



Dear Eastside Church,

I thank God for each of you and hold you in my prayers. I hope you are well in this season of gratitude and thanksgiving. As you know, it has been another challenging year requiring a great deal of sustained creativity, ingenuity, and problem-solving. While the blessing of the vaccine has allowed fresh levels of flexibility in our ministries, we continue to proceed carefully with the health and well-being of our congregants at the forefront. In spite of the challenges, the Eastside community still has a great deal to be grateful for:

- In January, we contracted with Harper-Rose Property Management, blessing Eastside with the much-needed talent and leadership of our now-Building Manager, Angela Nichols.**
- On Easter Sunday, we had our first in-person worship service in over a year, celebrating the resurrection of Christ with over 120 of our Eastside family members.**
- In May, we began limited-capacity worship in our beloved sanctuary while offering three additional outdoor services in late spring and summer.**
- We continue to foster our Core Group ministry with 7 groups this fall with 85 individuals participating.**
- Our youth ministry faithfully meets weekly.**
- Our ministry to 4-5th graders, the Beacon, continues to gather monthly.**
- We continue to live-stream worship and have bolstered its quality with substantial upgrades to our camera technology.**
- Our children's ministry held our summer Camp Creation virtually.**
- We transformed our worn playground and now have a creative, multi-purpose and intergenerational space named the Eastside Sharing Garden.**
- We replaced the ineffective gates from the sidewalk on Metropolitan into the Sharing Garden while also completing the south wall of the Sharing Garden fence. We now have a safe and completely secure outdoor space where our children can learn, play, and engage in communal creativity. We have added a roof to the stage, industrial outdoor fans, and, most recently, outdoor heaters.**
- We held our first ever Confirmation program and confirmed our first 5 Eastside confirmands during worship in October.**
- We installed top tier air purifiers in the Children's Wing and upgraded the filters to the highest grade.**
- Our new Children's Minister, Kyle Bynum, took over the implementation of children's programming in the Sharing Garden, and, due to recent cold temperatures, safely transitioned our kiddos back into the large room of our Children's Wing for programming during Sunday worship.**
- Kyle transformed the northern corner of our sanctuary into a "Prayground" for those parents who would like to keep their children with them during worship.**
- Last week, we completed critical repairs on the dome above the sanctuary that will last at least a decade.**
- After an air quality review, we confirmed that the system we installed in 2017 keeps our sanctuary at hospital grade levels of air safety. We installed air purifiers in both of the sanctuary restrooms.**
- A local Eagle Scout built us a new durable structure to replace our old community food and clothing pantry.**
- Our Justice Team inspired Eastside to raise nearly \$7000 for our quarterly justice offerings.**
- Most recently, we completed our hiring process by bringing on Eastside attendee Rachel Williams as our much-anticipated Church Administrator!**

There is, of course, much more we should celebrate, but I simply wanted to offer some reminders of what we have been able to do together by God's grace and your generosity.

Sunday in worship, I announced that between now and December 31st we will be living into our yearly season of Christian stewardship. In this season, we are invited to reexamine our personal resources (time, talent, treasure) with an aim to discern how God is inviting us to support the life and work of Eastside in the coming year.

Since our founding over a decade ago, we have joyfully taught and embraced the practice of tithing we find modeled in ancient Judaism. "Tithe" is simply the Hebrew word for 'tenth' and represents the amount God invites God's people to offer as acts of worship in response to God's generosity. In ancient times, these gifts would not only go to support the work of their local faith community, but would also be the primary source for the work of benevolent support for those in need.

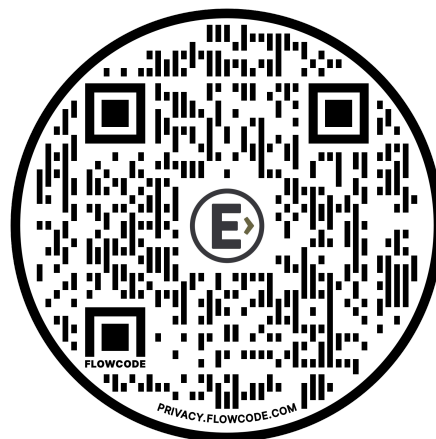
While Eastside encourages tithing, we understand there is a diversity of financial situations in our congregation. While some can immediately begin offering ten percent, others need to work toward this goal over time. Depending on your situation, you may need to begin at a percentage that is personally challenging and sacrificial while also considering your other obligations. There is no pressure, judgement, or shame in this, as ultimately your giving is between you and God. We also understand that some are struggling financially due to issues of employment and a host of other possible factors. If you have no income or are simply struggling to purchase the necessities of food, housing and transportation, consider how you might pledge your time and talents through service with Eastside instead of your finances.

A generous Christian life emerges from a conviction that everything good is already a gift from God. We are but stewards of what we have - not owners. Generosity springs from the conviction that God has created a universe of abundance not scarcity. Our giving has zero impact on God's immense love toward us. Tithing is, however, a very powerful spiritual practice that, over time, forms and shapes us into people with deeper and deeper experiences of dependence, faith, and trust in our loving Parent.

Thank you for faithfully supporting God's work through Eastside in 2021. We cannot do this without your loving investment. Between now and December 31st, please complete our online pledge form as a loving act of worship that will serve to empower our leadership to plan and prepare well for the year to come. Scan the QR code or follow the URL to pledge and to check your year-to-date giving.

Grace+Peace,

-Pastor Tim



<https://www.eastsideatl.org/pledge-2022/>