

*Offering unto Thee
Thine own of Thine own*



**SAINT
INNOCENT**
ORTHODOX
CHRISTIAN
CHURCH

*2021 Financial
Stewardship
Drive*



Dear Members and extended community of St. Innocent Church,

In 2019 there was no way to know or prepare for what we all would be subjected to in 2020. The pandemic, the shut-down, and the civil unrest have been devastating to so many people in our country and the local community. In this anxious season, everyone is having to adjust in unforeseen ways. At St. Innocent, I am thankful and pleased to report that although we have had to adjust in many ways our people have continued to be generous with their financial support! Thank God!

Our Mission/Vision states:

At St. Innocent Orthodox Church, we seek to make Jesus Christ and His Gospel the center of everything we do, glorifying God in the beauty of our worship and carefully preserving the faith practices of the Early Church, which was born at Pentecost. We press toward the goal of becoming more like our Lord and Savior, desiring to love and care for one another and those in the wider community. By the grace of the Holy Spirit, we pray that our parish would become a life-giving spring of the Orthodox Christian faith for the people of Middle Georgia. Although this year has been chaotic, behind the scenes we have been doing a lot of work to fulfill our mission in Middle Georgia.

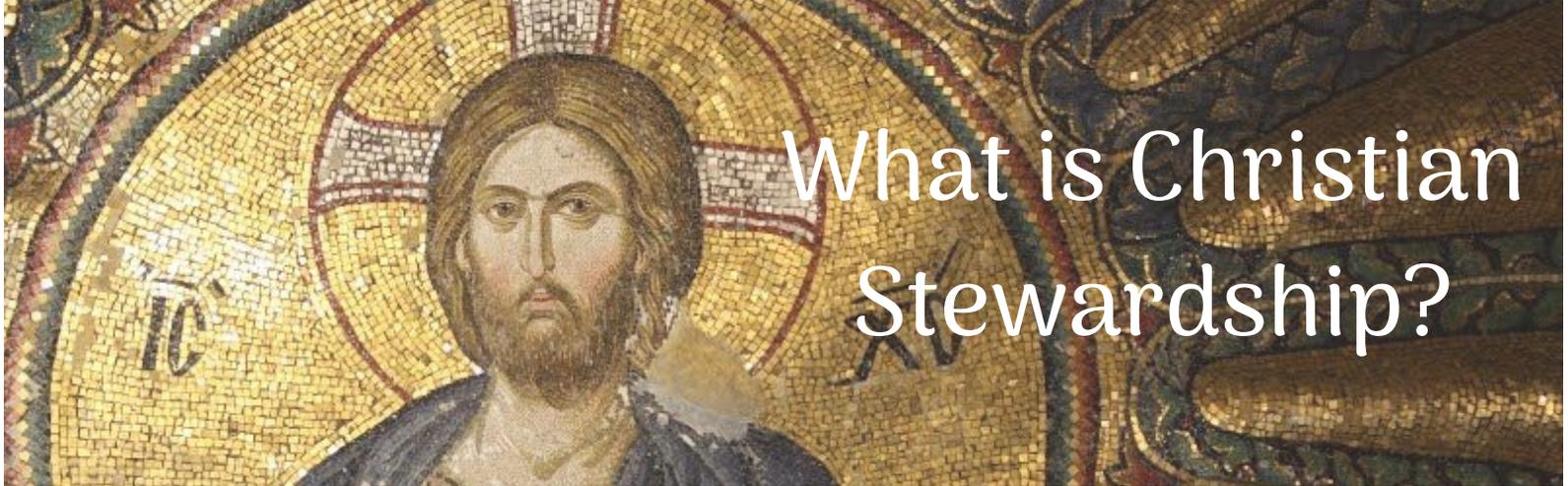
Your stewardship has helped the parish be stable in an unstable time. We have done our best to keep the services beautiful and your generosity enabled us to purchase and set up a quality live-stream of parish services on YouTube, Facebook, and in the parish hall. Currently, we have 3 families, totaling 12 people enrolled in our Zoom Catechism. To better form our ministry leaders this year the Parish Council and a few others have participated in an Effective Ministry Course and attended an Orthodox Leadership retreat via Zoom (of course). On top of this our parish has been able to support the Mentor's Project and the Middle GA Foodbank.

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.

The time has come to prepare a budget for the coming year of 2021. 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 financial commitment to the operating expenses of our Church. Every gift, large or small counts. Beyond the day to day expenses that your gifts support it is important to remember that your contributions are what enable us to fulfill our mission of "becoming a life-giving spring of the Orthodox Christian faith for the people of Middle Georgia." Every time a person makes a connection with Christ through all that our parish does it ties directly back to the people who have committed themselves to financially supporting our Church.

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 Financial Commitment form below as soon as possible and either hand it directly to the Treasurer Diane Dorogy 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 November 29, 2020.

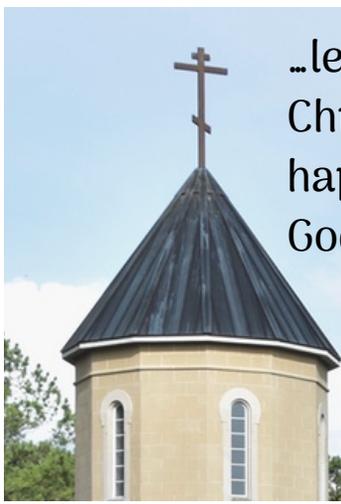
May God bless you for your generosity,
Fr. Theophan



What is Christian Stewardship?

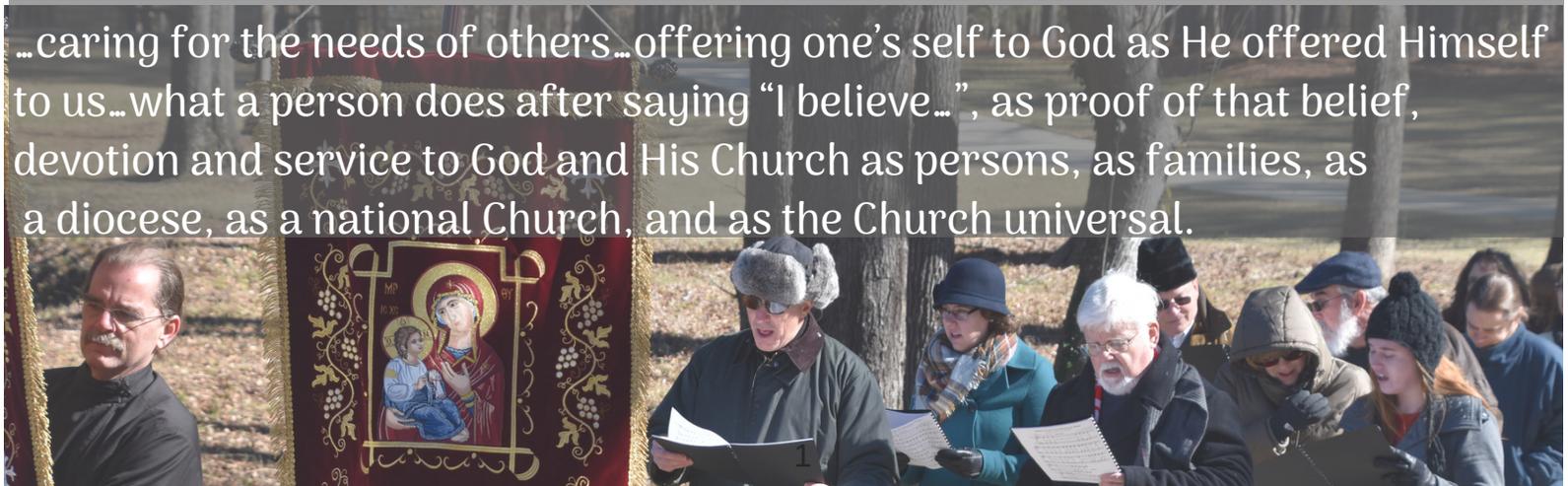


It is offering back to God all that he has given us...



...learning how to be a responsible and concerned caretaker of Christ's Church; it is learning how to enjoy Church life and be happy in Church work, for in Her dwells the fullness of the Spirit of God.

...our active commitment to use all our time, talent and treasure for the benefit of humankind in grateful acknowledgment of Christ's redeeming love.



...caring for the needs of others...offering one's self to God as He offered Himself to us...what a person does after saying "I believe...", as proof of that belief, devotion and service to God and His Church as persons, as families, as a diocese, as a national Church, and as the Church universal.

CHRISTIAN FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

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 tithing 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 financial commitment 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

2021 FINANCIAL COMMITMENT FORM

Name/Family Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

In gratitude for God's blessings, I/We commit to Christ and His Church the following amount: _____

Payment schedule: Annually, Quarterly, Monthly, Weekly.

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

() I/We will be fulfilling our pledge via automatic bank withdrawal through Realm.



When you donate through Realm, your payment information (credit card number or bank account number) remains private (between you and Realm) and is not viewed by anyone in the parish. You can make your payment recurring and easily cancel at any time. The

giving link in Realm gives you the option to choose which fund you would like to donate to. In Realm you can donate by:

- Automatic Bank Withdrawal - This convenient option carries the lowest fee for the parish, less than 1%.*
- Debit or Credit Card - This comes with a standard fee for the parish of 2.6%*
- Text message - Text siocmacon (\$amount) to 73256 to give to Tithes & Offerings using your text messaging.*
- If you have claimed your profile you can easily see a record of your charitable donations to St. Innocent Church*

Please fill out the pledge form as soon as possible and either hand it directly to the Treasurer Diane Dorogy 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 November 29, 2020.

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!

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 (SJ072) 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:** Have unwanted items in your home? Contact David Marble (dandmelbram1@hotmail.com or 478-972-3618) and learn how to dispose of those items with all proceeds going 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.
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"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