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The Reverend Rites

Standing For Something

I taught my children to stand when the veterans marched by in a parade carrying the flag. Before September 11, 2001, we sometimes were the only ones to do so. I don't know if the veterans marching noticed us, I like to think they did.

Did the veterans go to war because they were counting on being in a parade decades later? Did they **need me** to stand? No. They didn't need my thanks. They did what they did for any of several reasons, of which I can only guess, but I doubt it was because they were counting on me and my kids standing for them when they came by in a parade.

I needed to stand. For me.

For my children. For those around us. Someday our nation, our family, even a stranger will need our help. The situation might call for risk or actual sacrifice. By standing I remind myself, my children and others that we honor sacrifice for the greater good, duty to those in trouble and shared responsibility for one another.



In May we will be honoring graduates along with singers, ringers, Sunday School teachers and ushers. Giving them thanks. Not because they need it, not because they will stop if we don't thank them, but because we need to honor good work for our good and the good of the community.

Don't Sing? Don't Teach? Don't Usher? Don't Go To School? Good News! This doesn't stop you from participating in the encouragement and celebration of those who do. I never was called to serve in the Armed Forces. (In fact, there was not even selective service registration when I turned 18!) Yet, I can still thank those who did their duty and answered the call of their community.

Strange this attitude of celebration and thanks doesn't apply those who give money and pledges.



"The more time you give to something, the more you reveal its importance and value to you."

~Rick Warren
The Purpose Driven Life

In our recognition insert, we have dozens of names listed for all types of service to the church...but the names of those who have pledged or even contributed are no where to be seen. Somehow, we don't recognize those who give money and commit to our regular operating expense, but celebrate those who give time. I would like to celebrate and thank both.

It hasn't always been this way at Latrobe Presbyterian Church. Less than 100 years ago, we published not only the names of our financial supporters but also the amount of their giving! I don't know what is different now.

Stewardship is a tremendous challenge to churches our size. Churches major expenses are people's time and building use...and as a \$7,000 **increase** in our heating bill alone this year indicates, those two items increase significantly more than the "Rate of Inflation" measured by the Consumer Price Index. Yet, many folks give the same amount year after year or even nothing at all!

We wouldn't want folks tossing money into the air instead of an inspiring choir anthem... but then we can't bring the choir to the gas company to sing for our heat. It takes both to have a church that gives warmth to both the body and the spirit.

For all you good faithful people that pledge and pay faithfully and even sacrificially, I stand in your honor, not because you need my thanks...but because I need to remind myself and others of the good your sacrifice does for our church community.