**“10 for 10” Coming To [church name] This October**

*“All the church ever talks about is money!”*

You’ve heard statements like that before. You may even have said something like that before. Over the years, you’ve heard me take statements like that to task. Why? First, because it’s simply not true. (It has been a few years since we’ve done a significant stewardship emphasis that encourages regular, weekly offerings at [church].) Second, the statement is misleading: God wants a lot more than our money! He wants us to love him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. If we could love God in that way, money would be a non-issue at [church].

PARAGRAPH OF PARISH CONTEXT GOES HERE

Trinity’s sample from 2018 = Frankly, we are in serious need of an honest discussion about our love for God and how it is reflected in our use of money—earning, spending, saving, and giving. At the end of 2017, attendance was up and our weekly offerings were in the black! All of that changed on a dime in February 2018. We were hit with a series of snow storms. Not surprisingly, offerings followed attendance. Our Trinity family settled into a long winter’s nap. As a result, our 2017-18 budget ended almost [$xxxx] in the red. We passed a budget for 2018-19 that anticipated another [$xxxx] of red ink. Church attendance has once again been up this summer over last summer. We pray that offerings will once again begin to turn around. We’ve supported our budget (day-to-day Gospel ministry) for 131 years. Let this coming year be no exception!

Spoiler alert: You will hear biblical preaching on the stewardship of treasures this fall at [church]. Late in [month], we will challenge our [church] family to give a tithe (10%) *OR* to increase the proportion of what they are giving for their weekly offerings for a period of ten weeks. Why? Our giving shows the Lord the honor, love, and gratitude we have for what Christ has done for us. Generous giving is one of the ways that faith-filled hearts respond to the riches of Christ. Giving is *an act of worship.* That’s the only reason we pass offering plates during church services.

The practice of *tithing* (giving 10%) is at least as old as Abraham (Genesis 14:20). In Old Testament Israel, tithing was commanded by law. In the New Testament Church, tithing—along with all other methods of giving—is inspired by the gospel of Christ. Many Christians, free from compulsion, tithe as an exercise of their faith. Does God really have the ability to keep us safe, warm and well-fed without 10% of our income? To share an even greater proportion of our income? Faith relishes the challenge. The Spirit is up to the task!

How is it possible to give something like the tithe—and do so freely and joyfully? Christ’s love empowers his people to give generously. It flows freely from Christ *“who loved us and gave himself up for us” (Ephesians 5:2).* Our generous giving to God is a response to Christ’s willing sacrifice for us.

Finally, tithing serves New Testament Christians as a benchmark for *proportionate giving.* The Apostle Paul said, *“…each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income”* (1 Corinthians 16:2). As New Testament Christians, tithing is a practice to be engaged in freely rather than a requirement to be met legally. Some of us are already in the spiritual habit of tithing. Inspired by God’s grace, we may seek to give more, more often, more creatively. For others, tithing will be a big step forward as well as a significant test of faith. For still others, because of life-issues known to God, the tithe might currently be unreachable. Then what about an extra percent, or two, or three? No matter where we find ourselves on the “giving spectrum,” this is true: Our trust in God’s goodness is well-placed! *“Now to Him Who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us to Him be glory in all the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen” (Ephesians 3:20-21).*

You will be receiving several mailings, devotional pieces, and a commitment packet over the next four months as part of our **10 for 10 Stewardship Emphasis.** Receive them in the spirit they are offered: As an opportunity to grow in faith and in the grace of giving. Study them. Think about them. Pray through them. They will help keep our stewardship emphasis centered in Christ and the cross as we seek to avoid financial quick-fixes and gimmicks!

May the Lord of the Church richly bless our [church] family as we seek to excel in the grace of giving!

In Christ,

Pastor [name]

**Selfishness Generosity**

**- Hoarding + Sharing**

**- Discontent + Content**

**- Fear + Peace**

**- Sadness + Joy**