

Dear Friend of Saint Martin's,

"Why do we give money to the church?" a child asks her mother, who is filling Sunday's offering envelope. How will the mother answer her daughter's question? How do we answer this question for ourselves? Do we say that we give to help pay the church's bills? Do we say that we give because of all the good things the church does such as teaching children, standing for the best things in the community, fostering happiness and human welfare, providing help, friendship, and caring for people in need?

If we ask people to give in order to get, people might conclude that God is an entity whose favor we can purchase.

If we ask people to give out of obedience to a divine command to tithe, God might become an angry judge who demands and enforces.

If we ask people to give out of gratitude, people might understand God to be the source of everything we are and all we have, and that God lovingly provides for us.

The key stewardship question for each of us becomes: "Why should I give to the church?" The priest or the stewardship chair cannot answer this question for us. We must supply our own answer. What we can say is giving out of love, gratitude and thanksgiving are all answers consistent with the Episcopal view that God is the God of grace. A grace we receive as an unearned and unmerited gift from our creator. Our confirmation of this is the gift of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Regardless of our reasons, when we give to the church we are living out the gospel today that was given to us two thousand years ago. So it is that we give to God in response to all that God has given us, particularly in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. We give as a way of sharing in God's will for, and work done in, the world. In other words, we give in response to the gospel.

The clergy and stewardship committee of Saint Martin in the Fields ask that you include in your celebration of the gospel and your life in the Kingdom of God your loving support of your church home.

God bless you,



The Reverend John McCard



Susanne Snyder



Sid Oakley