

# The Rector's Letter to the Parish Regarding Stewardship

*"Those who carried burdens were loaded in such a way that each labored on the work with one hand and held his weapon with the other. And each of the builders had his sword strapped at his side while he built." (Nehemiah 4:17-18)*

Dear St. Philip's Family,

The Old Testament Book of Nehemiah describes the Jewish community struggling to maintain its identity as the people of the Lord in the midst of an unbelieving and hostile culture. Returning to their homeland after seventy years in Babylonian exile, the Jews found their once great city of Jerusalem in ruins and its impressive wall a heap of rubble. It was Nehemiah's task, as governor, to oversee the rebuilding of the wall and the restoration of the city, and it was a challenging task to say the least. Not only had the buildings been completely destroyed, but there was such intense opposition to the work from the surrounding tribes and nations that Nehemiah and his companions had to go about the work with one hand on the trowel and the other on the sword.

Today, we find ourselves in a similar situation. As the legal battle between the Diocese and TEC continues, we the people of St. Philip's must continue to be about the work of building the kingdom of God in Charleston. We must continue to have one hand on the sword, but we must also keep one hand on the trowel. Many wonderful things are happening in our parish. A spirit of joy and anticipation permeates Sunday morning worship, Bible studies and small group gatherings are plentiful and well-attended, our youth group and youth confirmation classes are reaching young people from all over Charleston, our missions committee is active and engaged in taking the Gospel to foreign lands, and the list goes on. The Holy Spirit is doing a great work in our midst and His presence is palpable!

Therefore, let me encourage you to continue supporting St. Philip's throughout the remainder of this year and into 2018. Despite the uncertainty raised by the legal battle, I can assure you that the money that you give to St. Philip's is used to carry on the Gospel work. The tithes and offerings of our parishioners pay the staff salaries, electric bills, maintenance costs, and mission work of the parish, and there is no excess. What comes in every month is used every month right here in the parish. The Vestry and I take seriously the stewardship of the financial resources you entrust to our care, and we promise to use them always for the glory of Christ and His kingdom.

Finally, let me encourage you to view stewardship and giving to the Church as an act of faith! When the unbelieving world sees the people of God remaining calm in the midst of chaos and steadfast in the face of opposition, it is a powerful witness to the grace and power of God. Be assured, we are keeping one hand on the sword and doing everything in our power to preserve our beautiful grounds and buildings for the next generation, but at the same time, let us not forget to keep one hand on the trowel and to continue building God's kingdom – the kingdom and the world without end.

Under the Mercy,



The Reverend Jeffrey S. Miller, Rector

*The Rector's Stewardship Letter and the 2018 Stewardship Card were mailed the week of December 6. If you did not receive yours, you may pick up a letter and card in the church office or in the Narthex. Alternatively, you may submit your stewardship plan online: [stphilipschurchsc.org/stewardship](http://stphilipschurchsc.org/stewardship).*