

God Provides

By Eileen Curtis



Money and its management are mentioned 700 times in the Bible. Jesus, in his Sermon on the Mount outlines the requirements of living as a member of God's family. Matthew 4: 19-21; 25-34.

We are told in this reading, that God supplies enough to meet our needs. We are told not to be anxious about having enough to feed or clothe ourselves or our families. We are asked to trust that God will provide for us all that we need. That is a big request, particularly when as a society we are bombarded with demands on our money. Our children come home from school requesting brand name jeans or shoes, the neighbour buys a new vehicle with all the latest bells and whistles, or advertising advises us to upgrade to the newest electronic device because it will make life easier. How do we pay the bills and deal with the external demands?

On a recent Sunday, Reverend Deb's object lesson to the children talked about focusing on what we have rather than what we don't have. She showed them a doughnut and asked them to remember this jingle: "For all of your life make this your goal...To remember the doughnut and not the hole!"



Do you catch yourself, at times, focusing on the hole rather than the doughnut? Do you become anxious because of what you "wish" or "want" rather than being aware of what you have been given? Thus, losing sight of your many blessings? I think we all fall into that category at some time in our lives and it takes great discipline to focus on what we have and trust that God is working in our lives.

God gives us what we need and we are asked to be good stewards of what we have been given – our time, our talents, and our treasure. We are asked to give back to God a portion of what has been given us and in return we are blessed in many ways. Some of those ways are not always immediately evident.



Let's review the life of the parish these past five years.

December 2008 – a snow storm shut down the Cowichan Valley causing Christmas services to be cancelled. Revenue counted on to meet the budget was lost and there was the extra expense to clear the snow. Dire straits threatened!

February 2009 – A new rector was hired and with that extra expense occurred. Do we have the Faith? Will we be able to manage?

2009 – After much work the Affirmations printed and displayed in the Parish Hall were confirmed and these became the basis for parish decision making and growth. There were a few more children in Sunday School.

2010 and 2011 – To finance programs that would enable the parish to grow deficit funding was approved. During the three years (2009 – 2011) parish giving had gradually increased by 1% each year. But, a large deficit was looming.

2012 – Parish Council made the decision to trust that God provides enough to meet our needs; to begin living within our means; to trust that the hard work that had been done previously had been done in God's name and that the work would be honoured and blessed. A balanced budget was presented and accepted at the AGM. How astonished and amazed we were by the abundance of God's blessings. The deficit was reduced by \$20,000, parish numbers grew, and giving increased by 1%.

In October of last year, I, as the Treasurer and as part of the stewardship presentation, showed you the breakdown of income and expenses for the operation of the parish. That presentation indicated that we were very dependent upon Fundraising to meet the budget. This is not good stewardship. Council agreed and the 2013 balanced budget was based mainly on Giving and Facility Usage, Only \$5,500 was to come from Fundraising. This is a real step in faith, a trust that God provides.





September 30th, 2013 – look around you – the community is growing; average attendance on a Sunday is nearing 100. 24 children are registered in Sunday School, in three different age groupings, Christian education for adults is blossoming with three different Bible and Spiritual studies happening, three musicians assist with music on Sundays, a hand chime group has formed and is part of the music team, and parish members are involved in several ministries.



Financially – Giving is up 2% over this time last year and we are projecting a further reduction to the debt. Plus, we have begun a major Capital Campaign to raise the money necessary to upgrade our physical plant (church, hall, and rectory). We are very blessed for being faithful servants, for trusting in God's provision for our needs. We give thanks!



The Wardens and Parish Council are beginning the budget process for 2014. Once again the focus is on developing a balanced budget based on Giving or Offerings. Pledge cards will be available beginning next week. Please complete one, put it on the plate, or leave it at the office.

God has blessed us; let us respond generously to those blessings with commitments of time, talent, and treasure. Let us continue to be good stewards of all God provides. Let us focus on the doughnut, not the hole. Let us not be anxious.



God Provides for all our needs!