

## **MONEY MATTERS**

We can't deny it: money matters. Without it we can't pay for the food we need to eat. We need it to pay for a roof over our head. We need it to buy clothing. Money is necessary for transportation to get to a job or to visit friends ...unless we can walk to get wherever we want to go.

Sometimes money plays too big a role in our society. Right now, as we finish the most expensive political campaign ever, I'm very aware that money has far too much influence, undermining democracy in our country. Over 95% of the time the candidate with the most campaign contributions wins, even if the contributions come from a small number of people. This is a reason recent studies have found that ordinary Americans with little money to contribute to political campaigns have virtually no influence on Congress.

Money matters in church, too. When it plays its proper role, it is a means of service, not a means of control and dominance. Fortunately, at Royal Palm Christian Church everyone agrees about this truth. We give, not for any personal advantage, but so we can help support the good God wants us to do as we touch lives in the name of Jesus Christ. We give because without our gifts the services we offer and the worship we share at RPCC could not happen.

Our food pantry that serves dozens of families each week, our preschool, our youth group, and all the things we do in the church building happen because people give. Generous people give money and they give of themselves, serving in the name of Jesus for the sake of others. We continue to be blessed and share blessings with others through what the church does because we offer both our efforts and our money.

Most ministers – me included – hate to ask for money. We are very conscious of the fact that some critics claim all churches do is ask for money. That leads us to be hesitant when it comes to financial matters in church lest we get on the brunt end of that accusation. The truth is that in worship we don't talk about money very often, except for the very brief invitation before Sunday worship offerings. But maybe we should talk about money a lot more. Jesus certainly did.

When Zacchaeus became a follower of Jesus, the first thing he did to show that he was serious about his faith was to change the way he related to money. He quit being a taker and became a giver. Instead of looking for opportunities to get for himself, he looked for opportunities to give in a big way (Luke 19:1-10). Our God is the great gift giver. And God want us to be givers as well. I hope you will prayerfully consider how God wants you to give and consider filling out a pledge card as a sign of your commitment and faith.