

Gracious & generous giving

December 2024



IMMANUEL
LUTHERAN CHURCH

For Everyone, for you

"I have held many things in my hands and I have lost them all.

But whatever I placed in God's hands, that I still possess." — Martin Luther

Why do we give?

- (a) *God owns everything.* The Psalmist writes, "The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it." (Psalm 24:1). God owns our houses, clothes, cars, children, wallets, our very bodies — everything!
- (b) *God first gave to us.* Everything we have was first given to us by God. "We brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it." (1 Timothy 6:7). God freely gives us forgiveness of sin, life, and salvation.
- (c) *We are God's stewards.* When God created humankind, we were given special responsibility to take care and keep watch over all creation (Genesis 2:15). We are a trustee of God's possessions. As stewards, God calls us to a life of generous giving, including being his partners in the gospel through supporting the work of his church.

How do we give?

- (a) *Voluntarily and cheerfully.* Giving is a voluntary calling to be done cheerfully in response to God's grace and generosity to us. It's not to be done under compulsion, and not grudgingly (2 Corinthians 9:6–8). As Jesus says, "Freely you have received; freely give." (Matthew 10:8).
- (b) *Our first-fruits.* God calls us to give from the first-fruits of our labour. He hasn't given us the dregs, but the greatest treasure on all the earth — forgiveness of sin through the Son! Therefore, we are called to give our best on the first day of the week (Sunday), before any other expenses come due. (Leviticus 23:9–14; 1 Corinthians 16:2).
- (c) *Proportionally.* Giving is not to be any old arbitrarily amount, but rather in accordance with how one has prospered each week. Each one of us is called to determine and set aside a certain proportion (percentage) of our income for the work of the church each week.
- (d) *Faithfully.* God promises he will give us what we need for this body and life. Therefore, we can give in faith, trusting that God will provide for all our needs (though not necessarily our wants!).

How can I plan my giving?

- (a) *Receive God's gifts.* Have you been faithfully attending public worship to hear God's Word, receiving his forgiveness, and receiving his body and blood in Communion for strength? If not, then perhaps this is a time to be turned, to come and receive the generous gifts of our Lord Jesus! God does not want your money — he wants your heart, he wants you, all of you!
- (b) *Consider what the church does.* The church is called to proclaim the good news of Jesus by preaching to all who will hear it and administering the sacraments. You are a part of God's church. You are called into partnership with God. This is your mission. We as church cannot complete our mission unless all members of the church faithfully partner and work together.
- (c) *Examine yourself.* Consider the generosity and grace of God shown toward you, and then examine your own giving. Are you: Giving voluntarily and cheerfully? Giving of your first-fruits, or is your offering just what's left over? Giving proportionally to your income? Trusting God's promise to provide for you? If not, then be forgiven and trust in God's provision!
- (d) *Prayerfully decide on your proportion.* After following the steps above, you are ready to consider what proportion of your income you can faithfully, proportionally, and cheerfully give. Some use the tithing method (10%), while others use a proportion that suits their particular situation. Whatever you give — whether 3%, 10%, 25%, or more! — God calls us to give our first-fruits voluntarily, cheerfully, and in faithful response to his grace. Moving to regular electronic giving (REG) or using weekly envelopes, may help you as you give generously.

Visit our website or contact the Church Office for our bank details:

immanuelchurch.au/give

