

Givers: Grumpy, Grouchy, and Cheerful

A few months ago, the UCC's Daily Devotional arrived in my inbox titled "Nobody Likes a Grumpy Giver" followed the very next day by "God Loves a Grouchy Giver." Besides making me laugh, it prompted me to think about givers – grumpy, grouchy, and otherwise.

I frequently talk about money and giving as a member of the Illinois Conference Stewardship Committee, as a pastor, and as an accountant. It probably comes as no surprise to you that I have found many people are uncomfortable when the subject of money comes up. What happens at your church when you ask directly for increased pledges or present a specific fundraising need? Perhaps there are a few non-committal murmurs, or people edge away from the conversation, or a silence descends. The pandemic has added another dimension of difficulty for churches.

Support to the Illinois Conference through Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) has been facing similar challenges. Giving is down and some tough decisions may need to be made. OCWM is the largest source of funding for the office and the staff we depend on (like our hardworking Associate Conference Ministers).

I hope you will join me at the Illinois Conference's virtual Annual Celebration, November 16-20. On Wednesday afternoon, during the All Conference Chat, the Conference's finances will be discussed. Then on Thursday evening, a financial panel and Q&A with Rev. Molly Carlson, Keith Clark-Hoyos, Ernie Potter, and David Holston. Information will be sent out the first week of November so that you can review it ahead of the meetings.

2 Corinthians 9:7 says that God loves a cheerful giver. I know we all prefer a cheerful giver; they are so much easier to talk to! But God certainly also loves a grumpy or grouchy giver. I would even go so far as to say God *especially* loves the grumpy and grouchy givers. These contributors are the ones who are supporting based on faith. They may not be sure about the benefit of a donation right now, or they may question past experiences, but the fact that they choose to give anyway demonstrates a hope for the future and a commitment to the continued work of God in the world.

Please generously support your local church and OCWM. I look forward to seeing all of you (as cheerful givers or otherwise) at the Annual Celebration!

Blessings,
Lauri Allen
Illinois Conference Stewardship Committee