

Ziegels Lutheran Newsletter

January 2022

*The January Newsletter is sponsored by Lori Brawn
in loving memory of Larry Ritter's Birthday.*

We are grateful for our members' financial support. In November, the contributions to our general fund totaled \$12,400.03 and our expenses totaled \$15,846.82. Our 2022 monthly budget total is \$18,888.00. Please give as you are able to support our ministry.

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Sponsors Are Needed

Can you help by sponsoring one of the following? It's a wonderful way to remember or honor a loved one.

Altar Flowers and Piano Vases – Contact Gloria Hausman at 610-285-6741.

Bulletins – Cost is \$18.00. Contact Sandy Rothermel at 610-966-0712 or Sandyravon@aol.com.

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Lutheran Council Meeting

Lutheran Council meeting was held on December 13.

- A discussion was held on the Benevolence payments.
- Discussion was held on the Steeple Repair in 2022.
- 2022 Elections of Officers - Keith Harwick is the President, Nadine Host is the Vice-President, Shelley Daniels is the Secretary.

The next Lutheran Council meeting will be held on Monday, January 10.

The Money Talk

We don't ask for money. Unlike most of those t.v. preachers who always include a financial appeal in their shows, our "money talk" is pretty muted. And even though we encourage generosity within our worship services, we usually mean we all need to be generous in every aspect of our lives. Opening our hearts to those around us is an excellent way to follow Christ. Generosity is, in general, a pretty good thing. But we seldom name the congregation as one of the organizations in need.

We're asking this year, though. At the same time that many other organizations are sending out their annual "ask" letters, we're sending one of our own. Our congregation has encountered some drop off in our giving, over the past two years. It's not unexpected given the realities of our world right now. We've handled it, to this point, but we're coming up short, a bit. So we're asking.

With that "ask" in mind, I want to share a little bit of Biblical context, and then talk about our congregational commitments. Begin with this:

The tithe (and there were actually a few different ways of tithing), was giving ten percent of an income in a sacrificial way. The most commonly definition of a tithe was a 10% gift to the Temple. It seems like some leaders in the religious community would make their sacrifice very publicly, as described in Mark 12.41ff.

Such tithes did keep the Temple going, of course. But Jesus was quick to point out that many who tithed did not attend to more important things like God's calls to take care of the poor, the orphans and the widows. (See Matthew 23.23, for instance.) It was not lost on Jesus that the ten percent demanded by the religious elites was much easier for the wealthy landowners to afford than those who lived hand to mouth.

It is also true, however, that from the earliest days, the Church was dependent on the generosity of the faithful followers of Christ. Paul spent much of his later missionary trips drumming up funds for the former fishermen in Jerusalem. His collection, harvested from more affluent Gentile Christians, like, for instance, Lydia (Acts 16.14ff). The generosity of the few with means aided the spread of the Gospel to the many.

The need for a certain amount of financing has, then, been a difficult topic for the Church. Jesus does not encourage giving to the Temple as much as he shows outrage for the way it treats foreigners and the poor; Paul tells us "God loves a cheerful giver." In our own country, the First Amendment – which guaranteed our religious freedom – eliminates the

ability of the state to fund churches with taxes; which has led to congregations becoming ever more dependent on their membership to be the cheerful givers Paul describes. What's a 21st century Church to do?

We seldom ask for money. But this year we have needed to. There's a possibility we may need to in the future as well. But to stay truthful to my understanding of the biblical tension, between Jesus outraged at the tithe imposed unfairly and the call for support by Paul, I would offer the following caveats.

1) We do not want people to give like the poor widow in Mark 12. While we believe that discipleship involves sacrifice, we have compassion for those with limited means. If you are on a fixed income, if you are without work, or otherwise find your resources stretched thin? Then you're probably giving enough already. Give what you need to know that you are part of a larger effort, but not so much as to make your livelihood untenable.

2) While we encourage generosity, I have always held that giving to any good cause is part of our tithe. It is likely that many of us have already designated our giving for the organizations that speak to our spiritual beliefs. Presumably, Ziegels is among them, but I expect many of us have other good causes to which we contribute. We understand that there are limitations on how much can be sacrificed.

3) On the other hand. We do encourage generosity. (And Jesus did ask for sacrifice.) Even if you do not make Ziegels the primary beneficiary of your giving, it is good to find a way to be generous. God's love is at work in the world in numerous ways – that is one of the reasons part of our congregations "work" is to support organizations like Good Shepherd Home, the Lutheran Home in Topton, Family Promise, Lowhill Food Pantry, and others.

I guess, in the end, we recognize that the way we deal with our money, like we deal with all the rest of our lives, speaks of who we are, to whom we belong, and to which cause we devote ourselves at the deepest levels. Being a giver, relative to our means, feeds our souls. Generosity is always good for us. While we do not ask for money for the church, not on a regular basis, we always want giving.

In any event, we trust God, who provides every good thing. As God acts in the hearts of the faithful, we believe that there will always be enough for whatever mission we are called into. From one generation to another.



Prayer List

Please pray for our members and friends:

Linda Folck
Carol Merkel
Marlene Evangelista
Clarabelle Dengler
Deanna Quay
Derek Green
Jerry Miller
Tammy Bauer
Lena Fox
Beth Lamkin
Drena Merkel
Kirsten Wert
Jason Fronina
Gloria Herber
Anna Masters
Richard Keller
Veronica Leibensperger
Tammy Bauer
Michelle Quier
Dennis Rothermel
Annabelle Koplín

Nancy Kleinsmith
Oscar Kleinsmith
Grace Zimmerman
Arlene Snyder
Laila Loch
Arline Lahn
Perma Miller
Forrest Merkel

Military Members:
Garth Ritter
Connor Smith
Dale Host
Chris Owens
Jessica Thomas
Ben Beitler

Deb Smyth
Roni Renay
James Ferguson
Walt Marsteller Jr.
Karen Feeley
Donna Hartman
Mary Alice
Jim Satterwhite
Barry Gerz Sr.
Gloria Gerz
Raymond Geiger
Irene Brightbill
Richard Bender
Charlie Hurry
Mark Toomey
Nancy Mintzer
Peggy Hoffman
Frances Plank
Stephen Plank
Pat Shreck
Bill
Lorraine
Darlene Merkel
Frances Plank
Christopher Gerz
Connie Bittner
Timothy Wessner
PA Henry Distler
Bruce Watt
Aiden Hirschmann
Megan Koch