



First Evangelical Lutheran Church

ELCA

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Charles R. Knerem

Pastors

Kathleen L. Kluck

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

October 7, 2016

Let's face it. Our lives are filled with ways in which we strive for excellence. We constantly challenge ourselves to do more and be more. We meet and exceed expectations and deadlines in our corporate lives. We want our children, or we as students ourselves, to excel in schoolwork. We work hard to maintain and increase the value of our homes. We strive to improve our health and wellness. We work to improve the quantity and quality of our family time. We increase the time that we volunteer. Striving for excellence can really make a positive impact, can't it?

The Church is no different. First Church provides excellent traditional and contemporary worship and Christian education. We are blessed with gifted pastors who help us connect God's word with our everyday lives. First Church has excellent music and fellowship opportunities. First Church has numerous and faithful volunteers who are excited and eager to share God's love through the ministries of the church. We welcome organizations to use our facilities, and we go out into the community to be the light of Jesus. First Church is doing pretty well, excelling in fact, but only because we challenge ourselves to do more and be more as we glorify God.

In Second Corinthians, Paul recognizes us for excelling in our faith, missions and eagerness to be Christ in the world, but he also challenges us to excel in our giving to the church. Paul wants us to understand that our giving is not to be done in isolation. Just as we are called to walk shoulder to shoulder to serve God and all people in the world, we are also called to collectively excel in our giving. Paul tells us about the impoverished church in Macedonia whose people were severely afflicted and yet voluntarily gave generously to the church. They even gave eagerly beyond their means! Paul recognizes the Macedonian church as an example of how we, too, should generously give to the church.

What would our giving at First Church look like if our generosity overflowed beyond our means? What could we accomplish then? When we excel in our giving, how will we be a powerful example of Jesus? There are any numbers of opportunities for First Church to do this!

As we approach Stewardship Sunday, October 16, we ask that you reflect on your current financial giving to the church in relationship to your household income. Are you excelling in giving, or tithing ten percent? As you complete your Faith Promise Card enclosed, please prayerfully consider how you will work toward the ultimate goal of excelling in giving. We ask that you return your Faith Promise Card to the church on October 16, but if you are unable to worship with us that day, the cards may be mailed to the church office or placed in the offering plate at any time.

It is God's desire for us to collectively excel in our faith, worship, witness and giving to further the mission of the church. Let's walk shoulder to shoulder and challenge ourselves to excel in giving!

In Christ,

The First Church Stewardship Committee:

John Brinzo, Linda Browning, Bruce Holderead, Bob Jacob, Julie Magons

"To live in the powerful example of Jesus, and to discover new pathways for spiritual growth."