

From the Consecrated Stewards team

## “Taxes, Tips, and Tithes”

Many people dread April 15<sup>th</sup> because it is the deadline for filing 2008 tax returns. Others may not be all that concerned because they had so much withholding tax that they will actually get a refund.

Most Americans would be thrilled if they had to pay only 10% of their income for taxes. But we know better. In many places the state sales tax alone is 8%. Social Security tax is another 7.65% (15.3% if you are a pastor, professional church worker, or others who are considered self-employed for tax purposes). State and federal income taxes are in addition to these other taxes. It doesn't take long to figure out that we are paying “double and triple tithes” for state and federal taxes.

And how about tips when we go out to eat at a nice restaurant? 10% used to be the standard tip, but in most people's minds it has moved up to 15-20%. We may grumble a little about this extra charge, but we pay it.

What happens when our pastor preaches and teaches about a tithe (10% of income) for the support of the Lord's work through the local congregation? Some people view that as an impossible expectation. Others may view that as a good starting point and rejoice that they are able to move beyond the tithe because they want to respond generously from what God has graciously bestowed upon them.

Is giving a tithe of the financial blessings that God has given to us an impossible expectation? For most of us it probably isn't if we practice discipline and good judgment in managing our financial resources. Some have learned to use the 10-10-80 plan. This plan involves giving the first 10% to the Lord, using the next 10% for saving and investing and then learning to live on the remaining 80%. It is not the perfect plan or the only plan, but it is a good one to start with if you find that you have not been disciplined in your handling of money.

Is giving a tithe a command for Christians? No, it isn't, because to make the tithe into a command would make it more like taxes and tips. The big spiritual question about Christian giving is this one: ***“What percentage of the financial blessings that God has entrusted to me do I believe He is calling me to give?”*** We do not give in order to meet the church budget, or do our fair share or because someone puts a guilt trip on us. 2 Corinthians 9:7 gives us this wise counsel: ***“Each one should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful [literally, hilarious] giver.”***

The key is to talk to God in prayer, asking for His guidance regarding giving, and then moving forward empowered by His Holy Spirit to be free and joyful in our Christian giving.

## **LCC HAPPENINGS**

*Lent has come and almost is gone, as we prepare for Holy Week and Easter. The major events of this past month included:*

- **Keith Dwyer** coordinating Mainspring on March 15<sup>th</sup>, again feeding over 100 people this month. WOW! Many thanks to all the cooks who stepped up and made this a very successful day.
- **The New Bethlehem Coffee House**, held on March 15, featuring Dennis and Alan. As always, many thanks to Jill Chiarelli and all who helped out.
- **The men met on March 21<sup>st</sup>** for their monthly Bible Study and breakfast.
- **The Women's book study group**, which meets Monday evenings from 7:15 PM to 8:15 PM, completed their study of Lee Stroebel's "A Case for Christ. They just started the spring session discussing the book "Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World" by Joanna Weaver. It's not too late to join in!
- **The church has started a new Capital Fund Drive** as part of our debt reduction initiative. An informational letter with a pledge card was sent out during February. Pledge cards are to be returned in March, even if you are unable to participate at this time. If you did not receive this letter please see Ernie Hill.
- **7:00 PM Wednesday evening Lenten services** were held throughout the month of March. The final service will be held this Wednesday, April 1. In addition to this service, many who attended enjoyed an hour of fellowship before the service at the soup supper. Many thanks to all who helped provide soup, bread, desserts and drinks for these dinners.
- **A movie night was held Friday, March 25<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00 PM.** We had a very small intimate group for the Narnia Chronicles. It is hoped movie night will "catch on" in the future and become a more regular, maybe monthly, event.
- **First Communion Classes** have been held during March for 2 of our children who will be receiving First Communion on Maundy Thursday.

## **APRIL AND BEYOND**

**Scrip Program for April** – the order date was held last Sunday, March 29<sup>th</sup>. The pick-up date will be April 5<sup>th</sup>. If you missed the order date, all is not lost! We now stock gift cards for the most popular venues; grocery stores and local restaurants to name a few, which can be purchased throughout the month based on availability.

**Mainspring, on April 11<sup>th</sup>**, is being coordinated by **Jill Chiarelli**. The menu for a tuna casserole is posted on the bulletin board. We can use many cooks with the numbers at Mainspring so high these days. . Many thanks to everyone who volunteers to help with this ministry.

**Adult Choir**, please note that Thursday evening rehearsals are back per the usual schedule, from 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM.

**Still Needed – A Deacon of Parish Life.** With the departure of the Prestridges, we now have a vacancy in our Church Council for the 2008-2009 church year. If anyone is interested in taking on this position, please see Al Hieber. ALSO, anyone interested in serving on Church Council should speak with Al – the process is underway to recruit replacements for the council terms ending this year.

**April Movie Night** is scheduled for Friday, April 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM. The plan is to watch “King of Kings”, the story of Esther. Bring your own snacks and as many friends as you want. The more the merrier. Pastor Michael is entertaining suggestions for future movie nights...

**Men – the next Bible study and breakfast** will be held on April 18<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 AM!

**Holy Week schedule:**

- **Maundy Thursday, April 9th - 7:00 PM** service, which will include first communion.
- **Good Friday, April 10th** - **4:00 PM** Children’s service  
- **7:00 PM** service
- **Easter Sunday, April 12<sup>th</sup>** - **6:00 AM Sunrise Service**  
- **7:30 AM Easter Breakfast**  
- **9:00 AM Traditional Service**

**The Easter Breakfast is on!** Come join us for breakfast at 7:30 AM between the 6:00 AM Easter Sunrise Service and the 9:00 AM traditional Easter service. The cost is \$4.00 per person with a \$15.00 family max. – such a deal! (Thank you Cathy Hayes for volunteering to coordinate this!)

**The next New Bethlehem Coffee House is scheduled for April 19<sup>th</sup>**, from 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM, with Music, Music, Music being the entertainment theme. Come help out – join the fun. This will be the final regular Coffee House prior to the year end cook-out in May.

**Vacation Bible School** (summer must be coming!) will be held this year the week of July 20-24 from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM. Mark your calendars! VBS is available for children Pre-K through those entering the 4<sup>th</sup> grade. However, Cathy Hayes would love older children to volunteer their time to help out!! Teachers are always welcome! Please keep the week open and come have fun with the kids! Please see Cathy for more details – or to volunteer!

**Women of the Cross Bible Study** is ongoing Monday evenings from 7:15 PM – 8:15 PM The group is studying *"Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World"* by Joanna Weaver .

**Women of the Cross Breakfast** is scheduled for Saturday, April 4<sup>th</sup>. For those who have signed up, remember to bring your \$5.00 payment for the craft if you haven’t done so already and to wear appropriate clothing for the Emmaus walk outdoors, for those who feel so inclined. Please bring a dish to pass.

**Thrivent Financial** has job opportunities:

Please join us on either of the below dates/locations for an informative evening exploring opportunities as a Financial Representative with Thrivent Financial for Lutherans.

April 29  
7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.  
Verrillo’s Restaurant  
155 Riverside Street  
Portland, ME

April 30  
7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.  
Holiday Inn  
700 Myles Standish Blvd  
Taunton, MA

Please contact Barb Giger ([barb.giger@thrivent.com](mailto:barb.giger@thrivent.com)) for more information.

## ***Volunteer Opportunities***

The strength of our church has always been largely due to the commitment of our members. It is important that we all continue to help and volunteer, which is even more important as we help support a new pastor. There are many ways each of us can choose to help. Below are just a few...

**Hanover Habitat for Humanity** – Plans for the house being built in Hanover by Habitat for Humanity are well underway. Each Hanover church is being asked to support this endeavor, both by supplying volunteers and food as the building starts, projected to begin in May.

- Stacey Stahl and Kyle McGivney have volunteered to coordinate food. We will be supplying food for the volunteers every sixth week. A sign-up is on the bulletin board for people to volunteer for food detail. Please sign-up and include phone number and email address so that they have the means to contact you when it is our turn.
- LCC Habitat Volunteer Coordinator needed: Please contact Nick Iovino ([volunteer@sshahabitat.org](mailto:volunteer@sshahabitat.org) or 781-843-9080 x18) if you would be willing to coordinate volunteer workers on behalf of our church. Also, please let our office know (781-826-5121) if you volunteer for this position so that we don't keep asking...

**Mainspring** – We supply meals to Mainspring on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of each month. A menu is usually posted around the first of the month and we can always use a few more cooks and bakers. The last few months we have been feeding close to 100! There is a **sign-up for 2009 on the bulletin board** for volunteers to coordinate each month in 2009! We still need volunteers for several months.

**Needed - Deacon of Parish Life** – With the departure of the Prestridges, we are in need of someone to take on the role of Deacon of Parish Life. Anyone interested should talk to Al Hieber. Council positions for next year will also be filled over the next few months. See Al

**Coffee Hours** – This year we need people to supplement the confirmation families in hosting the weekly coffee hour after church. A sign-up is on the bulletin board for volunteers to help out! So far everyone has been great in keeping the coffee and food coming after church. Thank you!!

**New Bethlehem Coffee House** – Jill Chiarelli can always use more help with the coffee house on the third Sunday of each month, from 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM! Next month, on May 17<sup>th</sup>, is the year-end cookout. Much help is needed for this event, so please mark your calendars.

**Remember the Hanover Food Pantry**, it can always use more donations! Also, the Food Pantry would like to help the environment and save space in their facility by giving out reusable grocery bags to patrons. This will eliminate the need for a mountain of plastic/paper bags on the premise. So, in addition to food items, the Hanover Food Pantry would love donations of reusable bags which can be purchased at any grocery store for \$1.00 per bag. Other specifics needed by the pantry are bar soap (no Ivory), and paper products.

**Interior and Exterior Help...** Included in this newsletter is a request from Jackie Johnson for someone with a 30 foot ladder and a love of heights to help change some of the burned out light bulbs in the church. Also, please watch upcoming bulletins and newsletters for information on a spring clean-up for the church grounds!

**Vacation Bible School** – Teachers, assistants, kitchen help would all be greatly appreciated the week of July 20<sup>th</sup>, from 9:00 AM – 12:00 AM. Please see Cathy Hayes.



*PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER...*



**Rob Hendrickson**, for continued health and healing

**Carla Errichiello-Hill**, for continued health and healing;

**The Bain and Grable families**, on the death of Marie Bain's daughter, Joan Grable

**Audrey Yeingst**, undergoing treatment for cancer of the liver and bile duct

**Jodi**, Jerry and Barbara Gorichs daughter, undergoing surgery for cancer

**Jay Freeman**, recovering from knee surgery

**Harriet Williamson**, for health and healing

**Elsie Vuilleumier**, dealing with loss of sight after surgery for macular degeneration

**Lloyd Prestridge**, Dan Prestridge's father, living with cancer

**Bella and Brayden Orrall**, for continued health and growth.

**Anna Fitzgerald**, Agnes Abrahamson's granddaughter, dealing with epilepsy and autism

**Jennifer T**, in thankfulness and gratitude for continued recovery

**Ethan Darcy**, for continued healing related to his congenital heart defect

**Marie Bain**, for good health

**Beth deConinck-Smith**, a friend of the Hendricksons, undergoing debilitating treatment for cancer

**John More**, friend of the Sweetsers diagnosed with lung cancer

**Jerry Haley**, friend of the Sweetsers, diagnosed with a brain tumor

**Ministry to the Persecuted Church:**

On March 8, Pastor Vinod Kumar James was shot dead and four Christians were injured following a bomb attack on a church in Bihar state, India. The pastor had gathered in the church along with 70 others to pray when Rajesh Singh hurled a bomb through the church's window. Four who sustained injuries in the bomb attack as well as a gunshot victim were admitted to a local hospital. Please pray for safety for believers in this area. Ask God to give them boldness to continue sharing the gospel despite this attack. Thank God for their faithfulness.

+++++

## ***Personal Mention***

- **Happy Birthday wishes in April** are extended to Jillian Corcoran, **Matt DiGiacomo, Josh Freeman, Sara Hendrickson, Mia Higgins, Maxwell McNulty, Amy Mueller, Isabella Pastore, Alondra Pena, Christine Pineo, Jenny O'Connor, Lisa Orrall, Calleigh, Shields, Eric Sidoti, Sean Sidoti, Stacey Stahl, Chris Staples and Madison Staples.**
- **Happy Anniversary to Carla and Ernie Hill, Kim and Dan Prestridge and Phil and Maurine Lindquist!!!**

+++++

## **Thank You, Thank You, Thank You!**

I'd like to acknowledge three unsung heroes in our church who make my job as Deacon of the Interior much easier. First is Gordon Royek, who shows up every fourth or fifth weekend to take care of our lighting needs in the Social Hall and lower level. Gordon replaces burned out bulbs, (there are over 50 lighting fixtures, most with two bulbs) and also handles the replacement of ballasts, the replacement of the entire fixture and the replacement of plug receptacles when necessary. Please thank Gordon for all of his work.

Second, I'd like to recognize John Kaczorowski who keeps an eye on the lighting in the church proper. There are lots of lights to care for also. Currently he needs the help of someone who would be agreeable to climb a 30 foot ladder and replace several bulbs. (We also need the ladder). Thank John for his help also.

Lastly I'd like to acknowledge Kyle McGivney who on a weekly basis takes our collected trash to the dump. It's amazing how much we generate! Without his help we might have to pay for this service. Please also thank Kyle for stepping forward to help.

There are many little things to help done by others which aren't being specifically acknowledged, and I thank each of you for all you do. I also encourage every member to help out. If something needs attention, and each of steps forward to help, we will continue make progress moving our church forward.

Jackie Johnson  
Deacon of the Interior

+++++



(See John 20:1-18)

03-29-2002

I WANT YOU TO FOLD UP MY BURIAL CLOTHES,  
WAIT FOR MARY, AND REMEMBER THAT THIS IS  
SERIOUS ... NO HIDING AND YELLING "BOO"

+++++

## HOMEWORD

ENCOURAGING PARENTS, BUILDING FAMILIES

### “5 Things to Do When Tragedy Strikes”

by Jim Burns, Ph.D.

Like a bolt of lightning on a starless, cloudless night, tragedy strikes. In the twinkling of an eye, it cuts to the heart and crushes security in the soul, leaving a trail of confusion in its wake. It’s easy to see why an unbeliever would be devastated by a sudden, seemingly senseless tragedy, but a Christian should know better, right? After all, we have the Lord on our side – not to mention His promise that He would never allow us to experience more than we could endure.

Well, guess what? Christians are human, too. And the reality is, tragedy isn’t interested in your walk of faith or your devotion to God. Tragedy strikes suddenly and decisively; it’s up to us how we deal with what it leaves behind.

Kay Arthur, the woman who along with her husband, Jack, developed the Inductive Bible Study Method, has a series of books that tackle some of the more common questions Christians ask. I came across her book called, *Lord, Where Are You When Bad Things Happen?*

Studying the book, I jotted down some notes under this heading –

#### “5 Things to Do When Tragedy Strikes”

1. **Remain Calm.** As basic as this might seem, I’m always amazed at the number of dangerous decisions people try to make in the moments immediately following a tragedy. Jesus wants us to be slow to speak, quick to listen and slow to anger. The same holds true when tragedy strikes. Holding your tongue might just keep you from losing your head later.
2. **Utilize Your Support System.** Friends and family members should contact those “special people” in their life and then start leaning on them for support. The death of a spouse, parent or child, for example, is hard

enough to deal with. Let your support system deal with some of the other, less important details while you grieve your tragedy.

3. **Acknowledge What Really Happened.** It's not uncommon for a person to go into shock in the face of tragedy. That's why it's important to be able to fully understand what happened (e.g. your son was in a car accident; your home was burglarized; vandals defaced the church sanctuary). No sense in trying to deal with an imagined crisis when the real thing still needs to be addressed.
4. **Remember that God is in Control.** God will never allow His children to be tested beyond what anyone can bear. Tragedies often bring many of our deepest fears and inadequacies to the surface. Trust your Heavenly Father. Let Him carry you through each step of what appears to be a really tragic situation. He has the big picture in mind (Romans 8:28).
5. **Pray.** It's as basic to the Christian as oxygen and breathing are to the human body. But, in the midst of tragedy, it's perfectly normal to "hyperventilate" a bit. Let the Son of God enfold you with His Spirit and His love. Pray each step of the way through your difficult situation. Pray with friends and remember to let them pray for you as well. God created us for each other to have community and relationship with one another. A brother is born for adversity, and sometimes, a brother is born from a tragedy, too.

Keep this list somewhere you can find it relatively easily (like in your Bible or on your refrigerator). It won't make the pain of a tragedy go away, but it can make difficult circumstances much easier to deal with.

© Copyright HomeWord 2003

www.HomeWord.com 800.397.9725

+++++

## ADOPT AN EXPENSE PROGRAM

(January – December 2009)

We are starting fresh to get the "Adopt-an-Expense" program to coincide with the church's fiscal year. So... below is the list of "Adopt-An-Expense" program items for 2009, so far. As mentioned at the January congregational meeting, the **goal is to get \$1,600 of adopted expenses by the end of the year.** Please remember that you can adopt a portion of any expense. Every little bit helps!!!

<u>Item</u>	<u>Approx. cost</u>	<u>Remain. Amt</u>	<u>Adopted</u> (this year)
<b>2009 Expenses</b>			
Sunday School Supplies			
Fall material	380.00	240.00	140.00
Winter material	380.00	380.00	
Spring material	380.00	380.00	
VBS Supplies	1000.00	1000.00	
Offering envelopes	500.00	500.00	
Disposable Communion Cups	110.00	110.00	
Portals of Prayer	160.00	160.00	
Confirmation Scarves	40.00	40.00	
Certificates (Baptism, 1 <sup>st</sup> communion...)	60.00	60.00	
Altar Candles	500.00	500.00	

Calendars	30.00	30.00	
Communion cruet	94.00	94.00	
Holy Week bulletin covers	90.00	90.00	
Pastors' wives conference	90.00	0.00	90.00
Puppet Ministry			
Deluxe Puppet Pack	116.00	61.00	55.00
6 Inbetweens	144.00	144.00	
6 Full/Half Body Puppets	240.00	240.00	
Stage Materials/Props	300.00	300.00	

**TOTAL ADOPTED: \$285.00**

\*\*\*\*\*

**ADOPT AN EXPENSE for PUPPET MINISTRY**

**\$116 Deluxe Puppet Pack** starts you with everything you need to start a puppet ministry! Puppet Directors Notebook, Basics & Beyond Puppet Video, 12 Pre-recorded Scripts, 2 Righteous Pop Music CD's

**\$144 - 6 Inbetweens:** - 17" puppets with rods are discounted to \$24. These are great for those needing a lighter easy to travel but good visibility puppet. This puppet suffers very little flip top and is extremely easy to use for the younger children. No Mouth resistance. Professional performance puppet.

**\$240 - 6 Full/Half Body Puppets:** Discounted to \$40. Full/Half Body Puppets™ big-mouth professional puppets are 30" tall with legs attached and approximately 19" with legs removed. Dual entry allows you to enter through the bottom for behind the stage work & through the back for full motion ventriloquist operation. Legs quickly and easily remove with no-tear velcro. Professional mouths are extremely easy to operate, and the generous padding, and top & bottom hand straps provide comfort and ease for small and large hands alike. Bring your puppet to life with a head and neck that was built for expressive motion. With accentuated fingers, and detailed feet with toes, sewn elbow & knee joints, we are sure you would agree that no detail has been overlooked. Rod arm included. All clothes are completely removable and interchangeable. These puppets would be used by the older children.

**\$300** – For stage materials and props.