



SOPC Leaflet, Wednesday, October 15, 2025

A Message from Pastor Jim:

Like Parent, Like Child - Matthew 22:15-22

A little boy was in church one Sunday morning with his grandmother. Everything went well until it was time for the offering. The grandmother began to frantically search through her purse, but she couldn't find her offering envelope. Apparently, she had left it at home. It was a most embarrassing moment for her as she kept looking through her purse for something to put in the collection plate. Her grandson sensed her dilemma. The little boy had a solution to her problem. "Here, Gramma," he told her, "You take my quarter and put it in, and I'll hide under the seat!"¹ Children learn from watching adults. That is how they determine what is important in life.

Wayne Barrett says that the first time he ever saw a fifty-dollar bill was in a church offering plate. This was years ago when fifty dollars were worth much more than it is today. Wayne is a nationally recognized leader in the field of Christian stewardship and author of The Church Finance Idea Book. Seeing that fifty-dollar bill in the offering plate spoke louder to him than any words. He saw first-hand how important the church was to his parents and the other adults in their congregation by the gifts they gave. It wasn't that these folks were wealthy. They were not; they were committed. Seeing fifty-dollar bills and twenty-and-ten-dollar bills in the offering plate taught young Wayne a lesson he would remember the rest of his life: the work of the church is important. The church he grew up in didn't use offering envelopes.

Wayne says that there is teaching value in letting children see what their elders are contributing to the church of Jesus Christ. Or at least, we can talk about it. How many of us sit down and discuss our gifts to the church with our children? It's much easier to give them a quarter and send them on their way.

The Pharisees were once again plotting against Jesus. They had a question for him. They were trying to trap him into saying something that would discredit him. They wanted to silence him and make him look bad in front of the crowd. Being the hypocrites that they were, they baited their trap with a compliment. "*Teacher, we know that you are sincere,*" one of them said, "*and teach the way of God in accordance with truth.*" Say, what? They didn't believe that for a minute, but they wanted the people listening to think they were giving Jesus a fair chance. Then they asked him a loaded question. "Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor or not?"

Uh-oh. If Jesus says it's all right to pay taxes to the Roman government, then he will lose face with the majority of his audience. For the pious Jew it was offensive to pay taxes to the hated Romans. Paying taxes was tantamount to supporting this detestable occupation. On the other hand, if Jesus says it's wrong to pay taxes, then he will be in trouble with the Romans. He will be siding with the revolutionaries who want to overthrow the Roman government. It's a no-win situation. Jesus knew the Pharisees were trying to trap him. Fortunately, he was wiser than they were. He says, "Show me the coin used for the tax." Jesus is using a subtle strategy here. One of the Pharisees produces a Roman coin from his pocket. Little did the Pharisee realize that by even possessing a Roman coin he already was well on the way to losing the argument.

¹ James W. Moore, *Yes, Lord I Have Sinned* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), p. 34.

The Jewish people found the inscription on the Roman coins offensive, "Tiberius Caesar, Son of the Divine Augustus, Pontifex Maximus." To the pious Jew the inscription on the Roman coin was a deliberate break with the Ten Commandments which prohibit "graven images." For these and other reasons the Jewish people did not use Roman coins. They had their own temple currency. In producing a Roman coin, the Pharisee showed which side he was on.

And that's true for us as well. The use of our money shows which side we are on. "*Where a person's treasure is, there is his heart also.*" If someone wanted to know what you and I truly value in this world, all they would have to do would be to look at our check book and our calendar. Where we spend our money and our time is what we really care about. Many of us value our cars more than we do God. Many of us value our leisure time more than we do God. Some of us value trinkets more than we value God.

As a pastor greeted persons at the door following a stewardship sermon in which he discussed pledging, a disgruntled member asked accusingly, "Where in the Bible do you find anything about pledging?" Like many of us this man was uncomfortable being challenged to pledge to his church. Instead of being defensive about his sermon the pastor answered good-naturedly, "That's a good question. Let's get together over lunch and talk about it this week." The gentleman agreed; a time and place were set. Later that week the two of them did get together for lunch. After they had ordered, the pastor brought up the subject. "You know, your question was a good one." The pastor said the question forced him to do some thinking. "The Bible is full of references to pledging," he told the reluctant church member. But the member remained unconvinced. "Come on now, Pastor," he said. He knew that sometimes pastors have a way of exaggerating.

The pastor told him that he looked up the word, "pledge," in a Bible dictionary. He had written down some of the words he found there that pertain to pledging: "Commit, promise, dedicate, devote, covenant, vow," very familiar Biblical words. That made the man think more about stewardship. His pastor explained, "Christian stewardship is merely a reflection of our spiritual commitment to Christ. Stewardship is, first, our response to God."² The man's attitude about pledging changed because of their lunch together.

How we use our money shows which side we are really on. Jesus exposed the Pharisees as hypocrites. They said one thing, but their lives said the opposite. Jesus takes the coin and asks, "Whose head is this, and whose title?" Without a moment's thought the Pharisees answer, "The emperor's." Quietly Jesus says, "Give to the emperor the things that are the emperor's and to God the things that are God's."

When an emperor came to power, he would immediately have coins minted with his name and portrait on it. That would signify that the coins belonged to him. In his answer, Jesus said that since the coins already belong to the emperor, give them back to him. Give back to the emperor what belongs to the emperor and give to God what belongs to God.

Jesus wanted the Pharisees to consider what was really important--their allegiance to God. The same is true for us today. We get caught up in all kinds of activities, but we need to continually ask ourselves, "what is most important in my life? What do I really care about?" When we answer those two questions, it will show in our stewardship of all of life--including our material possessions.

The late Danny Thomas lost his life savings of \$600.00 at a time when he was out of work. He and his wife, Rosie, had a baby on the way, and they needed money. Danny worked at part-time jobs so Rosie could buy groceries. He also borrowed money from friends. It was a tough time in his life. A week before the baby was born, Danny had the grand total of seven dollars and eighty-five cents to his name. What would he do? "My despair led me to my first exposure to the powers of faith," Danny would later recall. On Sunday morning Danny went to church. When the offering plate was passed, he put in his "usual one dollar." But something unexpected happened that day. A special missions offering was taken. The priest explained where the mission offering would go, and Danny felt he had to give something. "I got carried away," Danny said, "and ended up giving my seven dollars." He had given away all his money that Sunday. What in the world had he done?

He walked up to the altar rail, got on his knees and prayed aloud. "Look, I've given my last seven bucks," he prayed. "I need it back tenfold because I've got a kid on the way, and I have to pay the hospital bill." He went home with a mere eighty-five cents in his pocket--all the money he had in the world. "You won't believe this," Danny Thomas later wrote, "but the next morning the phone rang in the rooming house hall." It was a job offer. He was offered a part in a commercial. The job wasn't much but the pay was good--seventy-five dollars. "I literally dropped the telephone receiver," Danny remembered. "First I whooped with joy; then an eerie feeling came over me." He remembered what he had prayed at church the day before. "The seventy-five-dollar fee," he said, "unheard of for me at that time, was almost exactly ten times the amount of money I had donated to the church."³

The important truth about this story is *not* that Danny Thomas received a tenfold return on his money. He might have done just as well at the racetrack. The important thing was Danny Thomas' lifelong allegiance to God. Those of you who know his story know that St. Jude's Hospital for Children stands today as silent testimony to that allegiance. Often when God asks us, "What will you give?" we

² Eugene Grimm, *Generous People* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992), pp. 59-61.

³ Danny Thomas, *Make Room for Danny* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1991), pp. 68-70.

take the bit that we can spare, the part we can easily give and offer it to God. The question is one of total allegiance. How committed are you to God? But there's one thing more we need to see. There is joy in giving.

Jesus outwitted the Pharisees at their own game. Notice that after he told them, "Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperors, and to God the things that are God's," the Pharisees were speechless. They had no more questions for him. Matthew reports that "they were amazed; and they left him and went away." Many people never really discover the joy of giving. Like the Pharisees they hear the truth but go away without another word.

Stan Gaede was thirteen years old and sitting in the driver's seat of his father's pickup truck. He wasn't old enough to be driving. He was barely able to look over the steering wheel. Nonetheless, he was driving right through the middle of town. His father, sitting in the back of the truck, was delivering 100-pound bags of potatoes to friends, relatives, and needy people in their town. He recalls his dad running back and forth from pickup to house and back again-- toting those 100-pound bags on his shoulders. For young Stan it was a lesson in generosity he would never forget. Stan was glad he was too small to be lugging around those 100-pound bags. At first, he was embarrassed by his father's actions. After all, his father was a fairly successful farmer, with land and employees and social standing. Yet there he was, "running around town with sacks of potatoes on his shoulder, making a spectacle of himself."

It was an act of love, though. Stan would never forget the joy his father experienced giving away 100 pounds of potatoes.⁴

There is joy in giving. If you have not yet discovered that joy, it's not too late. Children learn what's important in life from watching adults.

Jesus said, "Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperors, and to God the things that are God's." It's a matter of declaring which side you are on. It's a matter of allegiance. But it's also a matter of joy.

4. Stan Gaede, *Surprised by God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1993), pp. 84-85.

*****Our annual Stewardship packets and pledge cards were mailed out (or placed in office boxes/ the choir room) on Monday. Be on the lookout for yours, please. We will dedicate these pledges to God's service on 11/9/25, Commitment Sunday. If you have any questions, please contact a Stewardship Committee member. They are listed in the brochure included in the packet.*****



October is Clergy Appreciation Month. If you feel so led, be sure to let Pastor Jim know what he means to this church and to you personally! Also, let's be sure that we let Rev. Bob Brearley know how thankful we are that he is sharing The Word with us during Pastor Jim's recuperation.

- ❖ **This Sunday's Guest Preacher: Rev. Bob Brearley**
- ❖ **This Sunday's sermon: *Against All Odds***
- ❖ **This Sunday's Scripture: Luke 18:1-8**



It's time to order poinsettias to adorn our sanctuary during the 2025 Advent & Christmas seasons!

The cost is \$14 per plant, payable to SOPC, due by Sunday, November 9th.

Please place this form with your payment in the offering boxes in the Narthex or return it to the church office. If you pay online, please select "Other," type in, "Poinsettia Order," and opt to cover the credit card processing charges. Thanks!

Your Name: _____

Your Email Address: _____

Your Phone Number: _____

Number of Poinsettias: _____ x \$14 = \$ _____ Total

In Honor / Memory of: _____





- ❖ **Our Missions Ministry is partnering with Ashland UMC to help provide CANDY for Seven Oaks Elementary School's community outreach Trunk-or-Treat on October 30th. If you are able and feel led to provide a bag of individually wrapped candy, or two, please bring your donations by the church office or to the large baskets in the narthex on either side of the entrance to the sanctuary.**
- ❖ **From Our YOUTH:** "We have invited any McGregor PC youth to participate in our weekly meetings on Sunday evening. We meet, usually at SOPC, from 5:30-7:00 pm on Sundays for food, fellowship, worship and mission projects. We also do occasional "field trips" for projects and/or fun. We join with Westminster PC youth. St. Mary's Episcopal church has reached out, and they have a few youth who may begin attending. We have about 14 active youth and usually have 6 to 10 youth every Sunday during the school year." Way to go, SOPC Youth and Advisors!!



- ❖ **Our next Ladies' Luncheon will be Monday, October 20th, at noon at BJ's Restaurant on Harbison Blvd. If you plan to attend, please notify Margaret Royals at 803-608-1434 or mroyals052@gmail.com. Thanks!**



- ❖ **Our SOPC Book Group** is currently reading *The Tears of Things* by Richard Rohr. They will meet to discuss it at Loveland Coffee shop on Carlisle St. in Irmo on Thursday, 10/23/25, at 3 pm. Next, they will read *The Woman They Could Not Silence* by Kate Moore and meet to discuss it on 11/20/25--same time and place.
- ❖ **SOPC will host a meeting of Trinity Presbytery on Tuesday, November 18th. VOLUNTEERS** are needed to greet, direct parking, serve lunch, etc. Contact Sharon Staton if you are available to help.
- ❖ If you would like to volunteer in the sanctuary's sound booth occasionally, please contact the church office. Training provided!
- ❖ **Parents of Young Children:** Please grab a "Wiggle Bag" from the coat rack just inside the sanctuary entrance doors before worship starts and remember that the little ones go to the Children's Corner after the Children's Message during the service. Thanks!



- ❖ **All Saints' Sunday:** On November 2nd, we will honor those who have gone before us to join the Church Triumphant in the past year. Please submit the names and years-of-life of loved ones who have passed since last year's service so that we can include them in the bulletin. Thank you.
- ❖ Our next date to prepare & serve a meal at Providence Men's Home is **NEXT WEDNESDAY, October 22nd**. Please contact Robert Miller if you would like to help out!

❖ Thanks to everyone who helped make our Fall Festival a blessing to our community on Saturday, 10/11/25. There were 159 guests, numerous volunteers, and a petting zoo of animals in attendance! In fact, when the Pastor is away, they animals will play...in his office!! See pictures below.



- ❖ Our First Responders' Appreciation Service on 10/12/25 was a blessing to all in attendance! Special Thanks to Rev. Dr. J. Eric Skidmore!!



- ❖ The picture below is our World Communion Sunday banner which was displayed in worship on 10/5/25. The crocheted cross was a gift from our partner church in Cuba, Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Nueva Paz, that was given to us by Pastora Tirisay Martinez during her visit in September 2024. The cross was crocheted by one of their parishioners. The banner was fashioned by our own Robert Miller.



- ❖ **Blast From the Past:** Rev. Dr. Eric Skidmore shared this article from 1993 when he, Jim Taylor, and Tom Are went to Sudan!

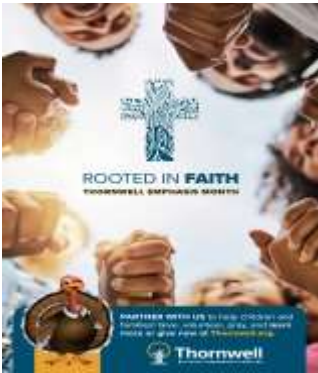


- ❖ **Let's go to the movies!** This trip = *Springsteen: Deliver Me from Nowhere* on October 28th at 12:45 pm at AMC. Tickets are \$6.00. This is a drama based on Warren Zanes' book about the time in Springsteen's life when he crafted his 1982 album *Nebraska*, which emerged as he recorded *Born in the USA* with the E Street Band. Please let us know if you are coming by calling or texting Sue Kesterson at (803) 727-8165. Ron will purchase a block of tickets. He can be reimbursed when you arrive for the movie. All are welcome, including friends!



- ❖ **Advent Devotions:** If you cherish SOPC's annual Advent Devotionals like many do, would you prayerfully consider volunteering to head up the project this year? Pastor Jim will help out with ideas and Scripture passages, but we need someone to organize our writers and compile the booklet. Annah headed up the effort last year and just doesn't have the time to be the main person this year. Although, she is available for computer support and distribution support if needed! Contact the church office if you are willing to volunteer.
- ❖ **A Note of Thanks:** Aletha Robinson contacted the church office this week to express her deep appreciation for her SOPC family. Recently, several church members have provided car rides for her and Derek while Derek has been in and out of the hospital. This ability to be with her son during

his illness and recovery has been a true blessing to Aletha, as have your prayers for her and Derek. Thank you, SOPC!!



MISSION

As a Christian ministry, our mission is to provide safe and nurturing environments where we educate, equip, and support children and families to thrive.

- ❖ We will collect our annual Thornwell Offering on Sunday, 11/23rd. For more information about Thornwell, visit: <https://thornwell.org/>.
- ❖ We're Collecting: These items may be placed in the large baskets in the narthex or brought to the church office.
 - Bags of individually wrapped candy for Seven Oaks Elementary School's community Trunk-or-Treat.
 - Travel-size toiletries to hand out from our Clothing Closet weekly. Travel size are best for those experiencing homelessness or housing instability. We can always use small soaps, shampoos, lotions, conditioners, deodorants, toothpastes, and pocket packs of Kleenex. We have plenty of toothbrushes, disposable razors, combs, feminine hygiene products, and incontinence products for now. If you travel, please save the hotels' provided individual toiletries for us! Thanks!!
 - We collect used crayons in the church office for www.thecrayoninitiative.org. They sort them, melt them down, and make them into free, ergonomic crayons for pediatric hospital patients. We have collected 397 pounds so far!
 - Please save your cans' pop tops and bring them to the church office. So far, we have donated 4 gallon-sized Ziploc bags FULL of pop tops to the Ronald McDonald House in Columbia.
- ❖ Save the Date:
 - October 17-19: PW Synod Triennial Gathering
 - October 26: Reformation Sunday; SOPW Fall Gathering
 - November 2: All Saints' Sunday
 - November 9: Commitment Sunday
 - November 18: SOPC will host the meeting of Trinity Presbytery.
 - November 23: Thornwell Offering
 - December 7: Christmas Music in Worship
- ❖ If you have information to go out to our church family in the weekly Leaflet newsletter, please get it to Annah in the church office by Tuesday of the week you want it to go out. Thanks!