

### **What is a “Beloved Community?”**

The Rt. Rev. Bishop Curry talks often about the church as a “Beloved Community.” This is a phrase he took from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Officially, “The Beloved Community” is a concept rooted in anti-racism work, but when Bishop Curry speaks about it, I think he is talking about much more.

A Beloved Community is a group of people dedicated to preserving and protecting one another and doing good work in the world. The Beloved Community is concerned less with creeds, codes and traditions, and more with relationships and service to others in joy and humility.

St. Mark’s has been, for me, a Beloved Community. It is where I’ve met all of my very best friends. It’s where I wonder, question, discuss and grow. It’s where I do acts of service that sometimes push me past what is comfortable and toward something meaningful. I suspect you feel the same way.

The Beloved Community of St. Mark’s is an enormous group of individuals and families. The church is what brings and holds us together. But the current national crises that threaten the fabric of our nation, also impact our church community.

Financial gifts to the church have lessened since March which is, in many ways understandable. Yet the work of our staff continues at full steam. I am currently a part-time children’s minister here, and though I have not been in our classrooms with children since March, I’ve made videos for them, prayed with them on Zoom, met with families in parks, created mailings, and used my hours to work creatively in other ways for our community. The rest of the staff is working tirelessly too. Though largely invisible to most of us, their work is what helps knit and maintain the community ties between us.

We know times are hard right now. Many of our families face financial uncertainty. But during this pledge drive, we ask you to think of this community you love and the many resources this church provides to you and others. Do your children use our childcare or educational resources? Do you participate in our adult education groups or social events? Do you watch our online services? Do you simply want to ensure that the pews you love in our historic sanctuary are well maintained until you return? If you cherish this church family, this Beloved Community, I ask that you support it financially.

There are several ways to give. We have a PayPal account, you can use the Give+ App, you can give by text, or by simply mailing or bringing a check to the church. You can find information about all these ways to give through our website.

As we head into what looks like a very hard winter, please bind yourself to our Beloved Community. Plug yourself into the things we offer, even if it’s from afar. And if you can, give. Even a small, recurring gift blesses our work and helps ensure it will continue into the future.