



Opening Thoughts:

It's a new year, when we take stock of the year. We plan what we want to accomplish and even change. Part of that is planning our giving. But often we find this difficult and joyless. But it doesn't have to be. In fact, it is simple and joyful. So here's what you do.

The Table of Duties gives us a guide. For Hearers, members of the church who receive instruction, St. Paul taught: "Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor" (Gal 6:6). This means that the local congregation is primary. For your congregation is the place where the Word and Sacraments happen. For "the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel" (1 Cor 9:14).

How much are we to give? Our only instructions are these: to give regularly (1 Cor 6:1-2), proportionally (1 Cor 16:1-2; 2 Cor 8:12), and generously (2 Cor 8:20) of our first fruits (Gen 4:4; Prov 3:9; Lev 27:30) with a spirit of eagerness (2 Cor 9:2), earnestness (2 Cor 8:7), cheerfulness (2 Cor 9:7), and love (2 Cor 8:23).

Giving to the church is not to be an afterthought, given after everything else is spent. We give regularly—weekly, bi-weekly, etc.—keeping in mind our strengths, weaknesses, and limitations. We set aside a generous proportion beforehand. Ten percent was the standard for the Israelites. And this is a good place to start (1 Cor 9:13-14). We give with eagerness and earnestness, cheerfully and with love. For through Word and Sacrament, God has forgiven all our sins.

It's that easy. And it is joyful because through this giving God presses us into His service, making our work holy work.

Rev. Jason M. Braaten- Immanuel, Tuscola, IL

Pray For Our Central Illinois District Missions supported by your church's Mission Dollars to the District. "Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the Word of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored..."

Dear God, convert and control. Convert those who are still to be converted, that together we may hallow and praise your holy name by pure and true teaching and a good and holy life. Control those who refuse to be converted. May they stop missing, defaming, dishonoring your holy name and misleading your needy people. Amen (Dr. Martin Luther)

CID Youth Bible Bowl

Topic: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Genesis 12-35)

Date: Sunday, March 31st, 2019

Location: Trinity Lutheran Parish Center- Springfield

It is time to start organizing your Youth Bible Bowl team. Circuits should schedule their regional Bible Bowl a least one week before the District Bible Bowl. If you are looking for assistance in getting your circuit Bible Bowls together, you may contact Pastor Mark Eddy in Taylor Ridge at zionlcms@juno.com or 309.795.1472

Don't forget to direct Thrivent Choice Dollars®

Grant funding from Thrivent Financial through its Thrivent Choice® program can help support organizations you care about. Don't let Choice Dollars expire.

Eligible Thrivent Financial members who have Choice Dollars available are asked to direct any remaining Choice Dollars. Help support the Central Illinois District- Springfield, IL. Go to Thrivent.com/thriventchoice to learn more. Or call 800-847-4836 and say "Thrivent Choice" after the prompt. If you're eligible Thrivent Financial member and have Choice Dollars available to direct, please keep us in mind.

Being the Shepherd's Hands:

On Saturday morning, May 4 (10:00 am – Noon) Deaconess Rachel Jaseph of Shepherd of the City Lutheran Church, Ft. Wayne, Ind. will speak at Wittenberg Student Center, Normal about the work done by this urban congregation in developing an outreach center, especially a two-pronged initiative to provide nutrition and after-school tutoring for neighborhood children. Her experience can be especially helpful for city or larger town churches that do not operate elementary schools at their sites. Others can learn from it too. Watch for further details, but save the date!

Campus ministry referral:

Please remember to submit contact information (on-campus and at home) for every one of your congregation's college students so the District office can make campus ministry referrals. We will even refer out-of-state! Email kschurb@cidlcms.org

Camp CILCA Annual Banquet

Camp CILCA's Annual Banquet is Sunday, January 27, from 5-8pm at Our Savior's in Springfield. The evening includes delicious food, music, conversation, and guest speaker Rev Jeff Hemmer, author of "Man Up", speaking on mankind's connection to God's creation. Tickets are \$40 and can be purchased by contacting the camp office (217-487-7497/camp@cilca.org) by Wednesday, January 23.

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