2018.

Here's your opportunity to grow in 2018, to have a personal challenge and reminder all year long to reflect on how much God provides for us, and to have a way to connect a portion of all the work you do to the ministry of Jesus Christ.

I'm excited about the potential impact of this change to a percentage-only commitment card. I suspect that if the families of St. Andrew's give this their prayer and attention, our church will blossom and grow in ways we've not yet seen. Join me. Remember what God has done in your life, and Renew your commitment to live a life of discipleship through percentage giving.

Dan Hester