



Neighborhood
Congregational
Church
est. 1943

340 St. Ann's Dr. Laguna Beach CA 92651



November 2, 2011

Ahoy Mateys!

Every pirate worth his or her salt is after treasure, buried and otherwise, and Commodore Jesus and his Father the Admiral are no different. “Surrender the Booty” is this year’s stewardship theme and the first thing ye should know is that ye are God’s treasure...no matter what! But when we keep to the Code, our very lives are treasure. I’m not talking about the code set down by the pirates Morgan and Bartholomew, but the Admiral’s Code—the Code Commodore Jesus summed up thusly: “Love the Admiral, and love your neighbor as yourself.”

And how do we follow the Code and live as God’s treasure? By offering ourselves and our treasure back to the Admiral. Now, I know it’s not easy for pirates to part with their treasure, but the Admiral is the source of all our bounty and asks for 10% of our plunder in return. How much each of us gives is up to us, but don’t be stingy. Commodore Jesus warns us about the dangers of treasure: “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Luke 12:34). Contrary to what most bilge rats think, the Commodore knows that our hearts follow our treasure, not the other way ‘round.

Too often, our version of stewardship leads with the heart. We think we need to be inspired and moved *before* we can give of our treasure. But Commodore Jesus switches the order on us. Good stewardship is not so much a matter of where our hearts lead us, but rather where our hearts are led. If we lock our treasure away in a chest, we ultimately lock our hearts away where no one can touch us. The Admiral’s request for 10% is to avoid this death trap. The Code asks us to give of our treasure so that the Admiral’s love may be shared and our hearts may be free to love fully.

And as Captain Jack Sparrow sagely notes: “Not all treasure’s silver and gold, mate,” so the Admiral asks us to share the gifts of our *time* and *talent* as well. Take time to pray for your church. Make time to volunteer in a ministry you treasure. Your heart will follow. You don’t have to join a committee, just get involved a make a difference!

As you consider your pledge to the Admiral and Neighborhood Congregational Church, we invite ye to share your treasure freely and generously that your hearts may be where your treasure is. Included in this stewardship packet are a pledge card and resources for understanding spiritual giving. And since our treasure includes time and talent as well as treasure, your pledge card includes places to pledge your time and prayers.

Keep to the Code!

X

Rev. B. J. Beu

Cleric of the United Church of Christ