



God works through our generosity

St. Michael's Daily Stewardship Devotions

September 1-30, 2021



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Dear Friends,

You are holding St. Michael's Stewardship Devotional written to help us prepare for this year's Stewardship Pledge drive. As with so many churches this year, the pandemic has presented St. Michael's with uncertainty. Our worship is strong again, and our attendance increases weekly. Our ministries are in order, and we are again reaching out to our community. We praise God for these blessings. The greatest vulnerability of St. Michael's is financial. It is of great importance that each of us prayerfully considers our offerings to the 2022 Pledge Drive. Our thanks to the members of St. Michael's who wrote devotions. May the words of God, along with the thoughts and prayers of your friends at St. Michael's, encourage your gifts this pledge season.

In Christ,



The Rev'd Dr. Dawn Enderwood
Interim Rector

September 1

The people of Israel gave in abundance the first fruits of grain, wine, oil, honey, and of all the produce of the field; and they brought in abundantly the tithe of everything. 2 Chronicles 31:5

As we look towards the season of bringing in the harvest, with the abundance of fruits of grain, new wine, oil, honey and of all the produce of the field, we must remember that a portion of the first and best harvest is to be brought as a tithe God. We give it to the house of God - the Church - and it should be done so generously, freely, and with a right heart.

Gracious God, we offer hearty thanks and praise the ground and gathering of its fruits and all other blessings through Jesus Christ, Amen.

Nelson Dent

September 2

Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 2 Corinthians 9:7

How often do we drive by a person standing in the hot sun holding a sign that says, “HUNGRY PLEASE HELP.” Quite often, yes? Admittedly, I am somewhat reluctant to offer cash. I do keep water in my car, which I offer. When I offer the water, I feel okay—cheerful, almost. When I drive by offering nothing, my heart is always somewhat crushed. Likewise, when we offer our gifts to God, our hearts are lighter. When we withhold, our hearts tighten.

Generous God, you have given us all we have, including the opportunities to be generous. Open our hearts this stewardship season and encourage our cheerful generosity. Amen.

Rev'd Dawn Enderwood

September 3

I give you thanks, O Lord, with my whole heart;
before the gods I sing your praise. Psalm 138:1

Giving thanks is not always easy. Sometimes the world is coming down on us and there seems nothing for which to be thankful. It is at those times we must look beyond our current circumstances and see there are things for which to be thankful.

I have an app on my phone that lets me daily write down three things for which I am thankful. On the days when I am having difficulties, I scroll through this list and am reminded of all for which I am thankful. St. Michael's often appears on that list—its people, its programs, its very being.

Gracious God, you have given me so much to be thankful for. I thank you for all the opportunities that St. Michael's gives me to love and serve you. Help me to always do your will and help me to live in gratitude to your grace. Amen.

Deacon Ann Murray

September 4

If anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? 1 John 3:17

God's love compels us to love--to love God, to love ourselves, and to generously love one another. In 1 John 3:17, we read that if we close our hearts against a brother in need, love does not abide in us. Love compels a heart open to giving and sharing.

God leads St. Michael's to be a church blessed with love, blessed with giving and blessed with open-hearted sharing.

Loving god, we pray that St. Michael's may go forward dedicated to love. We pray that we may have the courage to hold fast to the spirit of generosity and sharing. Amen.

Suzette McDowell

September 5

Give us this day our daily bread. Matthew 6:11

All things come from God. This line from the prayer the Lord taught us is—or should be—a reminder to all Christians that everything, even “our daily bread,” comes not from our own efforts but ultimately from the grace of God. It is idolatry to believe otherwise and to place our trust only in our own skills and efforts. God has created us as social creatures to live in communities and work through those communities to bring about the kingdom of God on earth.

*Dear Lord, please help us to remember that it is only through your grace that we have whatever skills and fortunes we individually possess and help us know the best way to express our thanks is in sharing the fruits of these unearned gifts with our community of St Michael's Church and others in ways that further your purposes for humankind and for all creation.
Amen.*

John Hartley

September 6

You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us. 2 Corinthians 9:11

Did you read that correctly? Paul says here that God will give you riches for the express purpose of creating in you the ability to be generous - and not just sometimes, but on every occasion that arises. God wants us to be very cognizant of the needs of those around us, so that we can utilize the riches God has given us - in material wealth certainly, but also in every other sort of richness we have received - to bless others. And then, those who have been the recipients of our generosity, which was made possible by God's generosity to us, will themselves praise God for being the recipients of God's generosity, working through us. In this way, everyone who benefits from generosity (and all generosity comes from God) responds with joy and gladness and is moved by the Spirit of generosity to give so that others will also have the opportunity to be generous. It's a beautiful cycle!

God of plenty, we have been recipients of so many blessings through you - things asked for and things we received simply because we live in this time and place, where blessings seem to abound. Nothing we have belongs to us. We have been given so that we may give. May we always remember to give thanks to you for all your gifts, and then remember that our duty is to give to others, so that they to may experience your generosity and give thanks anew. Through Jesus, your Christ, whom you gave to us that he might be a sacrifice to redeem our own lives. Amen.

Jeremy Wance

September 7

Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the first fruits of all your produce. Proverbs 3:9

God wants us to share our blessings with others and especially those in need. God desires that we enjoy giving of ourselves and God blesses us as we share with others. He will bless us abundantly when we give abundantly.

Lord, open our hearts so we give generously in response to God's abundant gifts to us. Amen.

Don Kelley

September 8

You shall be my people,
and I will be your God.

We have many things that we can allow to become our god—our jobs, our things, our ideologies. We are reminded by Jeremiah that there is only one, true God. God has assented to be our God and has accepted us as God's people. Jeremiah 30:22

Jesus sacrificed his life so that we could become God's people. Sacrifice is not easy. What can I sacrifice for the benefit of St. Michael's? This could be time, talent, or money.

Holy God, you are my God. Show me, one of your people, how I can love and serve you through St. Michael's. Take all of me and use it in your service. Amen.

Deacon Ann Murray

September 9

I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me. Matthew 25:35

People come to St. Michael's church for many different reasons. Many are looking for something. Some hunger for knowledge or understanding. Some come to quench a desire for meaning or a sustaining flow of the spirit. Some just want to feel a part, needed, or comforted by others. Other come to offer a kind word, a blessing to others, or the comfort knowing that you are not alone. At one time in my life, I have felt all of these emotions. Join me.

Dear Lord, please continue to bless me with your life-giving gifts. Never let me forget the sacrifice you made to provide me all that I need to live. Help me to accept all that you have given me and guide me to be a light to others to help them find what they are looking for. Amen.

Brandt Cassidy

September 10

If your enemies are hungry, give them bread to eat; and if they are thirsty, give them water to drink. Proverbs 25:21

Boy howdy, these verses are challenging! I don't know about you, but my first reaction when I see an enemy who is thirsty or hungry is *not* to go make sure they have a nice refreshing beverage, nor am I moved to run to the kitchen to make them a nice sandwich. Why don't I immediately react with generosity? Well, it's because I am human. I am imperfect. Yes, I was created in God's image, but I was not given a perfect heart and a perfect spirit. For this reason, I have many challenges as I go through life. Ways that I *must* grow, if I am to honor my Creator; if I am to follow the pattern Christ gave us; if I am to listen to the Holy Spirit as she works in my life and in my heart. And, without drawing on other scriptural passages in this collection, I have to consider the way in which I respond to my enemies. Do I grunt at them, hand them an apple and a bottle of water, and then make myself scarce? No, I should realize that God has sent them to me *as a gift* so that I can practice serving them the way Christ served his disciples. Do their metaphorical feet need washing? If so, I need to run get a metaphorical bucket of water. Do they need a coat? I've got one in the closet. Do they have a wound? I need to extend healing to them. What happens then? Well, if God is working on me by giving me an enemy to bless, then I must trust that God is working on *them* by sending me to bless them, instead of reacting the way we might expect enemies to act when they come face-to-face in difficult situations. Even our enemies are given to us as a blessing if we are seeing the challenge correctly.

God of provision, you have looked with pity and compassion on me in my need, and have provided beyond what I knew to ask. Help me to extend your blessing to everyone around me - most especially, to those that I may not want to serve with gladness. Give my spirit the ears to hear your Spirit in all my doings. Amen.

Jeremy Wance

September 11

We glorify God by our obedience to the confession of the gospel of Christ and by the generosity of our sharing with them and with all others.
2 Corinthians 9:13

We glorify God by our obedience to the confession of the gospel of Christ and by sharing generously with all others.

Dear Lord, I am so blessed by all you provide for me. I have enough when I think I don't. Fill me with the ability to give more, to do more and be more for the Glory of God our Father and for St. Michael's. Amen.

Debi Kelley

September 12

God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. 2 Corinthians 9:8

God has provided our community of faith with many blessings. We have many things which we can share. We share of our abundance to maintain our surroundings, to fill each other spiritually, and to reach out to our community so that all may share in God's gifts.

St. Michael's future is full of the Holy Spirit leading us in our individual ministries. We provide financial support from our abundance and spiritual support from our time and talent. While focusing on St. Michael's future, we will give to thank God for our abundance.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the many blessings which you have provided to us. We will share those blessings with our community of St. Michael's and all your people during this time of stewardship. Let us share abundantly with those in need those gifts which you have given us. Amen.

Amy Gardner

September 13

In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets. Matthew 7:12

In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets. “Do unto others what you would have them do unto you.” In our own Christian life, we should not simply be an absence of evil but the presence of what is good - for the benefit of others and to St. Michael’s.

Almighty God, let us to walk in spirit and truth and to love as Christ loved us, so that whatever we do in word or deed we do all to the glory of God—so that the life of Christ is reflected in every part of our living. Amen.

Nelson Dent

September 14

If there is among you anyone in need, a member of your community in any of your towns within the land that the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hard-hearted or tight-fisted toward your needy neighbor.

Deuteronomy 15:7

When I was almost five years old, my father died unexpectedly. My mother was not only grieving for the loss of her husband but how to take care of her three children. The Episcopal Church we attended took us under their wings and embodied this passage.

The love and support we received from the church showed me how Jesus is ever present in our world. This passage resounded in my heart since the community of faith where we worshipped was NOT hard-hearted or tight-fisted. Giving back to the church comes in many forms—time, talent, and treasure. All of us working together can accomplish anything.

Thank you, Jesus, for your love and commandment to love others as our neighbors. May we strive daily to do your work in the world and within our church. Amen.

Kathy Rodrigues

September 15

Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. Matthew 5:7

Each of us yearns for communion with God, and God passionately earns for communion with us. God gave each of us spiritual gifts so that we could share his love and contribute to The Kingdom of God. We have received all sorts of blessings, and God wishes us to enjoy them. God also gives each of us spiritual gifts and means for us to strengthen the body of Christ through stewardship and service. Let us use these gifts to bless others.

Gracious God,

Help us to recognize the spiritual gifts we are given and teach us how you wish us to share your love and to be good stewards. Amen.

Suzanne Moore

September 16

Now therefore revere the Lord and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Joshua 24:14

It's easy to believe we are serving our Lord with sincerity and faithfulness, but are we really?

When was the last time you honestly thought about what God wanted you to do and then did it, without wavering or side-stepping the situation?

Our self-made justifications make it easy for us to avoid doing the difficult task of serving with sincerity and in faithfulness. Stop looking for a way around and move forward with God. Knowing that God is leading us in the right direction.

Almighty God, give all of us at St. Michael's the courage to serve you and only you. Help us put aside our petty thoughts and hidden agendas in order to spread your kingdom here on earth. Through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

Rick Young

September 17

Honor the Lord with your possessions
and with the first produce of your entire harvest. Proverbs 3:9

By giving back to God what has been given to us we are living out the commandment to love our neighbor as ourselves. The world is in dire need of our love. We show this love by giving our very best, not what makes us comfortable giving...the first and the best. Isn't that what you would want?

Our Great Creator, you gave us this beautiful earth to live on and enjoy. We have lost the love for our planet and one another. Help us regain that love, individually and as St. Michael's community. Amen.

King Price

September 18

Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. 1Peter 4:10

Let us know and believe that our Creator has blessed each of us with our own special gifts of ability. Let us recognize that gift, whatever it is, in ourselves and other. Let us nurture that gift in each person we see, and especially in children. Let us look for each gift in each person and share gratitude for their contribution to the kingdom. Amen.

Tina Mahle

September 19

In all this I have given you an example that by such work we must support the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, for he himself said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

Acts 20:35

Giving the gifts of time, tithing, and prayers for others are fundamental to our faith. Giving does not begin and end but is continuous in our walk with the Lord. Often what we give to others and our church is reflective of the gifts we have received from God: a hot meal, a warm blanket, financial support, prayers for a sick friend. This abundance from God allows us to share our blessings with those around us.

Lord, thank you for the many gifts you have bestowed upon us, guide our thoughts and actions so that we can share these many blessings with others. Guide us in our mission to support the weak and vulnerable in all that we do. Open our hearts and minds so that we can also humbly receive the blessings of those generous spirits around us. Guide us at St. Michaels so that our community can give in a meaningful and holy way, helping others and sharing Christ’s love in all that we do. Amen.

Greg Hudson

September 20

Only fear the Lord and serve God faithfully with all your heart; for consider what great things he has done for you. 1 Samuel 12:24

We should not fear the Lord. We should only fear our failings. The Lord loves us as we should love the Lord, as we are commanded to love our parents. It is only natural that at times in our life we have disappointed the Lord with frivolous and thoughtless actions. The Lord continues to love, protect, and provide for us. Our obligation is to love the Lord with all our hearts, for our Lord will not give up on us.

Good Lord, forgive us for our failures of faith, and accept our generous gifts to you and the church as a sign of our gratitude for you everlasting mercy. Amen.

Howard Moore

September 21

Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. Matthew 5:16

No doubt most of us sang the song, “This little light of mine, this little light of mine, I’m gonna’ let it shine...” Now we are going to have that tune stuck in heads for the rest of the day and that’s okay. Jesus said that we are the light of the world. We must let it shine. How will people see that light? Through our good works

*Loving God, please make my actions today loving and good, so others can see these works. Let our light shine, to show others the glory of God.
Amen.*

Nelson Dent

September 22

Set apart a tithe of all the yield of your seed that is brought in yearly from the field.

Deuteronomy 14:22

We hear a lot about “me time”, but that doesn’t mean it’s a new idea. The text for today references the second of the three tithes that God expects from us: give to yourself to enjoy and to learn. This can be as sublime as a trip to the Holy Land and as commonplace as a class, a weekend retreat, or a seminar. Make time and save up to refresh yourself spiritually so that the other tithes--giving back to God and giving to the less fortunate--become not a duty, but a privilege.

Creator God, you are the source of all that we have. Help us today to balance our wants and needs with your expectation that we also give to the Church and to those in need. Amen.

Rachel Armstrong

September 23

The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it,
the world, and those who live in it. Psalm 24:1

Everything is the Lord's. How awesome is that? All creation is the Lord's from the leviathan in the deep to the pesky mosquito. All people are the Lord's from those I adore to those I do not.

The Lord is here for everyone—those within St. Michael's and those elsewhere. It is our job to share the Lord's love with all. St. Michael's is our base from which we can reach out, sharing the good news of God, in Christ.

Lord, help us to remember that we all belong to you. Give us the strength and courage to reach out to others so that we can share your love and grace. Amen

Deacon Ann Murray

September 24

When you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift. Matthew 5:23-25

This chapter of the Gospel encompasses the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus essentially stood up and summarized who he was, who his followers were, and how they were to live. (Spoiler alert: we're probably doing it wrong!) Much of the time, the Kingdom of Heaven is the opposite of the world in which we live. Much of the time, our sins are no less offensive to a righteous God than those big, glaring, "newsworthy" sins. In this chapter, Jesus is setting down a pattern for our spirit and our lives – and all aspects of our lives. He is laying out for us a path of humility, of mercy, of love, of service, of patience, of forgiveness, of prayer, and, yes, of giving. But the act of giving, in and of itself, is not enough. Lots of verses in the Bible deal with what our *attitude* should be when we give. In this verse, Jesus tells us that giving should come from a clean heart. In particular, we are to be, as the Book of Common Prayer says, "in love and charity with our neighbors." In the previous verses, Jesus says that if we hate or curse our neighbor, we "will be in danger of the fire of hell." He isn't messing around here. He's serious about this "love thy neighbor" thing. And he's telling us that, if we are approaching the altar of God, even if it's with the intention of giving to God, we *can't* rightly do it if we are harboring ill will toward another person. This "giving" thing isn't simple. It's foundational. And to do it, we have to put our souls in order.

God of mercy, help me to enter your house and approach your altar with a heart that is clean and happy. Give me the humility to love all my brothers and sisters, and not to carry grudges against them into your house. Let me come into your house with joy to give back to you from the abundance you have given me. Amen.

Jeremy Wance

September 25

The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. Hebrews 13:6

How can we not be afraid? How can we be confident in what happens today? Tomorrow? Easy—the Lord is our helper. Yet, not so easy—because of the uncertainties which cause us to doubt. Hebrews demonstrates the difference between a life of faith and a life of doubt. The Lord is with us and will never leave us nor forsake us. When our lives are centered on this certainty, we live are not out of timidity, but of boldness.

Creator God, thank you for your gracious dealings with those who trust in you. Each day, may we boldly say: “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid.” Lord, help us to trust you more with each passing day, in the name of Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

Nelson Dent

September 26

Commit your way to the Lord; trust in God, and God will act. Psalm 37:5

I often wonder where my faith comes from. I believe that through our baptismal covenant we have committed our lives to Christ. This also means we must live our lives with this understanding every day. We must actively show our trust in how we live. In doing this (if we look hard enough) we will see God's hand in all we do and see and feel. This faith gives me great strength and peace.

Lord God, who fills all the space with in and around us, help me to always live my life to the glory of your name. Open my eyes to your great works through me and strengthen me when I am weak.

Amen.

Brandt Cassidy

September 27

All tithes from the land, whether the seed from the ground or the fruit from the tree, are the Lord's; they are holy to the Lord. Leviticus 27:30

God gives us whatever strengths of body, mind, and spirit we possess. Likewise, God provides the riches of the soil, air, and water. Therefore, everything we have comes from the Lord. Our wealth is only "ours" temporarily.

Gracious God, help us overcome human possessiveness and the temptations of ego. Let us understand and appreciate all that you have given us. Enable us to use these riches wisely. Let us face our future with grateful hearts. Amen.

Judith Phillips

September 28

If you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples. Exodus 19:5

Jesus tells us the covenant we are to keep: To love God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our mind and to love our neighbor as ourselves. St. Michael's helps me keep this covenant at the forefront of my mind through weekly Eucharist—communing with God and my neighbor, through the many outreach ministries we offer, and through the opportunities we have to meet in prayer and love.

Gracious God, help St. Michael's to obey your voice and keep your commandments. Help us to remember we are your treasured possessions who are to love you, love ourselves, and love our neighbors. Amen.

Deacon Ann Murray

September 29

From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded. Luke 12:48

God calls on us to use wisely whatever gifts we have been given. If we are entrusted to care for property or people, we are charged to do the very best we can to ensure that the job is well done. Each of us is expected to know what we do best and to figure out how we can make the world a better place. In doing so, we advance and sustain His kingdom. Some have great monetary wealth. Some have the capacity to govern and make decisions that shape lives. Some are teachers. Some are healers. Some are parents. Some are gifted with wisdom and the capacity to establish and maintain order. Some cook, clean, landscape, or build roads. Whether our gifts are large and influence great numbers of people or small and influence only our families or those we work with, we each are equally valuable in the eyes of God. Our mandate is simple: Do the best we can with what God has given us.

Almighty God, we are humbled by the gifts and talents you offer us. Guide us in our work on behalf of your Kingdom. And from time to time, let us see the good outcomes of our work. Amen.

Delma Porter



September 30

Do not remember the former things or consider the things of old.
I am about to do a new thing. Isaiah 48:18-19

God is always about what's next. Always about the future.

God forgave Adam and Eve for eating the apple and set them on a new course. God's covenant with Abraham was the promise of future generations. Saul/Paul was an unbeliever before the scales fell from his eyes, and once he could see—with his eyes and his heart—he opened the way of Christianity.

God is focusing on St. Michael's future. God is with us, leading us into our future in ways of mission and ministry.

Gracious God, we remember the former years of St. Michael's with fondness and respect. Still, we know the future of our church is in your newness. Let us, in faith and trust, move into your ever-evolving Kingdom. Amen.

Rev'd Dawn Enderwood



Praise God from whom all blessings flow.