

Taxes and Tithing –

‘Tis the season – *Tax Time!*

I always feel fear mixed with hope as income tax preparation begins and April 15th draws nearer. Perhaps it’s just me.

Income taxes are a great mystery of life. Inevitable they may be (“Death and Taxes!”), but their preparation involves multiple forms, reams of obscure instructions, various tables, a few deductions, some credits here and there, and a little mathematical magic. For me it involves a mental “prayer” as well: “Please, reduce my pain, help me avoid an audit and can I please get a refund?” I am sure I am not alone in seeking help and inspiration this time of year.

A tax refund is an almost inexplicable happening for me, manna from heaven, so to speak. Many years I owe, I owe. Sometimes, I break even or receive a pittance back. Occasionally, there is a happy financial surprise. Now most refund money goes for expenses or that certain special something. What I often forget in my joy is that little “prayer” that went through my mind at the start of the process – I forget to thank the Lord for my good fortune.

As George Mueller*, a 19th century English pastor and orphanage director, said. “When money is sent to me for my own use, I pass it on to God... I do not regard such gifts as belonging to me; they belong to Him, whose I am and whom I serve.” Good words to recall when the IRS gives back.

Now Pastor Mueller would probably have given it all to God’s work, but why not at least tithe that refund, or any other unexpected windfall for that matter, to the Church as an extra contribution, beyond your regular pledge? It goes to thank and honor the Lord.

Think about it. Remember, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Luke 12:34 and Matthew 6:21, NRSV).

– The Stewardship of Treasure Committee

* George Mueller (German-born: Johann Georg Ferdinand Müller; September 27, 1805 – March 10, 1898), a Christian evangelist and Director of the Ashley Down Orphanage in Bristol, England, he cared for over 10,000 orphans in his life. He was known for providing an education to the children under his care, to the point where he was accused of raising the poor above their natural station in life. It is said he established 117 schools which offered Christian education to over 120,000 children, many of them also being orphans. – http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_M%C3%BCller