

“You shall count seven weeks; begin to count the seven weeks from the time the sickle is first put to the standing grain: Then you shall keep the Festival of Weeks to the Lord your God contributing a freewill offering in proportion to the blessing that you have received from the Lord your God.”
Deuteronomy 16: 9-10

October 24, 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

This passage from the Book of Deuteronomy describes one of the three pilgrimage festivals devout Jews were expected to participate in each year. During each of these festivals they were to bring an offering to the Lord God. If possible, they were to travel to Jerusalem, but there were also a number of other designated sites people could travel to if circumstances made travel to Jerusalem unrealistic.

In this passage we learn about proportionate giving in relation to the blessings God has given to us. How has God blessed you in 2018? I have taken time to reflect on the many ways God has blessed me this past year. I have taken time to reflect on how the ministries of Zion St. John, by being the body of Christ, has blessed people in our community, our region and even globally.

Here are just a few of the many ways ZSJ has blessed our communities:

- ❖ Our education and youth ministries are thriving.
- ❖ Along with four other area churches we have established the West Fork Food Pantry that serves the West Fork School District and all of Franklin County.
- ❖ The Women of ZSJ work very hard to produce quilts, school kits, and hygiene kits that are distributed to those in need through Lutheran World Relief.
- ❖ We have many members that use their time and talents in ways that benefit our congregation and those beyond our walls.

Our Annual Stewardship Emphasis will take place the first three Sundays of November. On these Sundays we will hear stories about three of the many ministries our congregation is involved in. Consecration Sunday will take place on November 18. On that day you will be invited to make pledges to God for the upcoming year. You will receive your pledge card in the next mailing.

Some people are reluctant to make a pledge because they are unsure of their income in the next year. That is certainly understandable. Still, I would encourage people in this situation to fill out an estimate of giving card. Then, if your income changes, you can always give less (or more!). These pledges help the council to budget for the upcoming calendar year.

Deuteronomy, the Book of God’s Law, allows for changes in giving based on income. My wife Diane and I have found that pledging is an important spiritual discipline for the two of us. I encourage you to come and hear these stories, and I ask that you prayerfully consider filling out an estimate of giving card and returning it on or around Consecration Sunday, November 18th.

On Behalf of the Stewardship Committee,