

+ October 2015+

GOOD NEWS

FOR OUR MEMBERS & FRIENDS

FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH • ALTOONA, PA

FROM YOUR PASTOR - OCTOBER, 2015

Opening the mail, by this I mean the paper trail, at First Lutheran Church is not a difficult task. Of course Andy our Office/Accounts Manager sorts mail and then I receive what Andy thinks is for me. Honestly we receive a lot of mail and my share some days surprises me. I like to do as much circular filing as possible, trying to touch the mail only once. There is important mail. Oh, I look and respond to email and that is another story, and truth be told – no social media.

One mailing recently from our Allegheny Synod was about giving. Well written offering a summary of what we already know and tithing was front and center, and you can go to page 13 to read the message. My heartfelt belief is Biblical stewardship is our model for openhandedness, which is the place to start. So giving is a matter to consider and ponder. You know that I appreciate all efforts in giving. In addition to our money there is more.

In giving we can and do give ourselves in different ways, since distinctive situations and people need us to give individual consideration. Here are simple and true examples: The best gift to an enemy is forgiveness; to a friend is loyalty; to a child is a good example; to a father is honor; to a mother is our heart; to a neighbor is our hand. We say yes to these ways of personal serving. Another example of giving personally is our Honduras Christmas Boxes, filled with gifts. Our congregation as well as our TLC Staff joined in giving boxes.

If our giving is less than it can be, then an assessment about our generosity is in order. Of course scripture offers the perspective of Jesus. Jesus tells us give to others and God will give to you. Indeed, you will receive a full measure, a generous helping poured into your hands. Is it possible that the measure you use for others is the one God will use for you - Luke 6:38?

In Jesus, God allows us to see his heart of love. Jesus gave freely and completely of his whole self. His sacrificial death redeems all our attempts at giving. Jesus exemplifies the giving of self more completely than anyone can. Thankfully, his love embraces us today with our modest giving or generous gifts. No matter, he continues to provide help in loving, which is the inside of his heart – Love.

Jesus lived to show us the outer dimension of an inner attitude as He gave life in its abundance to us. So then, we can ask to be empowered to extend ourselves in love, to allow our inner nature to be filled with love. A prayer for us can be: Help us Lord Jesus to be filled to the brim and overflowing with the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, with the power of the Holy Spirit. We can ask for assistance in giving with love, to the glory of God. Believe this; indeed Jesus will change our hearts helping us so our lives can be like his.

Thank you for your faithful giving,
Pastor Folmar