



PRINCE OF PEACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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The Reverend John Major, Rector



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Dear Friends in Christ,

What are some ways we express gratitude? We say, "Thank you," but sometimes those two little words just don't seem like enough. When someone has done something beyond what we could have expected, or gives us an exceptionally generous gift or goes out of their way to do something for us, we often want to offer more than words. We want to show our gratitude in a real, concrete way.

The upcoming seasons are ripe with opportunities to express our gratitude, from treating neighborhood children to candy to hosting loved ones for holiday meals and choosing the perfect Christmas gift to let them know how much they mean to us. And as we enter into this season full of ways to show our gratitude to those we love most, I'd like to invite you to also consider the ways you can show your appreciation to God for all He has done for you.

Of course, we can't really "give" anything to God. The Bible tells us that everything we have already belongs to Him and is given to us to manage, including the talents and abilities we use to earn a living and to enrich our own lives and the lives of those around us. By being good stewards or managers of God's gifts, we serve God and express our love and gratitude for all He has given us.

There are many ways to share what we have been given and live as good stewards of what God has blessed us with, including giving of our time, talent and treasure to our church. Giving to your church is a symbolic act of offering back to God part of what He has so graciously given. It's also practical because it enables the church to pay its bills and continue to offer the services and ministries that you and others need for spiritual health and growth, and makes it possible to continue the work of God's Kingdom.

The Bible has much to say about the importance of stewardship, from parables about how a good steward acts to reminding us of the rewards that await those who use their talents wisely. All these passages reinforce what we read in the Gospel of Matthew urging us to store up treasures in heaven (Matt 6:19-21). Anyone who has seen the devastation caused by recent disasters like the floods that touched our area can't help but see how little our money or talents amount to when spent pursuing earthly treasures—and how easily they can be lost.

That same passage in Matthew's Gospel also reminds us that how we choose to use our treasure reflects what is truly important to us --"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." I'd like to ask you to consider the ways you use your time, talent and treasure, and to

see if how you are using them reflects what is really in your heart. The booklet accompanying this letter provides reflections on the Scripture readings for the next six weeks, all of which will provide a Biblical perspective on some aspect of stewardship. As you read these reflections and listen to the related Scriptures and sermons each week at Mass, it is my prayer that you will find new ways to express your gratitude to our Heavenly Father and to enrich our mutual Christian mission and ministry through your unique mix of God-given gifts and the generous sharing of your time, talent and treasure.

Faithfully,

Fr. Major

Prayer: Lord Jesus, help me to give from the heart, not out of a sense of guilt or obligation, but in gratitude for all my blessings and out of love for you.