



## Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church *Pastor Terry's Thoughts of the Week*

### **Give**

Gee, where have we heard that before? This is the season of giving – but it also seems to be the season of “asking”. I’ve lost count of the amount of letters I’ve received asking for a donation before the end of the year. For some people that’s a good ploy because it will help them get a reduction on their income tax.

Quite frankly, if that’s why you’re giving, that’s not a good thing. All of us should give because we want to not because we have to or because we get a “bonus” if we give.

Most people give to the organ fund because they want better music for our times together. Ed wants you to give to the organ fund so that he can use, for our benefit, all the wonderful talent he has. But we all want everyone to give because they want to not because they feel they have to.

Why do we give to our congregation on a regular basis? Yes, it’s to pay for light and cooling and keeping the church clean and the like, but it’s also because we want to reflect the joy we have in our blessings and we want to share that joy with others in our community. For some of us, it becomes an “automatic” but for others of us it is a time when we have to look at our expenses for the week and squeeze a bit out for a gift. We each have our blessings in different measure and we want to give accordingly. Want to, not feel it is something we have to do.

The big question is why do we give? We give because we have been given so much in our lives. We give because God has been good to us. Some of us give lots of “bucks”, some of us give lots of talent and some of us give lots of time. We sometimes try to compare what we think one person gives as opposed to what we give. WRONG! Each person’s life is one we don’t know in

its entirety. Sometimes there are pressures of time, endurance, finances, psychological and other that we have no inkling about. We should never judge – for good or bad – because we are not walking in the other’s shoes or on the others’ path.

So, the question is not what do you give but Why do you give.

God gave himself. That’s more than a lot, that’s all. We are expected to do the same. Yes, give all you have. Give your life to God as he gave his life for you. Is that too much? It may seem to be but it means that whatever we do in life, we do because of Jesus. It means that we really don’t count the cost, but we give of our lives generously out of the love we have received from God.

Giving yourself means being good stewards of all your resources. God has given us resources so that we can provide for ourselves and our families. Our resources are also to be used to help our neighbors as best we can. But the best stewardship means putting our lives in God’s hands, trusting him to hold us up when things get heavy and trusting him to love us, even when we find it difficult to love ourselves!

Give yourself a gift again and again. Each day remind yourself of your baptism and the grace you have received in life from that baptism into God’s family. I have been baptized. That’s important. This is most certainly true!

*TMK*

*-- Week of December 13, 2009*