

“All things come of thee, oh Lord, and of thine own have we given thee.”

We sometimes hear these words at the offertory in the Episcopal Church, but they are not in our current prayer book. So where do they come from?

We find these words in the Old Testament of the Bible; 1 Chronicles, chapter 29, after God has decreed that a temple be built.

New International Version

29 Then King David said to the whole assembly: “My son Solomon, the one whom God has chosen, is young and inexperienced. The task is great, because this palatial structure is not for man but for the LORD God.

²With all my resources I have provided for the temple of my God—gold for the gold work, silver for the silver, bronze for the bronze, iron for the iron and wood for the wood, as well as onyx for the settings, turquoise,^{la} stones of various colors, and all kinds of fine stone and marble”

⁶Then the leaders of families, the officers of the tribes of Israel, the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds, and the officials in charge of the king’s work gave willingly. ⁹The people rejoiced at the willing response of their leaders, for they had given freely and wholeheartedly to the LORD.

In verse 14, David says: “But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand.”

David and his people gave generously so that God's temple could be built and maintained. Over the years, the people of Trinity have also given generously so that our beautiful church could be built and maintained. Those of us here now also give to Trinity in many ways, by supporting our church financially, physically and spiritually. We give of our time, talent and treasure to support the mission and ministry of our church and our people.

At this time of year, we look at all of the blessings God has given us, and decide how and what we are able to give back to God by supporting our own temple, our home here at Trinity. But sometimes it just isn't easy to figure out what we can give to our church while still maintaining our own homes and families.

Some years ago, my husband Dick and I had to take a close look at our giving when his pay was changed from a weekly paycheck to a once a month paycheck. We had been giving what we could afford each week, although with 3 children there were a lot of other expenses. When we started to receive a monthly check it was time to really plan ahead. After figuring out all the monthly bills and estimating our other expenses, there just wasn't very much left at the end for Trinity. There had to be an easier way.

In Deuteronomy 26, God asks his people to give of their first fruits from all that they had produced. We decided we would give God of our first fruits by writing the check to Trinity first and figuring out the bills and

expenses afterward. We gave what we felt we could afford, and at the end of the month there was plenty left over, more than we had anticipated.

We continued in this way for some time, and never had to worry about where the money would come from for the church or for our family. If there was a need, it was fulfilled. We could count on God. Over the years, every time that we felt we could increase our giving back to God, in time, talent or treasure, God has blessed us in return.

I would like to encourage you to also give back to God the first fruits of all that He has given you. Make your gift to God, however humble or generous that it is, the first thing you do in honor and thanksgiving to God.

We will soon be receiving an estimated giving form in the mail. Figure out what you can give to Trinity in 2019. Look at all that God has blessed you with and what you expect to receive in the coming year, and enter an amount on the form to be returned to the church. Even if it's just your best guess, write it down, so that those who we have elected to care for and take care of our church can plan and set a budget. Perhaps some weeks an unexpected expense will come up and you will have to give a little less, perhaps sometime there we be an unexpected windfall, and you

will be able to give more than you had planned. Give God your first fruits, and He will take care of the details and provide for you.

In 2 Corinthians 9:7 Paul says:

Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Give cheerfully, and thank God.