

Listening with our hearts, we learn that stewardship is not about the parish budget.

Stewardship is a process through which we become generous people, fall more deeply in love with God, and participate in transformation. Not only are our lives transformed to be generous expressions of God's intended creation, but the world is transformed because we are committed to holy purposes. The church budget only needs funding so that lives will be changed through ministries the resources offered support.

It is apparent through The Falls Church Episcopal that lives are being changed. Even when we can't gather regularly in person, we have welcomed 11 new members into our parish family in September. Every week we have people filling out e-visitor cards because they have found a place of purpose and transforming love. We see people loving God and their neighbors through our food ministries and in standing for racial justice, respecting the dignity of all people. I have an attitude of gratitude for all of you for Christ's love that you are sharing with so many. *Thanks for your generosity in giving* all you do of your time, talent and financial resources. Thanks for giving your hearts and your very selves to God here.

But there is more that God can do through our mission. There is more gratitude and generosity that we can show in our lives. There is more of your heart that God wants.

Now is the time for us to give our hearts to God through pledging and yes, even tithing. Now is the time for more of us to change our priorities so that the attachments that get in the way of God will take second seat. Increasing our pledges sacrificially will change those attachments that hinder spiritual health and growth and align our hearts with God's. And we will have an attitude of gratitude.

One steward put it this way: ***Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow.***