

Stewardship & Pledging at Glenwood Lutheran Fact Sheet

"God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may provide in abundance for every good work" – 2 Corinthians 9:8

The way the Spirit builds the Lord's House is dramatically changing! A strong foundation of generosity is needed, one that is laid in the ground amidst shifting priorities but also a desire to be generous. In community, as a congregation we want to help release the generous spirits of those who long to make a difference in the name of the gospel. Below are some typical answers to questions you might have.

What is a "Faith Pledge?" It is an invitation for you to indicate your response to God's blessings, and willingness to do God's work. God's blessings, all that God has given and entrusted to us include our time, skills, spiritual abilities, talents, and finances.

What is "Pledge Sunday(s)?" It is the time when you annually make a commitment to the ministry of your congregation. It typically occurs at the end of a fiscal year, our fiscal year ends in April, and a new year begins May 1st. "Stewardship Month" begins this week and runs through the annual meeting. "Pledge Sunday" is usually early in "Stewardship Month."

What is a "pledge?" It is a commitment between you and the ministry of your congregation, indicated on your pledge card. A paper pledge card can be turned in, or you can enter your pledge amount via an online form.

How do I determine how much to pledge? Typically persons consider a percentage of household income as the amount that they would like to try to contribute. When filling out a "pledge card" you would try to estimate a dollar amount. This can be expressed in a weekly, monthly, or annual amount, whatever makes sense to you.

What is "proportional giving?" It is giving based on New Testament teaching, this involves returning a portion of one's gifts to God in accordance with how one has been blessed by God.

What is a "tithe?" Or what is "tithing?" Tithing is based on Old Testament teaching, returning 10 percent of all one has received from God. The ELCA teaches households to grow toward a tithe and give beyond a tithe as you have been blessed. A "tithe" is typically given before other types of giving. The term may be used instead of the word pledge or "faith commitment."

Who sees my pledge? Typically you and the church's Financial Secretary are the only persons that know how much you pledge. Groups like the "Stewardship Committee" or Church Council will receive a report regarding how many members pledged, if they pledged online, or via paper form, the total dollar amount of pledges, etc. The Trustees and Council consider the total amount the membership has pledged when determining a proposed annual budget. This budget is then taken to the Annual Meeting, this year May 22, and reviewed and approved by the congregation at the meeting.

What does the Financial Secretary do with my pledge card? Your pledge is entered into "ICON," the church management system that is used by our congregation. When you received a statement showing your giving-to-date, it will list your annual pledge for the sole purpose of keeping yourself informed. The information is entered (without names) into a spreadsheet for planning purposes, including finalizing a budget, and then your pledge card is shredded.

Can I change my pledge? You can, but realize that it is primarily used as a personal benchmark and is updated annually; you can just wait until the next year, and then make your adjustment.

What if I cannot make meet my commitment? Nothing, once the annual budget is finalized and approved at the Annual Meeting; your pledge is a personal benchmark. No one will contact you if you do not meet your pledge, or if you go over your pledge.

Why do we bother to pledge? If a person sets a goal, and writes it down they are more likely to meet it. Faithfully considering, and pledging is a way to assist our members in setting this important goal and reminding us all the importance of our annual offering.

How does our "offering" differ from our pledge? An offering is the giving of individuals and households in response to God's blessings and doing God's work. It most often takes the form of money given to support the ongoing ministry in a congregation. Sometimes it is a specific offering to support special ministries or other specific benevolences.

What is stewardship? This specific term is not used in the Bible; over the years it has come to describe efforts to collect offerings to continue the mission of Christ's Church. A dictionary definition of stewardship could include: "The aspect of religious life and church administration dealing with the individual's responsibility for sharing systematically and proportionately their time, talent and material possessions in the service of God and for the benefit of all humankind."

What is Mission Support? It is the portion of offerings that congregations share with their synod and church-wide ministries for God's work both in and beyond the congregation.