



Gloria Dei Lutheran Church
18220 Upper Bay Rd.
Houston, TX 77058



Testimonies of Giving: Susan's Story

My father was a WWII veteran who was in the infantry and fought across Africa and Europe. He liberated a concentration camp and was in the army of occupation. He never got a “welcome home” because of the extra year in the army of occupation in Germany. The war definitely affected him, but there were times of healing that helped him over the years. One of those times was when Gloria Dei honored the WWII Veterans.

We came to church the day veterans were being honored, and there was a huge sign hanging in the church that said, “Welcome Home!” Pastor Kieschnick shook the soldiers’ hands and thanked them for their service. Each veteran was also given a little pocketknife as a token of appreciation. My father spoke of that “welcome home” celebration and kept that pocketknife from that day on.

When Dad’s health was failing at the end of his life, he gave out pocket crosses to nurses, doctors, health care workers, etc. and talked to them about Jesus. At his memorial service, my mom and I gave out the same pocket crosses to continue his mission. To this day, people tell me that they have kept their pocket cross in their wallet as a reminder of what Jesus has done for us.

Sometimes the small things end up being really “BIG” things in people’s lives!

-Susan Reaves

Awareness Forums

Thanks to the many folks who attended our Awareness Forums held recently! We had a great turnout! We appreciate your insightful questions, comments and continued prayerful support. If you missed the forums, you can view the slide show presentation by visiting gdlc.org/big.

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Commitment Card

With courageous generosity and sacrificial giving, I/we prayerfully commit to make a kingdom impact through the BIG campaign, in the amount of:

☐ \$ _____ per week for 156 weeks, for a total of \$ _____

☐ \$ _____ per month for 36 months, for a total of \$ _____

☐ Or, as follows: _____, for a total of \$ _____

Name _____ Phone: _____

Address _____

Signature(s) _____



Check Your Mail Soon!

Your commitment card will be mailed to you very soon! You will have several opportunities to submit your commitment card, including the Initial Commitments Event on October 18, and at our BIG Commitment Celebration Service on Sunday, October 30 at 10am! For questions regarding commitment card submissions, please call the church office.



You Are Invited!

BIG

Commitment Celebration

Sunday • October 30 • 10am

Let's celebrate God's blessings in a BIG way!

One Worship Service at 10am,
followed by The BIG Tailgate Party!

-  **WORSHIP** together
-  **FREE Tailgate-Inspired Lunch**
(lunch, dessert, drinks....the whole 9 yards!)
-  **LIVE Entertainment**
-  **ACTIVITIES** for the children



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Testimonies of Giving: Jeff's Story

I was blessed to have been brought up in a Christian home. We went to church and Sunday school every week. My parents always put an envelope in the offering plate, though I was never told, nor did I ask, the amount or percentage. Because going to church every Sunday was a habit, developed from an early age, I've attended Gloria Dei regularly since I came to Texas in 1973.

I'm not sure how long Pastor Kieschnick was here before he taught me the Biblical principle of tithing, but between his regular stewardship messages, and a string of capital campaigns over the years, I learned the joy of tithing and giving beyond. I tried to respond to the challenge in Malachi 3:10 and keep pressing the test button, always finding, not surprisingly, that God does what He says He'll do.

“I learned the joy of tithing and giving beyond. ...always finding, not surprisingly, that God does what He says He'll do.”

Through the years, my family and I have been richly blessed—more than we expected and certainly way more than we deserved. My current job is helping people save for retirement and with increasing frequency, helping folks turn their assets into income as they retire. Personally, I'm about to replace paychecks with distributions from savings and investments. At this point, tithing (or double tithing) for three years, has little meaning when I'm the one who determines our “income.”

That is why coming up with a commitment amount this time around is a little more difficult than in the past. One thing is for sure. Chris and I believe in the campaign's goals, we love Gloria Dei, and we plan to make a substantial gift. Please pray that the Lord will lead all of us to a number that stretches us to make a sacrifice for the sake of His kingdom.

-Jeff Bibler

Leaders Initial Commitments Event

“[David said] ^{5b}Who then will offer willingly, consecrating himself today to the Lord? ⁶Then the leaders of fathers' houses made their freewill offerings, as did also the leaders of the tribes, the commanders of thousands and of hundreds, and the officers over the king's work.”

These verses from 1 Chronicles 29 describe how David's leadership team brought their commitments to build the temple after David had brought his own. On **Wednesday, October 18 at 6:30pm**, the church and campaign leadership teams will bring their initial commitments forward. By making their commitments first, they hope to set a spirit of enthusiasm and model sacrificial giving for the congregation. The results of the initial commitments will be announced during the worship service on Sunday, October 23rd. Anyone who wants to participate in this event— to offer their initial commitments or to just attend— is welcome.

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Online Resources gdlc.org/big

Have you visited the BIG web page yet? We add new, valuable information regularly! The following are just some of the recent additions we've added to the web page :

- BIG Devotional Guide
- Prayer Calendar
- FAQ's
- Testimonial Videos

Dates To Remember

Initial Commitments Event
October 18



Commitment Celebration
October 30



Commitment Dedication
November 13



First Fruits Offering
November 20



Keep up with other
important campaign details
at gdlc.org/big



A Guide For Making A Special Offering Commitment

How does a Christian make a decision when making a financial commitment to a capital stewardship campaign (or any other special offering)? This is an excellent... and common question! Frankly, there is no perfect, or “right,” way. We believe that giving generously, for the cause of Christ, is essential to our lives, and for the sake of the Church. We encourage you to use the following guide, as you prayerfully consider how God may be leading you, and your family, into courageous generosity at Gloria Dei.

-  Do not confuse giving your tithe (10%) to the local church with giving a special gift. Your tithe is evidence of your faith and honors God by giving Him your “first fruits.” A special offering is just that; in addition to your tithe, God gives His people many opportunities to support His work. So, as you consider your special offering, do not “rob Peter (your tithe) to pay Paul (your special gift).”
-  Making a special commitment is an act of faith, so it is imperative to begin the process with prayer. Ask God for an open mind and heart. Ask Him what He wants you to do— not what you think you ought to do. God answers the prayers of His people. He will open your mind and heart, and guide you in the process.
-  Consider the needs and opportunities that the campaign will support. Do you believe them to be a “worthy cause”? Do you believe your leaders have been led by God to properly identify the mission and ministry challenges that have been presented to the congregation? If you are led by God's Spirit to say, “Yes, this is God's plan for us,” then take the next step.
-  Ask God to give you a “number” that He would have you prayerfully consider. Don't automatically trust the first number that comes to your mind; it's almost always a “safe” number you can give without God's help! If you're married, we encourage you and your spouse to pray and work separately through this process, and then come together to discuss your “numbers” with each other.
-  As you consider your gift, think through the following questions: Is my/our decision filled with faith? Does it reflect a “sacrifice” on my/our part? How can I/we make this a spiritual growth experience? Consider some of the following practical examples of sacrificial giving...
 - Salary and/or Budget • Double Tithe • Stocks, Bonds, Real Estate • Collections (art, cars)**
 - Giving Up Vacations/Home Additions • Delaying Purchases (furniture) • Inheritance**
 - Return to Work Force or Postpone Retirement • Insurance Policy • Skip Daily Stop at Starbucks**
-  Continue to pray. If married, “negotiate” as necessary. Do not let this harm your marriage, but do trust the promises of God. Paul reminds us, “God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.” (2 Cor. 9:7c-8). Thank God for your decision.
-  Complete your commitment card, place it in the confidential envelope, and return it on, or before **Commitment Celebration Sunday (October 30)**, with the absolute confidence that this decision is what God has led you to do. And remember this— if God changes your circumstances, you are always welcome to adjust your commitment.

Remember what Jesus said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” (Acts 20:35c)

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