



PEACE RIVER NEW CHURCH CURRENT

NEWSLETTER OF THE DAWSON CREEK CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM

APRIL 2013

GIVING TO THE CHURCH

By Rev. Coleman Glenn

You'll notice that later in this newsletter we're requesting donations toward re-doing the parking lot and sidewalk area at the church. There are many ways to give - volunteering time and work, for example - but in this article I want to focus on financial donations in particular. Money can be a touchy subject, especially when it comes to money and the church. We can worry about whether we're giving enough, or whether other people will think we are. We can wonder what the right amount to give is. On the other side, ministers and treasurers can worry about putting too much pressure on people to give, or about not encouraging people enough.

But even though it's a personal subject, it's worth talking about. Giving to the church is a useful and valuable part of worship - both for the uses it supports, and for what it represents. And we do have guidance on how to give in the Word. In the Old Testament, the people were required to give a tenth, or a "tithe," of their annual produce to the temple and the priesthood. The tithe went to support the priests, as well as orphans and widows and others in need (Deuteronomy 26:12). Beyond this, they were encouraged - but not required - to give "freewill offerings" to God when they chose to. The Writings for the New Church say that giving a tenth represents acknowledging that everything we have is a gift from God, since the number ten represents *all*.

When the Lord came into the world, he abolished representative worship (e.g. sacrifices) except for in the holy supper and baptism. In other words, the laws of religious rituals - and so, presumably, the literal commandments about tithing - were shown to be less important than the spirit that they represented. Still, He did suggest that tithing was a valuable practice; He said, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!

For you pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, *without leaving the others undone*" (Matthew 23:23).

But more importantly than giving a tenth was the spirit in which giving was done. When a poor widow put two mites into the temple treasury - a small amount of money - the Lord said, "Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury; for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood" (Luke 21:3) That spirit of willingness, of giving up of ourselves, is more important than the dollar amount or the percentage that we give.

Another key principle of giving drawn from the Old Testament is that we are to give the *firstfruits* to the Lord - that is, not to give Him the leftovers that we don't want, but to give Him the best. A law in Leviticus states, "Those that are blind or broken or maimed, or have an ulcer or eczema or scabs, you shall not offer to Jehovah, nor make an offering by fire of them on the altar to Jehovah" (Leviticus 22:22). Again, this is primarily true on a spiritual level - we need to make the Lord the *first* priority in our life, rather than using our "leftover" time and energy to pay lip-service to Him. But this same principle can apply to our giving - it should not be a way to get rid of things we no longer need, but a *first* priority, as a reminder that the *best* of what we have belongs to the Lord.

Now, because the Lord abolished the ritual laws, we are no longer required to give exactly a tenth of our income to the church. But there is still power in representatives, and so a number of New Church people *do* choose to tithe because of the representation, of acknowledging all our good as belonging to God. Some give that tithe to the church, then donate above and beyond that to other charities; others see all charitable giving as part of that tithe.

How a person decides how much to give and where to give to is up to each person's individual conscience. The Writings affirm the Old and New Testament emphasis on *freewill* offerings - even if we need to compel *ourselves* to make an offering to the Lord, we should not compel others, and our donations should be a freely chosen decision. The Writings do emphasize the importance of *discriminate* charity - that is, giving to things that will really provide a use. *Arcana Coelestia* 5036 says, "When a person becomes spiritual, he no longer believes it holy and for pious use to give to monasteries, or even to churches which abound in wealth." We may choose to give to a specific congregation, or a specific use of the church, that we see as being more valuable than another.

But if we do see a value in what the church offers - and most of us who attend *do* obviously see a value - then it is worthwhile to support that with our time and our money. If we see the church as a way that the Lord's kingdom is coming in to the world, then it is worth supporting financially. The church organization is *not* the Church in the truest sense of being the Lord's kingdom - but it exists to promote that kingdom, to promote each person becoming a Church and a part of the Church - that is, a recipient and vessel of the Lord's love and wisdom. The role of the church as an earthly body is to support this, and it is that that we should look to in all our contributions - of money, of time, and of service.

PAVING THE LOT: DONATIONS NEEDED!

At a special meeting on March 17th, we decided to go ahead with the project to work on the parking lot and sidewalks. The first step for this process will be to level the yard to deal with water run-off issues; we'll start work on this when the snow is gone, hopefully some time in May. **We will be doing this prep work ourselves, and we'll need lots of help, so let Rev. Coleman Glenn or Tracy Bouchard know that you'd be willing to help.**

After we've prepared the yard, our hope is to pave the lot, all the way up to the church steps (which we will replace with pre-cast concrete steps once the asphalt is laid). Here there are still a few possibilities. Last year we got a quote for paving the lot all the way to northern edge of the property, and extending eastward far enough to reach the bottom of the handicap access ramp. The estimated cost for that is roughly \$17,000-\$18,000.

We are going to ask for another quote to see how much it would be to pave only as far north as the shed.

But in any case, if we're going to do any paving, we need to raise funds for it. The money we have in the building fund now could cover most of it, but it would completely drain the building fund, which we will likely need in coming years for the roof, floors, etc.

So, if you're willing to make a donation, **please contact Rev. Coleman Glenn or Tracy Bouchard** and let us know. Thank you!

POTLUCK SUPPER & BINGO

Please join us on Friday, April 12th, at 5 p.m. for a potluck supper and bingo. All are welcome - please bring food, and a prize for a man, woman, or child!

GARAGE SALE: APRIL 27th

Mark your calendars - the Ladies Group will be holding their annual garage sale on **Saturday, April 27th. Please bring in your clean, useful items as soon as possible so they can be sorted and priced.**

We will have a bake sale table, so baked goods are more than welcome; please let Bev Bourbeau know what you're planning to bring. And if you have any items that you aren't able to bring to the church yourself, call Bev and she can pick them up for you. Thank you!

SERMON SERIES: JOSEPH

This month at our Sunday services, we will be following the story of Joseph, looking at his life as an example of the way that the Lord in His providence leads us every step of our lives.

THE DAWSON CREEK CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSAEM

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If you have news or other information for this publication, or if you have any pastoral concerns, please call the pastor, Coleman Glenn, at (250) 782-8035 or (cell) (250) 467-2313, or email pastor@dawsoncreeknewchurch.ca.

CHURCH CALENDAR

APRIL 2013

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
31 11 a.m. Easter Sunday Service	1	2	3	4	5	6
7 11 a.m. Family Service - "Joseph's Youth"	8	9	10	11	12 5:00 p.m. Potluck Supper and Bingo	13
14 11 a.m. Traditional Service - "Joseph in Prison" 4:30 p.m. Worship and Class (Grande Prairie)	15 7:00 p.m. Doctrinal Class	16	17	18	19	20
Rev. Coleman Glenn away for outreach conference						
21 11 a.m. Traditional Service with Rev. James Cooper - "Famine in Egypt"	22	23	24	25 7:30 p.m. Silver Valley Doctrinal Class (tentative date)	26	27 Garage Sale
Rev. Coleman Glenn away for outreach conference						
28 11 a.m. Traditional Service - "Joseph's Family" 4:30 p.m. Traditional Service (DeBolt)	29	30	1	2	3	4

Note: All events take place at the Dawson Creek Church of the New Jerusalem unless noted otherwise