



STEWARDSHIP SPARKLERS

**Renewing Hope
Strengthening Congregations
Building Skills for Ministry in a Changing World**

IN THIS EDITION

Thank-you from
Pastor
Schantzenbach

Website
announcements

Reminder to
Complete Your
2018 Mission
Support Intent
Form

Fun Facts About
Spirituality,
Social Networks,
and Generous
Giving

A Report on
Mission Support
Giving Thru
October

WITH JOY AND THANKSGIVING

I offer thanks for the many ways in which congregation have supported the New Jersey Synod's ministries this year. Our continuing challenge is to remain engaged with these ministries and to sustain momentum for mission. At a recent gathering of our pastors, one of our pastors stated, "I have never felt so proud and powerful in our commitment to be a Church in mission together."

I want to ask for your congregational commitment to help our Synod to end the 2017 year well. Year-end generosity reflects the passion, pride, and power, of God's people who are drawn to strengthen their relationship with Jesus and share financial gifts of mission support.

If you, like me, believe that the New Jersey Synod should be growing and supporting congregations...

If you believe the New Jersey Synod should be equipping and raising leaders...

If you believe the New Jersey Synod should provide resources and support to congregational ministries...

If you believe the New Jersey Synod should become as richly diverse in membership as is our wonderfully diverse State...

If you believe the New Jersey Synod should be in partnership with our agencies, institutions, schools, and programs...

If you believe the New Jersey Synod should seek peace, justice, and hospitality...

I invite your congregation to make a generous year-end Mission Support contribution. The last Sunday in 2017 is December 31! This is a

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wonderful time to remember the many ways our church brings the Gospel of Jesus Christ to an intersection with the lives of people in our communities, our state, our nation, and around the world. Because of your generosity, people's lives are changed through their encounters with the Living God.

On behalf of all of those with whom and among whom we minister, thank you. As we approach the Incarnation of our God, may the gifts of hope, comfort, and peace renew you and your congregation through the year to come.

With a grateful heart,



REFRESHED STEWARDSHIP WEBPAGE COMING IN DECEMBER

www.njsynod.org/stewardship

It has been a while since we have updated our Synod Stewardship web-page. In the weeks ahead, we will update and refresh materials available for download. Check us out in December as we start to make the edits. If you are looking for specific information or materials and cannot find them on the website, or if you want to schedule a stewardship consultation or arrange a preaching date, don't hesitate to contact Pastor Schantzenbach, our stewardship specialist at 908-892-8299 or sschantzenbach@njsynod.org.



GENEROUS

2018 MISSION SUPPORT LETTER OF INTENT

Every congregation has received a letter that details your recent Mission Support giving history and a suggested giving goal for 2018. We long to have each congregation give consideration to incorporating this goal into your financial planning for 2018. When your budgeting process is complete, please inform us of your Mission Support intent by returning the form mailed to the church office, or go to the website, www.njsynod.org/stewardship and click on the Mission Support box and enter your information.

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FUN FACTS ABOUT SPIRITUALITY, SOCIAL NETWORKS, AND GENEROSITY

The following information comes from Putnam and Campbell (2010) *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us* and from Wuthnot (1999) *Arts and Religion Survey*. Princeton University Department of Sociology.

NETWORKS MAKE RELIGIOUS AMERICANS MORE GENEROUS IN THEIR GIVING?

- People with religiously-based social connections are two or three times more likely to be civically engaged and generous than people with few such ties, regardless of how devout and observant they may be.
- Religiously-based social networks lead people not just inward to the church but outward to the wider secular community.
- People in religious networks behave more generously in part because they are asked more often by the people who are part of their religious social network.

RELIGIOUS UPBRINGING HAS A POSITIVE EFFECT ON GIVING

- Having a special Bible as a child increases giving to one's congregation as an adult on average by \$221.
- Having a favorite religious picture or object as a child increases giving by \$280.

PERSONAL DEVOTIONAL PRACTICES AS AN ADULT MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN GIVING

- Reading the Bible every day increases giving by \$545.
- Praying every day increases giving by \$358.
- Meditating every day raises giving by \$211.

BEING LINKED TO PEOPLE INCREASES GIVING: REGARDING SPIRITUALITY AS PERSONAL AND PRIVATE REDUCES IT.

- Doing volunteer work increases giving by \$528.
- Each additional friend one has in a congregation increases giving by \$118.
- Saying that one's spirituality does not depend on being involved in a religious organization REDUCES giving by \$464.

MISSION SUPPORT TRENDING NOW!

At the close of October, our Mission Support income in the New Jersey Synod is significantly behind our giving pattern from last year and well off-pace from our 2017 budget. Current Mission Support gifts are \$97,750 behind our giving for the same period last year. We project that without strong year-end giving, we may miss our budgeted income goal by about \$179,000. Steps have already been taken to adapt our spending considering these shortfalls; adjustments in central office staff have been instituted, and one Assistant to the Bishop position has been eliminated.

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