



## Diocese of Western Anglicans Bishop's Pastoral Letter on Tithing – Advent 2018 The Grace of Giving and Pastoral Leadership

My brothers and sisters,

We are blessed to enter into the glorious celebration of the Nativity of our Lord, the Word of God incarnate in human flesh, destined for the joy of doing the Father's will, which eventuated in salvation by grace through faith because of his passion, death and resurrection. (1Cor. 15:16-22) This is the great story, the cosmic drama of redemption and reconciliation in which we participate every moment of everyday. I give thanks to God for your friendship and partnership in the gospel, trusting Him for each day to lead us to fuller expression of His Kingdom. Thank you for those things that you do without, both large and small, because of your love of the Lord, so that you may preach and teach, sacrifice and serve, and lead and inspire the church to fulfill Her calling in Christ to 'go and make disciples of all nations'--loving God and others with our whole heart.

### **Clergy Inspire and Lead God's People**

Before we move too far away from our discussion on congregation giving at our Synod, I wanted to share with you some of my views about how we might move forward together as clergy leaders. The congregations we lead and serve need our courage and our faith, which is modeled as we boldly trust Him when our rational minds may rather not. In various ways and at various times, we have spoken about how we got to where we are now. Some suffered under abusive bishops. Others protected financial resources for a time when they would be needed when the new wineskin (ACNA) was formed. Congregations began to behave congregationally. Others came to Anglicanism from traditions with differing practices on giving. The ACNA is God's provision for equipping Anglicans to carry the gospel to a world in desperate need. The issue of giving to support the new province was addressed in 2009 by the 10-10-10 Principle of Giving. Through it, the province hoped we, as clergy leaders, would:

1. Eagerly embrace opportunities throughout the year to teach and encourage people to give God the first fruits of their lives through the tithe and to make offerings over and above the tithe.
2. Embrace at the Vestry level the privilege of participating in the church's work we do together as a diocese by giving the tithe to the diocese, at least



## Diocese of Western Anglicans Bishop's Pastoral Letter on Tithing – Advent 2018 The Grace of Giving and Pastoral Leadership

as a minimum expression of our partnership. Offerings above the tithe would be welcomed for expanding mission.

3. Commit the diocese to give a full tithe to God through the province, which we are doing.

While our canons do not fully exegete the Scriptures, they do speak to the basic doctrine of first fruits and point us toward trusting God's generosity with ever-increasing measure (Luke 6:38). Jesus put an exclamation point on the grace of generosity when he saw the widow offer the Lord her daily food allotment, saying to the disciples, *"Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on."* (Mark 12:43-44) Some would say that she was sacrificial and they would be correct, but what impresses me is her trust in the God who would provide for her most basic needs out of His generosity. The gospel leads us to affirm these simple assertions:

- Our God is generous
- He can be trusted because He is always faithful
- His followers tithe as an expression of their love for Him and others
- They give offerings, as the Lord directs, because His abundance is to be shared

### **Guidelines for Stepping into the Future**

Going forward, I ask you to join me in practicing the 10-10-10 Principle of Giving personally and to lead your congregation leaders and members to do the same. Based on our current discussions, the following guidelines may give us all a practical outline to follow together:

1. If your congregation is far from practicing the 10-10-10 Principle (currently below 5%) in 2019, please plan so that you can be tithing within a two-year period. Just let us know, so the deanery and diocesan leaders can plan accordingly.
2. The diocesan office will operate with the 10-10-10 Principle of Giving as the normative practice of the diocese and will be in communication with local church leaders with this principle in mind.



## Diocese of Western Anglicans Bishop's Pastoral Letter on Tithing – Advent 2018 The Grace of Giving and Pastoral Leadership

3. Please explain the 10-10-10 Principle of Giving to your leaders, conveying that you will be following it both as a policy and practice. Please speak well of it and us.
4. The funds that you raise for a capital purpose (building projects) or a specific mission project (missionaries funding, local feeding or school project, etc.), either of which being associated with a restricted fund are exempt from the tithe. This helps local and international mission.
5. Please teach them to give to these specific projects with their offerings after they have already given the full tithe to God through the local church's operating budget.
6. All other costs, including rent, personnel, vendors, insurance, ministry expenses and other overhead are considered operational expense and should be prioritized below the tithe.

The Lord has been faithful and generous to us, so let us continually give Him our praise: *"Glory to God, whose power working in us can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine. Glory to him, from generation to generation in the church, and in Christ Jesus our Lord."* (Ephesians 3:20,21)

I am your brother and fellow servant,

M. Keith Andrews, bishop  
Diocese of Western Anglicans