



September 15, 2020

Dear Friends in Christ,

I cannot think of a time when more has been asked of us in living our faith. I don't have to list the reasons for you: we all know the challenging year it has been. What I find striking, though, is how this community remains connected to the good news of God's presence among us. We are tethered to this audacious belief that we are in this together and that real hope exists in our shared pilgrimage. For the coming month, we'll be focusing our attention on this bold claim that we are ***Together in Hope***.

Our collective action, born of hope and trust, is the bedrock of stewardship. It is a commitment to being grateful and responsible stewards of the gifts we receive from God. The tradition of giving back to God and to the church is rooted in the Biblical practice of "tithing," or giving a tenth of our earnings back to God (Numbers 18:26). While offering an intentional proportion of our income to the work of our church can be a meaningful spiritual practice, the Episcopal Church teaches that stewardship is more than just pledging; it's about contributing time and talents and working to bring God's kingdom closer.

Here at Church of the Resurrection, stewardship is critical to our common life as a community of faith. Our operating budget is funded almost entirely by the remarkable generosity of our parishioners. We draw no income from an endowment fund and we receive no funding from the wider Episcopal Church. In 2021, we will depend upon pledges from our stewardship campaign to fund over 90% of our day-to-day operations.

So what does that incredible generosity make possible? A great deal, even in a pandemic! Your gifts fund a youth program so robust that our dozen graduating seniors led worship from the distance of their homes. You fuel a music ministry spanning generations and musical genres and many different instruments. Your abundance enabled the gathering of 34 barrels of food for Monument Crisis Center. It takes the form of putting a new roof on the church, protecting the sanctuary and all who gather for generations to come. Your financial support makes it possible for us to get creative in how we gather to pray, to connect, to crack open our sacred texts, and to lift each other up.

The investment of so many people's time, talents and money over the years has grown a thriving church community that we all call home. I fully recognize that many of us are experiencing real hardship this year — if that is the case for you, please let me know how the church can support you, and know that your prayers and spirit among us are truly gift enough. For those in a position to support the church, we encourage you to prayerfully consider how you can share out of your abundance. It may be helpful to know that if pledges increased by 8%, we would meet our 2021 budget goal and deepen our ministry in the community. In the coming weeks, please join in reflecting on the many blessings we have received, returning a pledge card or pledging online at [www.resurrectionph.org/caring/giving](http://www.resurrectionph.org/caring/giving) as you are able by October 11, and above all, choosing to walk **together in hope**.

Thanks and peace to you,

*The Rev. Liz Tichenor*