

Dear Rockville United Loved One(s),

The annual pledging season (October 20-November 17) is here! It reflects the 3rd leg of the 3-legged stool that is stewardship: Time, Talent, and Treasure. This year's theme is *Fearless Generosity*, and is based on Ephesians 3:20-21, which explores how God has blessed us more abundantly than we can imagine.

Pondering, Praying, Planning Your Giving

How has Rockville United served you... in the past, present, or projected future... for which you are grateful? Consider thanking Rockville United with a monetary gift this season. All levels of contributions are welcome and appreciated, no gift too small; and your commitment can span the year or be a one-time donation. The four-week pledging season will close Sunday, November 17th, when Reverend Scott Winnette will bless the collective bounty of the pledges received. Some of you will find multiple pledge cards in this packet. Your household financial commitment to RUC might be a personal journey of your adult child, or different than the journey of your spouse. The additional cards simply provide you with choice when making your pledge.

Here is some practical advice on how to determine what you should be contributing to the work of the Church.

1. Pray, explore how God has blessed *you* more abundantly than you could ever imagine.
2. Consider how you have benefited from what RUC does. RUC cannot complete its mission unless all members of the Church who have benefited from the Church's mission, faithfully support the Church.
3. Examine yourself. Consider the commands of God from the New Testament about supporting the work of the Church and examine your own giving. Are you relying on God's promise to provide for you? Trusting God and giving of your firstfruits? Giving voluntarily and cheerfully?
4. Decide what portion of your income you can give faithfully and with joy. "Tithing" implies 10%. If you joyfully give more? Awesome! But if you can't find pleasure in the 10% giving, pick another level: 7%? 5%? 1%? Follow the guidelines from Scripture and faithfully give a voluntary firstfruits' portion of your income.¹ When we give of our firstfruits, we are making a symbolic gesture that what we have is not ours but belongs to God. It's a reminder that all that we have, and all that we are, belongs to God; we are not in control. When we remember that God is the one in control over our lives, not us, then we are empowered to give fearlessly, generously because we have nothing to fear. God has our back. We become aligned with God's will for us in giving generously, living generously, and loving generously.²

During this pledging season, may an abundance of gratitude burst forth as we reflect upon what we have received. May thanksgiving overflow in our hearts, and often be proclaimed in our prayer. May our basket of blessings surprise us with its rich diversity of gifts and its opportunities for growth. May we slow our hurried pace of life so we can be aware of, and enjoy, what we too easily take for granted. May we always be open, willing, and ready to share our blessings with others. May we never forget the Generous One who loves us lavishly and unconditionally.³

Blessings and thanks,

Sharon J. Kemmerer, Stewardship Elder

¹ Adapted from Rev Heath Curtis, *The Theology of Stewardship: The New Stewardship, Faithfully Giving a Firstfruits Portion of Your Income for the Work of Christ's Church. The LCMS | www.lcms.org/stewardship*

² Contributed by Reverend Dr. Elizabeth Halsey.

³ Adapted from Rupp, Joyce, "Out of the Ordinary," *A Thanksgiving Blessing*, 2000, Ava Maria Press, pp 206-207.