

The Joy of Generosity

Washington D.C.

Early in their marriage, the Rev. Dr. Theodore Schneider and his wife, Doris, decided to make tithing a priority in their lives—an idea that, at first, scared Doris. “We had very little money when we were first married,” she recalled. “I thought, ‘How are we going to give away something that we don’t even have?’”



But over the next 51 years, tithing “just got to be part of who we were,” said Schneider, former bishop of the ELCA Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod. “Once you start doing it, it becomes part of your life.”

Through their generosity, the Schneiders have given to this church, as well as numerous charities and institutions. “Most Lutherans can be major givers if they plan ahead,” he said, citing the numerous planned-giving vehicles available through the ELCA Foundation. “If we remember the church in a will or bequest, for example, we give a gift that keeps repeating itself.”

Did you know?

The ELCA Foundation’s nationwide network of professional gift planning staff can help you explore a variety of possibilities for making a significant gift to ministry.

Call 800/638-3522, ext. 2970 or visit www.elca.org/fo for more information.

But planned giving means more than making long-range, large gifts, he added. “Planned giving starts with the annual pledge that we make for our weekly giving. Tithing also is the planned giving that we do.”

Personal stewardship has been at the forefront of Schneider’s teaching throughout his 48 years

of ministry. When he was called as bishop 12 years ago, one of the comments made in writing to him as he left his congregation, St. Luke Lutheran Church, Silver Spring, Md., was, “He taught us the joy of generosity.”

“That was probably the greatest compliment anyone could have ever made,” he said.

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