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# YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE

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STEWARDSHIP PRAYER JOURNAL



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Dear friends,

Over the next 14 days I invite you to join me in praying about how you will live out your membership commitment to St. Luke's in 2020. Specifically, how will you give of your time, talent, and financial support to share God's love and bring hope to the world?

At St. Luke's, every member is part of our effort to Share Christ, Grow in Faith, and Serve the Community. Our work in the church and community is possible in large part due to the generous financial support of our church family. Together, we are able to do so much more than we could ever do alone.

I hope you will take time to read and reflect on each of the 14 days leading up to November 3 when we will have Commitment Sunday. Whether you make your commitment in worship, online, or by calling the church office, I hope your decision will be grounded in prayer, reflection, and gratitude.

Thank you for your love for Christ and the church. Your commitment blesses lives and makes a difference in our community and beyond.

With gratitude,



Bob Long  
St. Luke's Senior Pastor



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## DAY 1 – OCTOBER 20

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What does generosity mean to you? What does a generous person look like? Take a few moments to rate yourself on these statements (there are no wrong answers and no scoring – just be honest in your self-assessment):

- Compared to my friends and family, I believe I am very generous
- When I receive a bonus or raise, I consider how I could help someone else with the additional money
- I give a lot of volunteer time to my church and community, so I don't feel the need to give as much money
- What I contribute to church and charity represents sacrifice (I have to give up other things I need or want)
- I give away more money in a year than I spend in other areas such as Starbucks coffee, personal hobbies, or dining out
- I could give away more money and my lifestyle would remain the same
- I believe giving away 10% of my income is important to my faith
- I often wonder what everyone else is giving and I want to give an equal share
- I am intentional in my charitable giving
- When I am at church, I often contribute change and small bills from what I carry

In order to be generous, what percentage of income do you believe you should be donating to church and charity? Ask God to guide you in the amount and/or percent you should give.

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## DAY 2 – OCTOBER 21

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When was the last time you were generous to a complete stranger? Did you give money to someone on the street? Did you give someone money in the grocery line because they did not have enough?

Over the next few days, consider how you might express generosity to someone else. You could choose a coworker, family member, or someone you don't yet know. Think of creative ways you could do something kind for them. Write a note, do someone a favor, call a long-lost friend, or walk someone's dog for them. If you're at a loss, you can search online for ideas.

In the following space, describe how you felt about that experience. Did you interact with the person? Did you see their reaction? How did you feel about doing something for someone else? Did it feel like something you should have been doing your whole life?

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## DAY 3 – OCTOBER 22

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In what ways are you currently generous? Take a minute to make a list for each of the following:

- What groups/organizations do you give money to and how much?

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- What groups/organizations do you give your time to and how often?

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- What other ways do you express generosity (cards, gifts, calls, etc.)?

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Reviewing your lists, how would you feel about giving more money or time? What changes would you need to make in your life in order to increase your generosity? How would those changes make you feel?

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## DAY 4 – OCTOBER 23

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A 2014 article from Forbes offers the following seven benefits of showing gratitude:

1. Gratitude opens the door to more relationships. When we say thank you or express appreciation to someone we've just met, the person we thank is more likely to seek an ongoing relationship.
2. People who express gratitude experience fewer aches and pains and they report feeling healthier than people who do not express gratitude.
3. Gratitude improves psychological health. According to the writer of this article (Amy Morin), research confirms that gratitude effectively increases happiness and reduces depression.
4. Gratitude reduces aggression and increases both sensitivity and empathy.
5. Grateful people sleep better.
6. Gratitude increases a person's self-esteem and reduces resentment toward people who are perceived as having more.
7. Gratitude increases mental strength. Studies indicate that people who are grateful respond to trauma and tragedy with greater resilience and strength. Recognizing all you have to be thankful for – even during the worst times of your life – fosters resilience.

After reading these statements, do they resonate with your experience? How can you develop an attitude of gratitude? How would your life be different if you live in a spirit of gratitude?

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## DAY 5 – OCTOBER 24

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Reflecting on your own life, rate yourself honestly about the following statements related to gratitude:

- Compared to my family and friends, I believe I am very grateful
- When I receive a bonus or raise, I believe this is mine and mine only. I worked hard for it and I will do with it as I please.
- When I receive a gift, I always send a “thank you” either by sending a note, email, or phone call.
- I can remember the last time I actually sent a handwritten thank you note.
- I seldom, if ever, thank people who are simply “doing their job.”
- When someone genuinely thanks me, it makes me feel great and encourages me to do more.

Now list the people you have thanked in the last 30 days. Was it a cashier, teacher, spouse, flight attendant, co-worker, boss, child, enemy, friend, God? Who do you need to express gratitude to this week?

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## DAY 6 – OCTOBER 25

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Who are the people who shaped how you think about the following, and what are the key lessons they taught you?

1. Family: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Work: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Money: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Church: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

When you think about those people, what about them makes you want to be more generous? How did they live in a spirit of gratitude? What specific actions did they take to show you what is important in life?

Take a minute now to think about who you influence in your life – a child, coworker, friend, spouse? How are you being intentional about sharing your values with those people?

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## DAY 7 – OCTOBER 26

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In 2017 the Barna Group released a study about the content of American prayers. Here is what people prayed about:

- Gratitude and thanksgiving – 62%
- Needs of family and community – 61%
- Personal guidance in crisis – 49%
- Health and wellness – 47%
- Confession and forgiveness – 43%
- Things (I) suddenly feel compelled to pray about – 43%
- Safety in daily tasks or travel – 41%
- A sense of peace – 37%
- Blessings for meals – 37%
- Specific requests from others – 34%

Note that there is no mention of listening to God, no mention of asking “God, what do you want me to do?” or “God, how do you want me to give of my time and money to bless others?”

When was the last time you prayed for God to speak to you?  
When was the last time you asked God to guide you about how much to give?

Take time today to ask for God’s direction as you pray about your financial commitment.

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## DAY 8 – OCTOBER 27

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Over the next few days, take some time to examine your prayer life. Here are few times you might consider praying – including both talking to God and listening to God:

- First thing in the morning
- In the shower
- In the car (with the radio off!)
- Over lunch
- During exercise time
- In the evening before going to sleep

You might also find a close friend and ask them the following questions:

1. How is prayer important to you?
2. What do you pray about?
3. Has God ever clearly spoken to you?
4. What advice do you have about praying?

Take time this week to really focus on praying about how God wants to use you to make a difference in the lives of others.

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## DAY 9 – OCTOBER 28

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When we give, our financial support enables ministry to happen. Lives are changed because of our gifts of time and money. But do you take time to pray about how God will work in other people's lives through your financial support? Here is a suggested list of people to pray for today:

- The children in our after-school programs
- Members of our church family who are in the hospital
- The pastors of our church who perform funerals, weddings and visit the homebound
- Teachers of our Sunday School classes and Bible studies
- Members who go on mission trips
- Leaders of our outreach programs like Mobile Meals
- Volunteers in our youth and children's programs

When you pray about these people, ask God to work in and through them to lead others closer to God.

Ask God to use your support – time, prayer, and financial gifts – to improve their lives and help them grow in faith.

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## DAY 10 – OCTOBER 29

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Rank these people in order of their levels of generosity (there is no right or wrong): A person who...

\_\_\_\_\_ stops to help someone with a flat tire

\_\_\_\_\_ gives blood

\_\_\_\_\_ donates clothes or food

\_\_\_\_\_ participates in a charity run

\_\_\_\_\_ contributes a percentage of their income to church and charities

\_\_\_\_\_ gives \$10 to a homeless person on the street

\_\_\_\_\_ shovels out their neighbor's driveway (or rakes their leaves)

\_\_\_\_\_ donates a kidney

\_\_\_\_\_ leaves their entire estate to church or charity

Now think about your own life; how do you calculate your own generosity? What are you doing to intentionally give of your time, talent, and financial gifts to bless others? What is important to you about making a commitment to be generous?

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## DAY 11 – OCTOBER 30

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Think for a few minutes about what experiences at church are meaningful to you. Maybe something about worship, a small group, a mission trip, or participating in an activity. How has the church blessed your life? How have you blessed someone in the church through your life?

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When we think about our participation in the life of the church, how has God worked in your life? What message, event, or opportunity has helped you grow in faith?

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Now think about people in your life who do not have a church home. How could you invite someone to share your experience? How does your time, talent or financial support make it possible for others to experience God and a family of faith?

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Make a list of people that you would like to invite to church or a church-related activity. Who would be blessed by participating in a ministry or mission of the church, and how can you help to make that possible?

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## DAY 12 – OCTOBER 31

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As we prepare to make our financial commitments for the coming year, take a few moments to write down your priorities for 2020.

What plans are you making for the following:

- Taking a special trip
- Making a memory with family or friends
- Attending a special event
- Buying something for yourself or someone else
- A significant change in your life – new job, retirement, or moving
- Something you want to accomplish
- A ministry you would like to join
- Something new you hope to try

Now think about what ministries or missions are important to you. What gift of time and money could you make to help that ministry area? Maybe it relates to children, youth, music, senior adults, technology, food, or another activity you heard about at the church. What part of the church would you like to see grow, develop, or continue because of your support?

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## DAY 13 – NOVEMBER 1

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How will you give in 2020? Here are some options:

- Write a check
- Give gifts in cash
- Go online and make a monthly gift from your bank account
- Make a gift through text message
- Leave a gift in your will or estate
- Transfer stock or other property
- Make a distribution from your IRA

Think about which of these will help you to feel connected in the coming year. Take time to figure out the most efficient method for you to make a meaningful financial gift or gifts in the coming year.

You can find out more about giving options online at [stlukesokc.org/give](http://stlukesokc.org/give). Most importantly, pray that God will direct you about how to give so that you will feel the impact of your gift.

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## DAY 14 – NOVEMBER 2

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Tomorrow is Commitment Sunday at St. Luke's.

If you are attending worship in person, we invite you to bring a pledge card or pick one up at the Welcome Center. In each service, there will be a time to bring your card forward and pray at the altar. If you make your gifts electronically and have already renewed your pledge for next year, come forward to pray and ask God to use your gifts to make a difference.

If you are unable to attend worship, you can go online at [stlukesokc.org/pledge](http://stlukesokc.org/pledge) to make your commitment. You can sign up to give by check, credit card, or bank draft.

Take time today to pray the following prayer:

Dear God, what do you want me to give to support our church in 2020? How much and often should I give? What specific ministries and missions do I want to support with my regular giving and my extra giving? How do you want to use me to make a difference for others?

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# ST. LUKE'S G

GIVING BACK IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF

## WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT GIVING/TITHING?

In the Old Testament, we read about the tithe in Leviticus 27:30 – “A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord.” In this way, the “tithe” represents our giving to God from the first 10% of whatever we receive. In the New Testament, the focus is less on a percentage and more on the heart, as expressed in 2 Corinthians 9:7 – “Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” We encourage every member to seek God’s guidance in how you will give to the church.

## WHY SHOULD I GIVE?

At St. Luke’s, we believe giving is good for the soul. We believe that generosity and giving helps us to grow in our walk with God and make a difference in our community and world.

## HOW MUCH SHOULD I GIVE?

The amount you give is between you and God. We encourage “tithing,” which means giving 10% of your income to further the ministry of Christ. We encourage every family to pray about what gifts you will give to help St. Luke’s accomplish the mission of *Sharing God’s Love and Bringing Hope to the World.*

USE THE CHART AS A GUIDE TO DETERMINE YOUR MONTHLY GIVING.

Annual Household Income	Monthly Pledge Contribution					
	2%	4%	6%	8%	10%	12%
\$30,000	\$50	\$100	\$150	\$200	\$250	\$300
\$40,000	\$67	\$133	\$200	\$267	\$333	\$400
\$50,000	\$83	\$167	\$250	\$333	\$417	\$500
\$75,000	\$125	\$250	\$375	\$500	\$625	\$750
\$100,000	\$167	\$333	\$500	\$667	\$833	\$1,000
\$125,000	\$208	\$417	\$625	\$833	\$1,042	\$1,250

# LIVING GUIDE

## OUR SPIRITUAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

### WHY THE COMMITMENT CARD?

The reason for this request is simple: we will commit to spend only what the family of faith commits to give. As each family makes a commitment of what they intend to give throughout the year, we are able to plan for ministry and mission that will fit within our means.

### WHERE DOES MY MONEY GO?

Your church is committed to living within its means, making sure every gift makes a difference! When you give to support the general operations of the church, your support provides for:

- Staff (administration, ministry, and programming)
- Facility and Operations (utilities, insurance, and maintenance)
- Programs (worship, children, and youth)
- Missions (more than 50 different local and worldwide ministries)

Whatever the family of faith commits to give is what we will be able to spend in the coming year. We only know how to plan when each family tells us what they intend to give. Thank you for making a financial commitment to your church. Your gifts help St. Luke's share God's love and bring hope to the world.

Information about ministry budgets, along with financial statements and independent auditor's reports for St. Luke's United Methodist Church and St. Luke's United Methodist Foundation are available upon request. Please contact Rev. Phil Greenwald at [pgreenwald@stlukesokc.org](mailto:pgreenwald@stlukesokc.org).

Thank you for taking the time to reflect and pray each day about your gift of time, talent, and financial support for St. Luke's in 2020. The leadership of the church believes that every gift matters.

The majority of the material in this booklet has been excerpted from "The Generosity Challenge" by Scott McKenzie and Kristine Miller (Abingdon Press, 2019). Specific credits and references are available from their booklet upon request by contacting the church Business Office.



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*stlukesokc.org*