

“At Least Buy a Ticket!”

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There once was a man who wanted to win the lottery. He prayed several times each day, “Lord, let me win the lottery.” He prayed like this day after day after day: “Lord, let me win the lottery.” The man had determination and perseverance. He prayed like this for weeks and months and years—everyday the same prayer: “Lord, let me win the lottery.” Finally in an exasperated tone, the man hears the voice of God say, “Look, I heard you already. But help me out. At least buy a ticket!”

This is one of my favorite stories for several reasons. One is that it can apply to almost anything—and what preacher wouldn’t love a story like that. The other reason is that, regardless of where you apply it, it’s true! God can do some amazing things in our lives and our world. And we have a part in it—that’s how God made the world to work.

So what is your part? Do you feel a little overwhelmed?

I Corinthians 3:6 has become a powerful scripture for me: ***“I (Paul) planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.”*** As you remember, the church in Corinth was divided over their leadership: some liked Paul, others liked Apollos. Each credited their “favorite” with the growth in the Corinthian church, thinking their guy was better. Into this conflict, Paul places the conflict into a larger perspective. “Apollos and I are just workers,” Paul explains, “It’s God that does the real work. Again, we are just the workers.” I find this idea both challenging and comforting. When I try to take the credit for something good that’s happened, I am reminded that I am just part of the process. When I feel like I am running on empty—tired of doing it all on my own—I am reminded that I am part of a team. The best team this side of heaven!

You have a part to play in God’s plan for this world. Your part isn’t to run the show—that’s God’s job. It’s an important part—one that only you can play. So buy a ticket...and get busy! The best is yet to come!

We’re all in this together.

Put the Church in “the Stack” for Year-End Giving

We are quickly nearing that time of year when we will be inundated by year-end requests from charities, seeking gifts to support their causes. We will receive several hundred requests in a matter of weeks! Most of these requests do directly to the recycle bin. But some will make it to “the stack,” that short pile of requests from favored charities which we will consider sending a year-end gift. These are the groups we appreciate most and want to support most generously.

While some congregations are beginning to send year-end requests, many are still trying to figure out how to do it without “offending” their members. Ironically, most members actually welcome these requests. Without this letter, we can forget our church when making our year-end gifts. So this year, let’s each put a note in “the stack” for the church. Sample letters are available on the synod website, www.synodrm.org.

As we begin to receive these year-end requests, let’s simply put a piece of paper with the words, “the church,” in “the stack.” While we’re at it, let’s put in another piece of paper with the words, “Synod of the Rocky Mountains.” All gifts to the synod will be used to support Presbyterian mission in the Rocky Mountains and will be greatly appreciated. Thank you for thinking about this ministry we share.