

Centreville United Methodist Church

A welcoming congregation inviting all God's children
to experience and share Christ's transforming love

Our Theology of Stewardship, Giving, and Generosity

Why a Theology of Stewardship, Giving, and Generosity?

The Centreville United Methodist Church (CUMC) Theology of Stewardship, Giving, and Generosity is a statement of our beliefs about stewardship and what it means to be a faithful steward of all that God has provided us as we seek to grow in faith and serve God through CUMC as disciples of Jesus Christ. The Bible verses, while not all inclusive, are representative of what scripture tells us about stewardship, giving, and generosity.

As disciples of Jesus Christ at Centreville United Methodist Church, in covenant with one another, we prayerfully believe:

Stewardship is First and Foremost an Act of *Worship*

Our focus at CUMC is to worship, praise, and serve God so that all of God's children may experience and share Christ's transforming love. By so doing, we will see the outpouring of God's Spirit in our lives. Giving of our time, talents and treasures is an act of worship just like singing, preaching, and praying.

“Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name.” Psalm 100:4

“God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” John 4:24

“O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker! For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. O that today you would listen to his voice!” Psalm 95:6-7

“Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.’” Luke 4:8

Stewardship is Lived out in *Faith*

As Christ's disciples we are continually growing in our faith, and this growth includes our giving. Generously giving a portion of our time, talents, and treasures to God through CUMC requires a bold step of faith. Our faith embraces the call of God, as revealed through prayerful willingness and gratitude, to act. Giving generously expresses our faith in God.

“Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in my house, and thus put me to the test says the Lord of hosts, see if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing.” Malachi 3:10

“Now as you excel in everything in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness, and in the love we have kindled in you, see that you also excel in this grace of giving.” 2 Corinthians 8:7 (NIV)

“And without faith it is impossible to please God, for whoever would approach him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.” Hebrews 11:6

Stewardship is Grounded in Prayer

Praying and listening to God with a willing and obedient heart requires courage and patience. Prayer reorients our lives from being self-centered to God-centered. Whenever we make decisions about our resources, we need to place ourselves in the hands of our generous God through prayer. In so doing, we are asking the Holy Spirit what God wants to do through us with all God has given us.

*“Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus”
Philippians 4: 6-7*

“Likewise, the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words.” Romans 8:26 (RSV)

“The human mind plans the way, but the Lord directs the steps.” Proverbs 16:9

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Stewardship defines our Relationships with God and our Possessions

As stewards of God’s many gifts to us, we are called to manage and use our prayers, our time, our talents, and our treasures to worship and glorify God. Through our relationship with Jesus Christ, we become willing and faithful stewards. It is our obligation as Christians to prayerfully manage and use the gifts that God has entrusted to us, not only our financial blessings provided by God but also all the spiritual gifts that are given to us through the Holy Spirit.

“Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. To Him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.” 1 Peter 4:10 -11

“...From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded.” Luke 12:48b

“The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. As it is written, “He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his benevolence endures forever.” 2 Corinthians 9:6-9

Gratitude and Generosity are Characteristics of a Follower of Christ

God loved and then God gave. It is about the heart before it is about the resources. In our thankfulness to God for all God has given us, we express our gratitude by living as Christ taught us. By generously giving our prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness through CUMC we are living out our covenant with God.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.” John 3:16

“What shall I return to the Lord for all his bounty to me? I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people.” Psalms 116:12 and 14

“But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to make this freewill offering? For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you.” 1 Chronicles 29:14

“For as I can testify, they voluntarily gave according to their means, and even beyond their means, begging us earnestly for the privilege of sharing in this ministry to the saints, and this...they gave themselves first to the Lord...” 2 Corinthians 8:3-5

“Brothers and sisters, we want to let you know about the grace of God that was given to the churches of Macedonia. While they were being tested by many problems, their extra amount of happiness and their extreme poverty resulted in a surplus of rich generosity.” 2 Corinthians 8:1-2 (CEB)

Joy is the Outcome of a Generous Heart that Knows and Serves God

We experience great joy in serving Christ and giving back to God through CUMC as an act of worship. By so doing, we enable all God’s children to experience and share in His transforming love. Investing of ourselves in God’s mission and ministry is one of life’s greatest joys.

“As for those who are in the present age rich, command them not to be haughty, or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but rather on God who richly provides everything for our enjoyment. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous and ready to share, thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that is really life.” 1 Timothy 6:17-19

“You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us.” 2 Corinthians 9:11

“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Matthew 6:21

Note: All Bible verses are from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) unless otherwise indicated.

Definitions of Terms Commonly Associated with Stewardship, Giving and Generosity

Steward - One who manages all the resources God has provided in a manner that glorifies God.

- “Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy.” 1 Corinthians 4:1-2
- “Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.” 1 Peter 4:10

Stewardship - Caring for and prayerfully managing all of God’s gifts to us (our environment, our talents, our time, our money, and all God’s children) as a way to express our love and gratitude to God.

- “...give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.” Luke 6:38
- “Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.” Hebrews 13:16

Tithe/tithing - A tithe is the 10% of our income that we give to God’s mission and ministry. It is a Biblical expectation to prayerfully give ten percent of the “first fruits” of our labor as a gift from our hearts for the glory of God. Tithes should be given with an attitude of worship to God and service to God’s creation.

- “Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God, and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that you give me I will surely give one tenth to you.” Genesis 28:20-22
- “All tithes from the land, whether the seed from the ground or the fruit from the tree, are the LORD's; they are holy to the LORD.” Leviticus 27:30

Offerings - Our offerings are our gifts given through the church that are other than our tithes. Christians freely and prayerfully offer their gifts through the church to ministries and missions to transform lives for the glory of God.

- “Take from among you an offering to the LORD; let whoever is of a generous heart bring the LORD's offering: gold, silver, and bronze” Exodus 35:5
- “In all this I have given you an example that by such work we must support the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, for he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.’” Acts 20:35

Generosity - The fullest act of love in the heart of a Christian who has been given gifts from God; gifts that must be prayerfully and wisely used for the purpose of bringing glory to God. When we embrace God, God enters our hearts, and our generosity follows. We are called to give in proportion to what we have been given. How we express our generosity and gratitude through our prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness is different for each of us and depends upon our individual or family circumstances. We strive to give joyfully!

- “all shall give as they are able, according to the blessing of the LORD your God that he has given you.” Deuteronomy 16:17
- “You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us.” 2 Corinthians 9:11
- “He looked up and saw rich people putting their gifts into the treasury; he also saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. He said, “Truly I tell you; this poor widow has put in more than all of them; ⁴ for all of them have contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in all she had to live on.” Luke 21:1-4