

Connections:

Jacob Beyea is leader of the Connections Ministry where he welcomes parish members and new guests to the Liturgy. He gives a newcomer a Liturgy Book and answers any questions they may have. Contact Jacob during Fellowship if you would like to join this ministry.

Outreach Ministry:

There is usually a project every one or two months. Ideas and suggestions are welcome. If you would like to join this ministry, see Arlene Tonjes or Rebekah Becker during the Fellowship. Due to the needs from the recent hurricane, we are still collecting for church. You can place your donations in the basket as you enter the church.

During December we collected canned goods and related items for the food bank in Plant City.

They were most appreciative. In January we will be taking a respite and then look forward to Souper Bowl Sunday when we collect for the homeless and those in need.

On Stewardship and the Christian Life

By Father Frederick Watson

“A Simple Plan”

“Bring the full tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house; ... put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, (see) if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing.”
(Malachi 3:10 RSV)

One of the continuing themes of the Old Testament Scriptures is that of covenant. A covenant is an agreement, something like a contract. A covenant binds two parties to a certain plan that each agrees to carry out. A professional athlete, for example, signs a contract with the team for which he or she will play. The athlete agrees, as his or her part of the contract, to use the abilities and skills he or she has to help the team win, to follow the rules of the team, and to carry out requests that the team officials make from time to

time. In return the contract requires the team to pay the athlete a certain amount of money,

to offer protection to the athlete, as the team is able, from injury, and to keep the athlete employed with that team for a definite amount of time. This is a form of a covenant.

God made a covenant with His Old Testament people. Going all the way back to our Holy Forefather Abraham, God said simply, *“I will be your God, and you will be my people.”* From that simple covenant, the contract was filled in with many things for which God’s people were responsible, and those things for which God was responsible.

Part of that covenant between God and His people was the tithe (the people agreed to return 10% of what God had given to them back to Him). The Holy Prophet Malachi lived hundreds of years after Abraham and that first simple covenant. The Prophet lived hundreds of years after the covenant was made again with Moses on Mt. Sinai when Moses received the Law of God in the form of the Ten Commandments. Late in the life of God’s Old Testament people Malachi is still working to get God’s people to be faithful to what they had agreed to as their part of the contract.

For the Holy Prophet it was simple: Give your tithes and offerings, fill the storehouse of God, and then see what happens. And what will God do? He will as He always did. He will do as He did at the Red Sea. He will do as He did at Jericho when the walls came tumbling down. He will do as He did in the Promised Land, a land given to His people, a land overflowing with milk and honey. Give your tithes and offerings, the Prophet said, and test the Lord: He will pour down for you an overflowing blessing.

