

## WHY YOU MIGHT CHOOSE TO MAKE A PLEDGE TO REDEEMER

To make a **pledge** means, in the broadest sense, to "commit by solemn promise." In terms of church stewardship, it means to promise that we will, **regularly**, make gifts of time and money to Redeemer. Our commitments of **regular giving** make it possible for the church council to prudently exercise its financial obligations and for the congregation to extend God's mercy and grace in the most creative, responsive, and generous ways possible.

The Old Testament mandate to "tithe" - that is, offer to God one-tenth of one's land, livestock, or earnings - often appears in stewardship talk as the proper measure by which to determine the amount to pledge to the church. As Christians, we understand we are no longer bound to this biblical "law." Yet the tithe retains important symbolic value: first, it calls us to make offerings that are in right **proportion** to all of our resources; second, it calls us to offer to God **the very first and the very best of what we have to give**. We make our offering to God in the same spirit as those biblical offerings of first fruits, first harvests, and dedications of first-born animals and children. Our commitment to **proportionate giving** - offered first before all our other commitments - is a practice that cultivates in us a disposition of trust and a spiritual posture of gratitude in response to the generosity of our God.

In its Middle English origins, the word **pledge** meant "a person acting as a surety for another." This is the deep value! We do not pledge to finance our church operations. Rather, we pledge to be "sureties for each other," **solemnly promising to be all the church can and should be for each other**, guarantors for each other - for all others! - of God's grace, mercy, sacraments, community, and love.