



SAINT INNOCENT ORTHODOX CHURCH

September 9, 2016

Dear faithful of St. Innocent Orthodox Church,

Our giving is always our response to God's grace which moves us from grace to gratitude. Just as we love because God first loved us (I John 4:14), we give because God first gave to us. The question of the Psalmist "What shall I give to the Lord in return for all His benefits towards me?" (Ps 116:2), is answered in every Liturgy when the celebrant calls us to "offer ourselves and one another and our whole life to Christ our God." Part of this offering of ourselves is monetary. Ultimately, giving to the Church is an opportunity – an opportunity to examine our priorities and values. It is an opportunity to express our thankfulness, to give of ourselves and to grow in grace. It is an opportunity to participate in the work of God.

Once again, the time has come to prepare a budget for the coming year of 2017. The Parish Council and I thank you for your generosity in giving of your time, money, and support over this past year and beyond. We are asking that you prayerfully make a monetary pledge for the operating expenses of our Church. Your pledges pay for our monthly expenses which include priest stipend, mortgage, insurance, utilities, upkeep on the building itself, rent for our parish hall, wine, oil, grounds maintenance, Sunday School costs, charity to the community, and other basic expenses. Ten percent of our pledges/tithes go to the Diocese of the South as our tithe to them, and an additional ten percent goes towards the Diocese of the South to repay them for their loan to us.

The next major need in our community is a permanent parish hall. We may have to fundraise to make the parish hall project a reality. Outside of the various things we may do to fundraise, our monthly bank statements will be looked at and assessed by the bank and will ultimately determine whether or not we will qualify for a loan. Every gift, big or small counts. By God's grace and your financial gifts we may be able to break ground on this major project within the next few years.

Over the years God has richly blessed our parish. Join us as we prepare for the many blessings yet to come. Please fill out the pledge form below as soon as possible and either hand it directly to the Treasurer Kimberly Guest or place it in a sealed envelope labeled Attn: Treasurer and deposit it in collection box at the front entrance of the Church by October 2nd.

May God bless you for your generosity,
Fr. Theophan

What do the Scriptures say about Giving?

- Give without show - "Let not your left hand know what your right hand is doing." (Matt.6:3).
- Give with regularity in proportion - "Upon the first day of the week let everyone of you lay by him in store, as God has prospered him." (I Cor. 16:2)
- Give liberally - "He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully." (II Cor. 9:6)
- Give cheerfully - "Let everyone give as his heart tells him, neither grudgingly, nor under compulsion, for God loves the man that gives cheerfully." (II Cor. 9:7)

Pledging, Tithing, Proportional Giving, and Offering

Pledging: A pledge is an estimate of giving; some call it a statement of intent. Pledging is "promising to give tithes and offerings in the future," and it dates to the 5th century B.C. (Nehemiah 10:28-39), when the people of God promised in a written document to give tithes and offerings in the future. See also 2 Corinthians 9:1-5, concerning "a pledge" that the Corinthians were to make of future offerings for the relief of famished Christians in Jerusalem. In ancient times and today, pledging makes planning possible.

How much should I pledge? Determining the amount of your annual pledge is between you and God. The church does offer some guidelines to assist you as you make this important decision.

- **Tithing** is giving ten percent, a tenth, of one's annual increase (Deuteronomy 14:22). The first biblical instance of this is Abraham's tithe to Melchizedek (2000 B.C.; Genesis 14:21). See also Malachi 3:6-12, and our Lord's instruction on "not neglecting" tithing in Matthew 23:23. Tithing predates both Judaism and Christianity, and is found in both. It has always been a way to express one's commitment to God. Tithing orders household budgets and our lives. "Tithing" appears 37 times in Scripture, Old and New Testaments. Tithing is giving directly to the "storehouse" (today, often the parish general operating fund). Tithing is based on a comparatively simple calculation, moving the decimal point one place to the left on our total income - or our increase - and drawing a check.
- **Proportionate giving** is basing your pledge amount on a percentage of your income. Not everyone feels they can afford a full tithe, but what about giving one percent? Or five percent of your income?
- **Offering** is to give or sacrifice or present something to God as a mark of respect and love. See Psalm 96 [95 LXX]:7-8 "Bring an offering and come into his courts" (in a worship setting), and Matthew 5:23-24, where our Lord says that, after reconciliation, we are to "come and present your offering." "Offering" appears 710 times in Scripture. "Tithes and offerings" also apply to church workers and clergy, not just laity (Numbers 18:26). Offerings are our gifts to God - and to godly needs - without necessarily any set reference to proportion of our increase or income. (For a widow's one hundred percent offering, see Luke 2:1-4.) Choices about giving offerings are matters of individual prayer and determination: what do we believe God wants us to give, in love, from what He has given us, in love?

**"Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the Lord your God has blessed you."
Deuteronomy 16:17**



Pledge card for 2017 Operating Expenses

I/we (names): _____ intend to give the following:

- *Weekly* _____
- *Monthly* _____
- *Annually* _____

Please fill this out as soon as possible and return directly to the treasurer Kimberly Guest or deposit it in a sealed envelope labeled Attn: Treasurer in collection box in the front entrance of the Church by Sunday, October 2, 2016.

**If needed this slip can also be mailed to: St. Innocent Orthodox Church,
Attn: Treasurer Kimberly Guest
7301 Rivoli Road
Macon, GA 31210**

Or e-mailed to: nsvc2him@gmail.com

*Did you know you can set up reoccurring pledge payments through PayPal?
Click the PayPal Donate Logo on our website or scan the QR code.*



"6 But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7 So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work...10 Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness, 11 while you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God." (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)