



### **“Flourish In Faith” - Step by Step**

1. On October 6, receive your family’s pledge packet after church.
2. Take the pledge packet home. ~~Add it to the pile of mail and bills that need your attention at some point.~~ Open the pledge packet, take the pledge card out, and place it somewhere visible that will remind you to start praying about what contribution you might make to Nativity in 2014.
3. Sit down and read the “Flourish In Faith” bulletin insert from Sunday’s worship. Continue to take time to read the inserts that will be coming each week.
4. Discuss with your spouse/partner/significant other the contribution you would like to make. Look at what you gave last year - could you increase it by a percentage? If you didn’t give last year, prayerfully consider where you might start.
5. Pray about the contribution. (Ideally, pray with that other person.)
6. If you have questions, or need more information, ask someone who knows about this stuff. (Contact information below, and they will be at church on Sundays.)
- ~~7. Forget about it until you see the panicked notice in Sunday bulletin from the Stewardship Team.~~
7. After time of thought and prayer, fill out the pledge card and bring it to church and place it in the offering plate; or mail it in; or go on-line and complete the card via the web-page. (Please do this step before November 10.)
8. Celebrate! You just took a significant step in your spiritual journey!
9. Receive a nice “Thank You” note from the Vestry. Enjoy the warm and gracious feeling of knowing you have made a difference in your faith community. (Note: the Vestry member who writes the note won’t know how much you pledge, only that you did so.)

Whom to contact with questions:

- Stephanie Allen, Rector, [sa@nativityonline.org](mailto:sa@nativityonline.org)
- Susie Holmes, Senior Warden, [sch123@nc.rr.com](mailto:sch123@nc.rr.com)
- Ken Jenkins, Vestry member for Finance/Stewardship Team, [kjenkins@issretail.com](mailto:kjenkins@issretail.com)
- John Oldham, Team Leader, Finance/Stewardship Team, [joldham8616@gmail.com](mailto:joldham8616@gmail.com)

## **Tithing and Pledging (don't be scared - it's just some definitions)**

As the Church of the Nativity begins its 2014 stewardship campaign, "Flourish in Faith," there will be many opportunities for us to discern (both introspectively, and in community) where we are on our personal giving journey. Here are a few pieces of information that might help you frame your discernment over the next few months.

In 1982, the Episcopal Church affirmed the tithe as the minimum standard of giving for Episcopalians. This resolution was reaffirmed at General Convention in 2009, and interestingly, included a call for the members of each House to declare (publicly or anonymously) that they were tithing, or firmly committed to tithing within five years. There are many resources online to give more insight into the why of this affirmation, but this one, by Presiding Bishop John Allin (1982), is quite uplifting, "When offered in thanksgiving, tithing continues to be an affordable, affirming, and reassuring experience of and in the faith that is gracious and the Grace that is faithful."

Since the affirmation of the tithe as a minimum standard for Christian giving, the Church has always acknowledged that we are all at different places in our spiritual journey. **The practice and discipline of regular giving is more important than the amount itself.** Giving to God and God's work gladly is an important part of our spiritual journey. To help us strengthen that practice and discipline, proportional giving is a useful tool to discover. Consistent and deliberate increases in proportional giving allows time to discern God's call in our hearts, time to reflect on our spiritual journey, and time to organize our financial lives to be consistent with that call and that journey. A recommended starting point is often a 1/2 tithe or a 1/4 tithe, (5% or 2.5% of one's income) looking to increase each year by 1-2% of income each year on a journey to a full tithe.

The second idea is that of the pledge. The pledge is nothing more than a declaration - that same declaration called for at convention in 2009. There are two reasons why we ask for a formal pledge at Nativity. The first is obvious: it empowers the leadership of the church to manage our finances responsibly as we bring the Word of Christ into the world. The second is to foster our spiritual growth. **A declaration (or a pledge if you will) is a powerful statement of who we are and in what we believe.** I am reminded of the many Baptisms we celebrated as a community in the past few months. We did not sit back quietly and watch the ceremony up front and think happy thoughts in our head. We stood up with our new brothers and sisters in Christ, and declared our support, loudly and with vigor.

As Episcopalians, we believe in working toward a tithe, and reaching out to build relationships from a perspective of abundance instead of scarcity. As members of Nativity, we declare ourselves with vigor and purpose, formalizing our pledges joyously - it is one of the ways we "Flourish in Faith."