

## Offering Meditation

*by Rev. Bruce Barkhauer, Minister for Faith and Giving at the Center for Faith and Giving*

In a few minutes, we will receive our Easter special day offering and you will be given an opportunity to make a gift. I mention that now because I want you to be prepared to participate in that moment and so I want to give you time to look for a pen or your wallet, [or your phone] (*if your church offers electronic giving*) or whatever you need to be a part of this experience. But before you decide on an amount, I want to tell you a little bit about what this offering means so that you can understand how this gift will become mission and ministry. It will also give you a chance to listen for how God may be leading you toward a generous response.



I hope most of you are familiar with the good work that happens through our regular offerings which support programs and people right here in our community. But I hope you also know we are part of church that reaches far beyond what we can see in our own neighborhood. As a part of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), we participate in a witness for the gospel of Jesus Christ around the world and across the United States and Canada. This partnership is by choice, not by contract or obligation, but solely by our decision to be in covenant with others so that together we can share the transformational love of God.

When we decide to give to the Easter offering, we are providing clean drinking water, sustainable agricultural practices, medical missions, educational opportunities, and human rights advocacy to and for our sisters and brothers overseas. A gift to this offering today also provides support for our US Military Chaplains, God and Country curriculum for scouting programs, refugee resettlement support, immigration legal services, Christian education resource creation for youth and children, women's ministry, men's ministry, support for our clergy, seminary students, and helping to live out our commitment to care for God's creation through the resources of Green Chalice.

These gifts also empower our Church-related seminaries and colleges as we seek to strengthen our leadership for the Church not only of today, but for the Church our grandchildren and their children will relate to. When you give today, you continue our heritage of working for ways to express the unity we share in Jesus Christ as we pursue common work with other Christian communions. It also supports our interfaith dialogue, which works for greater understanding of those who are different from us in religious expression but not in their desire for global peace. Your gift will enable us to preserve our part of the Christian story through the Disciples of Christ Historical Society and help young people find their place in the Church and society through programs that feature community service such as the XPLOR program for adults in their early and mid-twenties.

As you can tell, a gift given to this offering goes a long way. It supports the connectional ministry we share and the relationships it takes to make ministry happen beyond the doorsteps of this congregation. It provides leaders who challenge us to live boldly into our faith; who stand

with us and for us in times of difficulty; and who represent us in public forums so that our witness of the inclusive welcome Table of Jesus is heard by those who need to hear it most.

Your offering makes this and more than we can list here today possible. The greater your gift, the greater our impact. Make a difference. Give hope. Give generously to the Easter offering.