

Rector's Note

10. 31.2025

We have heard two announcements on two Sundays from our stewardship team. Sandy and Harry Gould talked about their giving to St Martin's flowing from their gratitude toward God for all God has given them. Jennifer Prah presented a series of giving steps and invited us to pray about and consider moving up one step in our giving.

Jennifer's message could remind us of messages we have heard from WHYY or NPR. "Give us \$100," these pitches say, "because it works out to just pennies per day, less than the cost of coffee."

Jennifer's message, the message of Consecration Sunday, is saying something different. We are being invited in this program to give proportionally, that is, to give something off the top, to our church and to God, every time we are paid. Rather than sending St Martin's a \$100 donation now, by rationalizing that it works out to only a little bit per day, we are being asked to consider literally giving those few dollars out of each paycheck, and then seeing how it will add up over the course of a year.

If our current giving adds up to about \$5 per paycheck, we are being asked to think about whether we could give \$10 per paycheck, and to give it in exactly that way. Moving from giving less than 1% of our income to a full 10% tithe could seem understandably daunting, so we are being invited to just go one step on that path and see how it feels.

All these steps on our spiritual journey add up. They are, in the long run, a gift to ourselves as much as they are a gift to the church.

This week, I am at Trinity Retreat Center with a group of St Martin's members. We are taking a whole three days to learn, reflect, rest, and just be, with God.

It is a big investment of time. Everyone here has stepped away from responsibilities at home and from their regular weekly activities.

And yet, it is also a gift we have given ourselves. A gift that will likely pay dividends when we go back to our “regular” lives. A gift that may subtly shift the relationship we have with time, at least for some of us. We may find that we return less rushed, less drawn into the need to be constantly working, less panicked that there is not enough time.

Making a proportional gift to God can work in a similar way. We may be giving a small amount every two weeks, or every month. At the end of the year, we can feel like rich philanthropists when we see how it all adds up! For some of us, it can subtly change our relationship with money, in the same way that spending time on retreat can change our relationship with time.

There is a wonderful energy going through St Martin’s in this season. Our Stewardship Committee is feeling it in working with this new-to-us program of Consecration Sunday. I am feeling it in the stories we are sharing on retreat this week. Maybe you can feel it too!

It is undoubtedly the Holy Spirit. We need energy and Spirit so badly these days. And I am excited to see where it will lead us.

Mary+

