



ST. INNOCENT ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH

2018 OPERATING EXPENSES
PLEDGE CAMPAIGN

Sunday, October 1, 2017
Feast of the Protection of the Theotokos

Dear Members and extended community of St. Innocent 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 2018. 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, 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.

As you may be aware we have started the construction of our new parish hall which will be completed in the late spring or early summer of 2018. The parish hall and everything that we do is tied to our vision to "bring the Orthodox faith to the Middle Georgia region." As we break new ground, your generous gifts have never been more important. Every gift, big or small counts.

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 the collection box at the front entrance of the Church by October 29, 2017.

May God bless you for your generosity,
Fr. Theophan

CHRISTIAN CHARITABLE GIVING

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 every one 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)

TITHING

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.

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.

PROPORTIONATE GIVING AND OFFERINGS

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?

An 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 the 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?

ST. INNOCENT ORTHODOX CHURCH

2018 PARISH PLEDGE FORM

Name/Family Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

Gift Pledge Summary: Total Pledge

Payment schedule: Annually, Quarterly, Monthly, Weekly.

() I/We will be fulfilling our pledge by depositing checks in the offering box at church.

() I / We authorize our pledge payments via automatic bank withdrawal.

Name of Bank: _____ 9 Digit bank
routing number _____

Your bank account number: _____

Checking, Saving

() I / We authorize our pledge payments via credit card.

Card Type: AmEx, Visa, MC, Discover

Credit Card Number: _____

Expiration Date: _____ CVC No. _____

Name on Card : _____

Please fill out the pledge form 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 the collection box at the front entrance of the Church by October 29, 2018.

You can also mail your pledge to St. Innocent Orthodox Church, 7301 Rivoli Road, Macon GA 31210. Make checks payable to St. Innocent Orthodox Church. All gifts are tax deductible.

We thank you for your generosity!

PLANNED GIVING

Please consult your tax or legal advisor for detailed information and to determine if any of these options are right for you.

- **Corporate Matching Gifts:** Employee Matching Gifts are donations an employer makes to match its employees' charitable contributions. Usually associated with corporate grantmakers, employee matching gifts often are dollar-for-dollar, but some companies will give double or even triple the original donation.
- **Gifts of Life Insurance:** Life insurance proceeds can be received by St. Innocent Orthodox Church, free of federal income and estate taxes, probate, and administrative costs, and without any delay, fees, or transfer costs.
- **Gifts of Real Estate:** The appraised fair market value of donated real estate can be deducted as a charitable contribution by the donor.
- **Gifts of Securities (Stocks, Bonds, and Mutual Funds):** Gifts of publicly traded securities that have appreciated in value allow you to claim a charitable deduction for the full market value of the securities on the date the gift is made. You pay no capital gains tax on the appreciation.
- **Wills or Revocable “Living Trust”:** Revocable living trusts and wills both allow you to name beneficiaries for your property.
- **Charitable Remainder Trust:** A charitable remainder trust is a trust that provides for a specified distribution, at least annually, to at least one noncharitable income recipient for a period specified in the trust instrument, with the remainder interest paid to at least one charitable beneficiary.
- **Deferred or Planned Gifts:** Planned Gifts typically provide donors and beneficiaries with tax benefits including the reduction of capital gains tax, minimizing or eliminating gift and estate tax producing tax efficient income streams. It's also noteworthy to remember other tax breaks currently available such as:
- **The IRA Charitable Rollover:** The donor does not pay tax on the distribution and gets a charitable deduction for the contribution to the parish. Keep in mind you must be 70.5 years of age or older. You can give up to \$100,000 with this provision.

"Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord your God which He has given you." Deuteronomy 16:17

EASY GIVING

- **Kroger Community Rewards:** Fr. Theophan has Kroger card signup forms. If you already have a Kroger card, you can update your Kroger Community Rewards online by visiting your Account Summary page. After selecting Community Rewards, there is a user info page (addr & phone #) which then takes you to a lookup page where you can enter the Org number (49127) or simply Innocent and select our church.
- **Amazon Smile:** On your first visit to smile.amazon.com, you need to select St. Innocent Orthodox Church Macon, GA to receive donations from eligible purchases before you begin shopping.
- **eBay for Charity:** Buy and sell on eBay while contributing to St. Innocent Orthodox Church.
- **Credit Card Points:** Check with the Credit Card company and see if you can apply your points to our Parish Hall charity.



"Take from among you an offering to the Lord. Whoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it as an offering to the Lord: gold, silver, and bronze" Exodus 35:5