

The Red Door

St. Mary's Episcopal Church

November 2022

Grace, Gratitude, and Generosity

There's a little bag of coins on the bookcase shelf behind my office desk. It's a reminder of a lesson I learned from an 8-year-old on what generosity is-- what true Stewardship is.

Stewardship...the word that strikes fear and discomfort in just about every corner of the church...except for maybe the Sunday School classrooms. Stewardship in most churches is synonymous with funding next year's budget. However, if you look at what Scripture says about Stewardship, God's understanding of what it means to be a Good Steward, nowhere is there a discussion of making next year's budget. So much has the discussion of generosity been about budgets and how much money is needed that the difference between the generosity God calls us to and fundraising has been lost. It's why if you ask me about singing "Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow" when the Plate Offering comes to the altar, I'll give you a look and a lesson about equating God's generosity with a check and cash. (By the way, that's one of my favorite hymns, just not when we're talking about money).

I've spent the majority of my life writing appeal letters for non-profits, so I have no fear of "The Ask" as Advancement Directors call it. I live with the guy who has spent his life doing mega Capital Campaigns for universities. The last church I was in the Vestry and Stewardship Committee were shocked when I asked them when and how often they wanted me to preach on Stewardship. They thought clergy either wouldn't do that, or weren't supposed to. The word strikes fear into clergy hearts, too.

That takes me back to the little bag of coins and why none of us should be afraid of the word and understanding of true Stewardship...Grace, Gratitude, and Generosity.

When I was Director of Christian Ed at a large congregation, I decided to have a Stewardship Campaign for the Sunday School classes. This wasn't about pledging, but it was about learning generosity and giving to others in need by supporting the programs at El Hogar, a project (and home) of the Episcopal Diocese of Honduras that provides love, education, and a future for the most vulnerable of children

and youth. It's one of the most successful break-the-cycle-of poverty programs I've ever seen. Many churches in our Diocese support El Hogar.

The children were asked to be generous in what we call age-appropriate ways, such as bringing in all their old soccer equipment and clothing, books, small donations, and a whole bunch of things that children can do.

One of the programs for the younger children was to send Birthday Greetings, cards and prayers (and maybe some books) to the children their age. As many of these children don't have families outside of El Hogar, these are really important celebrations. But on that list were names, many names, that had the exact same date. Statistically impossible. I asked the El Hogar Director about it and he said, "That's because so many of these children were abandoned and have no idea what their birth date is. We give them a date so they get a Birthday Celebration." I told this to the teachers.

This little 8-year old girl came to me on our Stewardship Sunday, accompanied by her mom and dad and that bag of coins with 28 Cents. Her bag of coins, from the piggy bank where she'd been saving up for something that I can't remember what was. She told me that she was really lucky to have so many things and a birthday. "I have a birthday. How can someone not have a birthday? Please send this so he can have a real birthday." Her parents offered their own coinage to the gift explaining that when they had asked her if she really wanted to give her savings away, she'd said it was important to help someone have a birthday. They thanked me for teaching her the value of things.

That little girl understood that she had received much grace and love from God. She had lots of things that others did not...like a birthday. And she showed God how thankful and grateful she was by being generous to someone who didn't have as much. Grace...Gratitude...Generosity.

Like the widow who put in what she had, this child gave all that she had so that another might have something. That's doing God's work. That's taking
(continued on page 2)

VESTRY

John Joy, Sr Warden
 Charles Everhart, Jr Warden
 Richard Davis
 Judy Franklin
 Andrea Harner
 open

Newsletter editor—John Glaze

Submissions to THE RED DOOR are welcomed. © items cannot be published without consent of the owner.

Samaritan Outreach continues to depend upon donations to meet their current needs. Please help us help SOS serve our community. The collection box is now in the Parish House.



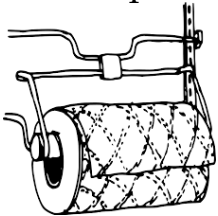
Diapers



Clothes Washing Liquid

Toilet Paper

Paper Towels



*If you would prefer to mail a monetary donation:
 Samaritan Outreach Services
 PO Box 242
 Hillsboro, OH 45133*

Vestry Report

My wife Carol and I traveled to South Dakota the last week of September, returning home on October 1. The trip was taken as part of a group tour, and we were able to go with my aunt and cousin from Maryland. The trip was a long time in the making, and there were some unexpected outcomes that might interest our readers. The tour focused almost entirely on the Black Hills region of South Dakota; or the “paha sapa” as the Lakota named them. They are not really black, but from a distance do appear that way, largely due to the predominance of Ponderosa pine and rock formations. At our first evening dinner, we were asked to introduce each other, which we all did. We were also asked to think about our last dinner of the week, where we would have to describe what our “aha” moment was for the week. Recognizing my personality is not inclined to “aha” moments, or other kinds quick illumination of thought, I thought this was really going to be a struggle, and something I was not looking forward to. As it turns out, it was not a struggle at all.

During the first three days we visited the High Plains Heritage Center (a five state regional western museum), the towns of Deadwood and Lead, the Homestake Gold Mine (which was the largest gold producing mine in the U. S. and is now used as a sub-atomic particle research lab 4000 feet below the surface), and a visit to a Woolly Mammoth dig site in Hill City, which boasts the largest concentration of mammoth remains in the world.

After dinner the first evening we heard a speaker, John Esposti, explain the geology of the region, and he did so in way that made clearer what happened to earth in the region over the past two billion plus years. John was fond of quoting the first poet of South Dakota, Badger Clark, and he recited at least four of Clark’s poems from memory. John also challenged us with a comment that stuck with me in the days afterward, and still does. He asked us to use our imagination when anywhere. He also urged us to “be receptive, and let your emotions guide you.” This really puzzled me and I kept wondering what does imagination have to do with rock, and geology, and the hard sciences?

To be continued next month.....

Respectfully submitted,
John Joy

Who is this?

If you guessed Andrea Harner last month, you were correct!

Grace, Gratitude and Generosity *(continued)*

ing care of the needs of others.

God has given us much, many blessings. Those blessings are on loan to us from God’s creation. It ain’t our stuff. It’s God’s for God’s purposes and to support God’s ministry in the world. When we give to the church, it’s for the work of the Kingdom. It’s for showing Gratitude for the Blessings God has loaned us. We show that Gratitude by our Generosity...by Giving Back To God the Things That Are God’s!

As it says in Deuteronomy 10:14 “To the Lord your God belong the heavens, even the highest heavens, the earth and everything in it.”

Stewardship is our work to care for and transform God’s Vineyard, God’s Creation into the Kingdom of God, the vision of God’s Will on Earth.

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In my never-ending search for history of or about St. Mary's, I ran across a letter written by Dick Flinn early in January of 1990. He had contacted the Cincinnati Art Museum and was following up with a letter and photographs of the wooden case currently located in the foyer of the new building. Anita Ellis of the museum contacted him back with this information.

1. Lack of paneled construction precludes an early date.
2. Appears to be a revival piece of the last quarter of the 19th Century at the earliest.
3. Could be ecclesiastical.
4. Possibly, but not necessarily, European.

If you remember, Betsy Miller took this piece to Louisville a few years ago, to the Antiques Roadshow, who had very little solid information either. Several guesses or "it could be" suggestions. One thing they added was that they felt it was a "one off" piece.

This is almost as mysterious as our sanctuary floor!



Above: detail of lid

Below: detail of front



What's coming at Our Christmas contest! Not giving now, but we will 2nd and 3rd duplicate winning will be a drawing es! You know that editor is all about can be sure that the volve our St.

Now, of any is permitted, but sharing your an- will only lesson your own chance of winning! When the tree goes up and the decorations go on, the entry forms will be available!



Christmas time? Tree will contain a out many details have prizes for 1st, es! In the case of numbers, there to award the priz- your newsletter HISTORY, so you contest will in- Mary's history! reference materials keep in mind that swers with others When the tree goes up and the decorations go on, the entry forms will be available!

Memorials for Carlene Phillips

We thank the following for their generous gifts in memory of Carlene Phillips:

- Merchants National Bank
- Jim & BJ Gee
- Jane Stowers
- Janis Vosper
- Madeleine Crouse

Grace, Gratitude and Generosity *(continued)*

That child gave from a heart that sees her abundance, not from what she didn't have...her scarcity. That's Stewardship, seeing our abundance from God and giving in gratitude from our blessings...not from what's left after we have what we want.

When we look at what the church needs we can look at what we have...our blessings and our abundance... or we can be anxious about what we don't have in our budget...our scarcity. We can be like that child. We can look at what God is calling us to be and do as Christians through the lens of our Abundant Blessings and with trust in God's Grace, putting God first. Or, we can bury our blessings in the ground or a piggy bank.

Did I mention she also managed to live The Great Commandment.

28 Cents...in the world we live in...not much.

In God's world...everything.

PARISH PRAYER LIST

Comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit; give them courage and hope in their troubles, and bring them the joy of your salvation. We remember Eleanor Cumberland, Shirley Gilliam, Margaret Lyons, Joyce Kittrell, Herschel Hook, Nancy Orth, Maxine McGrath, Sharon Kamm, Bob & Dorothy Hodson, Dan Fisher, Bob Lowell, the families and friends of Carlene Phillips, Dan Pitsos and Kenneth Joy, the prayer concerns of Paul and Joyce Nort, those affected by the Coronavirus pandemic and those serving to relieve their suffering, those thousands who have lost loved ones in Ukraine. the patients and staff at Georgetown Veterans Home as well as all of those now serving in our armed forces, especially Macy Lyle, Henry Sherrill, Jaden Chin-Franz and Javier Paula.

The Red Door

St. Mary's Episcopal Church
234 N. High St.
Hillsboro, OH 45133



ST. MARY'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH INFORMATION

The Diocese of Southern Ohio
St. Mary's Episcopal Church
234 N. High St Hillsboro, OH 45133
937-393-2043

The Rev. Terri Thornton
Supply Priest

SUNDAY WORSHIP - 10:00 am
IN PERSON & *delayed posting on Facebook*
COMMUNION FOR THE HOMEBOUND—
Sunday after service.

*We strive to be safe and make our parishioners and
guests feel safe and welcome!*

WEB SITE:

www.smehillsboro.weebly.com



November
11 - Ty Harner
15 - Shirley Gilliam

Lector & Intercessor Schedule

1st wk Betty & Jim Heathcote
2nd wk Connie Reynolds & Dea Flinn
3rd wk Carol & John Joy
4th wk Rich Davis & Connie Reynolds
5th wk Connie Reynolds & Dea Flinn