

STEWARDSHIP MOMENT (Sunday, October 19, 2025)

My name is Mark Edwards, and I am a member of the Stewardship Committee. It is my privilege to kick-off a new Stewardship Season. Over the next three weeks we will show you how you can contribute to fulfilling the needs of the church. Pledge cards are available online or on the table in the Narthex. Our financial pledge drive will culminate on Consecration Sunday, November 9, when we will gather our monetary pledges. The title of this year's campaign is **Dreaming God's Dream**. For me this is an exciting challenge, as it gives us the opportunity to fulfill that dream, to be the best that we can be.

As a former basketball coach, I am very familiar with the starting of new seasons. For 37 years I would gather the team together and talk about what we needed to do to reach our goals each season. It was both exciting and challenging to plan what we had to do to reach our goal. Every team member would have to make a commitment and a contribution in order for us to have success.

Now a lot of people think that it is the coach's job to motivate the team to meet these challenges, but motivation is not the real issue. After all, everyone is there because they want to be. The desire to succeed is already in the room. The main need is to be able FOCUS our energies and efforts on the common goal, to utilize the talents of each member of the team, to capitalize on the energy and spirit around us, and then to channel that energy into action. I coached over 900 games in my career and before every game we would "take a minute" –one minute to focus, one minute of quiet introspection about the task ahead and to feel the energy in the room.

Our church's Stewardship season is no different. The desire and means to accomplish our task is in this room, by our choice. We need to FOCUS our collective energies on making this a successful campaign. Every Sunday morning at the beginning of our service, we are invited to close our eyes, take a deep breath, and to feel God's spirit and to focus on what it is telling us.

In 1975 I was a young basketball coach and went to my first National Coaches Convention and NCAA Final Four in San Diego. It was a wonderful experience. I watched John Wooden and UCLA win their 10th consecutive NCAA National Championship. But the thing I remember most from that time 50 years ago is an accidental encounter that I had. After checking into our hotel, my colleague and I went down to the lounge to join the other coaches who were there. We just sat down in a booth when Adolph Rupp, the retired legendary University of Kentucky basketball coach walked into the crowded room. At this late point in his life he was totally blind. After looking around the crowded bar, the person guiding him brought him to our booth and asked me if Mr. Rupp could sit next to me. I said "of course", but I really was thinking what could I possibly say to this legend. After introducing ourselves and an awkward period of silence, he said "you are probably wondering why a blind man is coming to a basketball tournament? The truth is, if you are really engaged in something, you don't have to see it to feel it". These words have stuck with me all my life.

So my questions to you as we start our Stewardship Season is:

What does "Dreaming God's Dream" require us to do? Are you engaged enough to feel the energy of the challenge ahead of us?