



Giving Guide

This year we invite you to celebrate the joy of generosity as you offer your estimate of giving card for 2011. We encourage you to find greater contentment and simplicity in your lives as you put God first in your giving and living, and to experience the joy that comes from knowing our gifts honor God and change lives. Our challenge as members is to find ways to grow deeper in our faith. One way to do this is to offer our financial blessings to God through our tithes and offerings. Through these gifts, we invest in God's vision and purpose and create an opportunity for God to work through us. Our gifts to God each week are an act of worship; and our offerings are vitally necessary to change lives, transform communities, and impact the world through ministry.

Why is giving important?

The Bible has much to say about wisdom and finances, with 2,300 verses that tell us to be generous and good stewards of our resources. Jesus taught generosity and sacrifice. He demanded that his followers serve not wealth but God, and in the parable of the talents he taught that God will hold us each accountable for what we do with all our earthly possessions.

What is expected of me?

The Bible teaches us to give a tithe, or the first 10 percent of what we earn, to God and the church's work. For some, giving one tenth is a very difficult goal. For others, it is the starting point, and their giving far exceeds 10 percent. The important thing is that you start somewhere; that your giving be in proportion to your income; that your giving reflects an appropriate offering to God given your means; and that your offerings express both your desire to serve the Lord and your investment in God's work. Begin by determining what percentage of your income you are giving to God. If you are not yet tithing, consider taking a step toward tithing this year. For example, if you now give 3 percent of your income, consider increasing your gift to 4 percent, and add 1 percent each year until you reach the tithing goal. Our prayer is that everyone will grow in his or her faith through giving financially to the ministries of the church, and experience the joy and blessings that come from financial generosity.

Everything we have belongs to God.

"A tithe [tenth] of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the LORD; it is holy to the LORD." —Leviticus 27:30 (NIV)

Why do I need to return an estimate of giving card?

There are two reasons why it is important that every member of our church family return an estimate of giving card. First, the process of prayerfully asking God to guide your decision and then making a commitment to serve the Lord with your financial gifts is an act of worship, an expression of gratitude and praise to God. Second, on a more practical note, your commitment allows our church to budget and better plan for our ministries, key objectives, and mission outreach programs.

ENOUGH

Discovering Joy Through
Simplicity and Generosity

What if financial hardship prohibits me from making a commitment this year?

Don't let your inability to give at this time keep you from worship. Remember that God honors your faithfulness and that your acceptance at St. Mark's is not based upon your capacity to give. We ask that everyone return an estimate of giving card even if it is a limited financial commitment at this time. If your situation changes, you can always increase or decrease your commitment by calling the church. Be sure to let our pastoral staff know of your situation so that they can pray for and support you during any difficulty. We also offer classes to assist members to become better managers of all that God gives them. Watch for announcements in the bulletin, *The St. Marker*, and the website. For more information, contact the church office at 630.232.0133x10, or email office@stmarks-geneva.org.

Because we reap what we sow.

"The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully." —2 Corinthians 9:6

Why do I need to turn in a new commitment card each year?

Financial situations change from year to year, and if we are growing in our faith, our annual commitment should reflect likewise. Each year, our church budget is based upon the growing commitments of our congregation.

Should I use Automatic Bank Draft?

Automatic Bank Draft

Automatic Bank Draft (ABD) is both a convenient and reliable way to fulfill your financial commitment to the church. ABD is also the most cost-efficient method of giving to the church since it reduces administrative costs and helps maintain a predictable cash flow. Please establish a regular gift sent directly from your account to St. Mark's (P.O. Box 126, Geneva, IL 60134).

To whom much has been given . . .

"From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked." —Luke 12:48 (NIV)