

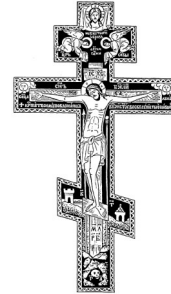
## STEWARDSHIP LETTER

St. Elizabeth's Orthodox church  
Woodstock, GA 30188

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December 6th 2015

St. Nicholas Day



Dear Parish Family,

The Christmas season is known to the whole world as the season of giving. After all, it was on Christmas Day that God gave to the world the most perfect gift we could ever receive, the gift of his only-begotten Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Why did God give the world such a gift? Why did God open the doors of Paradise to all mankind? We can answer this question with one word...love. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:16).

Think of all the gifts God gives to each of us everyday. The gift of His Son. The gift of salvation. All of this because of love. God blesses mankind with such gifts because He loves us.

We can never repay the gifts our Lord gives to us. However, we can and must "Give thanks to the Lord for He is good" (Psalm 136). We can follow Christ and His commandments; we can love one another as He loves us. We can give back to the Lord what He has given to each of us. St. John Chrysostom reminds us that "our money is the Lord's, however we may have gathered it." When we give to the Church we are truly and simply giving back what has only been loaned to us by the Almighty.

In this season of Advent we are all on our way greet the newborn King of the Universe, born in a humble manger, in a Cave, in the small town of Bethlehem. Remember who takes that journey with us. The Angels, the shepherds, and the Three Magi. The Three Magi brought the newborn Christ gifts of a great worldly value: Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh. Legend tells us that although the shepherds didn't have much that the world would consider valuable they gave what they could. Some shepherds gave the food for their next meal, some gave their cloaks, and some even sang lullabies for the infant Christ child.

Although the gifts of the kings and the gifts of the shepherds were different, they were all accepted by the Lord. In the eyes of the Prince of Peace they were all the same; because they were given for one reason and one reason only. The gifts given to the Christ child were given out of love.

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This year as you prepare for the birth of the Saviour of the Universe, remember to truly search the depths of your souls and think about your responsibility to your Church. Decide in your hearts what you and your family can give your Church this year, and pledge that amount to St. Elizabeth's.

Remember the words of St. Paul when you decide on your pledge. "Each one must do as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." God loves a cheerful giver! So give to your Church all that you are able, with joy in your hearts.

The gifts of the Magi and the gifts of the shepherds looked different to the eyes of men, but in the eyes of God they were truly the same- they were the gift of love. If you can pledge more than you have in years past, pledge more, but do it because of your love for God. If you need to pledge less this year, pledge less and feel not one ounce of sadness in your heart. Just remember the humble gifts of the shepherds. Remember that it's not about money- it's about loving God and showing Him that love. The shepherds gave the Christ child a beautiful song, and so can we. We can give our labor and sweat, we can give our dedication, we can our time, and most importantly we can give our prayers and our love.

God provides for those who come to him in humility and in faith. It is through all of our prayers and by the Grace of God that St. Elizabeth's will continue to grow in the years to come. It is a reality that the Church needs money to stay open, but what it needs infinitely more than money, is prayer and love. It is only through faith that St. Elizabeth's can truly grow.

Thank you all for your continued support of St. Elizabeth's . Remember to cheerfully give all that you can this year and show in that gift your love for Christ and His Church, just like the shepherds did so long ago in Bethlehem.

My prayers and blessings are with all of you as we journey together once again to the little town of Bethlehem, where we will greet our New Born King saying "Glory to God in the Highest and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"

May God always bless you all with health, happiness, and salvation in His Kingdom!

With love in Christ,

Fr. Matthew Dutko

**SAINT ELIZABETH'S ORTHODOX CHURCH  
STEWARDSHIP COMMITMENT CARD FOR 2016**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Member? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

In gratitude for God's blessings, I/we am offering to God, through St. Elizabeth's, the following stewardship of my money:

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ weekly \$ \_\_\_\_\_ monthly \$ \_\_\_\_\_ quarterly \$ \_\_\_\_\_ annually \$ \_\_\_\_\_ one-time

If you are able to help with any cleaning, fundraising, or any other way: please write that in below with an area where you would like to help!

*Only the Priest and the Treasurer will see this form.*

Please put this card into an envelope, mark the envelope "Pledge for 2016" and bring it with you to Church by **January 3rd 2016**. You may mail the card to Fr. Matthew, 2263 E. Cherokee Dr., Woodstock, GA 30188.