



*Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another  
with whatever gift each of you has received. – 1 PETER 4:10*

October 29, 2020

Dear Holy Trinity Family,

Last November, right before Thanksgiving, I remember calling Joanne Wallend and informing her that I was accepting the vestry's invitation to be the next rector at Holy Trinity. I finished the month of December at Church of the Ascension, took a short break in January, and began my time at Holy Trinity on February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020. This would be my very first call as rector. I was incredibly excited, but also very nervous. I would routinely ask myself: Am I ready to be rector? Do I have what it takes? Little did we know what was about to happen. Sunday, March 15<sup>th</sup> would be our last in-person worship service before the "shut-down."

Sunday, March 22<sup>nd</sup> was our inaugural on-line worship service, a pre-recorded version of morning prayer. It was awkward at first, but we adapted. As time went on, the "sermons from the lanai" became a hit. After several months, we began entertaining a return to in-person worship. We engaged in a campus-wide internet upgrade project and we live streamed our very first Eucharist on June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020. The live stream was rough at first, but with some borrowed equipment and a new Boxcast subscription we took a substantial leap forward. Today, we get over 150 sustained views every Sunday morning. People tune in from as far as Texas and Pennsylvania. Did you know we now have virtual members of our church? These are people who live in other states, who have never stepped foot into Holy Trinity, but watch every Sunday and send us financial support...amazing!

This pandemic has been rough! Our way of life has been disrupted. The norms are no longer. We all know someone who's been directly impacted by Covid-19. Yet, even in the midst of this great challenge, blessings emerge. Despite the health risks, I've seen people rise up to help other members of our church who were in great need. Our thrift store has become a beacon of hope for those impacted by the economic downturn. Our outreach committee has been able to give thousands of dollars to local charities and assistance programs. We've all learned new tech skills as virtual meetings and on-line worship have become the new normal. The vestry and I have been hard at work developing a new strategic plan, re-structuring our committees and designing new employee agreements. Yes, things are not the way they were, but God has opened so many doors that have allowed us to adapt, to evolve, and to develop new structures that will carry us into the next phase of our journey as a Christ centered community.

(over)

I can say, however, that although coronavirus has tested our resolve, it has not tested our faith. As I stated above, I have witnessed the countless ways that you have used your resources for the mission of the Church and to help each other. I find this inspiring and hopeful as we plan our work together in 2021. You may not know this, but the members of Holy Trinity have shown incredible grace by not only meeting but exceeding their 2020 pledges in order to keep the church financially afloat. Wow...Thank you! Thanks to each one of you doing your part to help during these tough times, not just here at the church, but in your homes, your workplaces, your schools, your neighborhoods, and with your families. This is the light that we are called to bring into a dark and hurting world.

At the end of my sermons, I typically leave everyone with a question or two to ponder. How will you discover and use the gifts you have been given to help our church and our community? How will you hear the Gospel call to seek and serve Christ in all people, and respond with generosity? As I look at each family, each individual, I realize that we are all stewards of God's manifold grace because we give to the world from what we have received.

Because of coronavirus, we're having to engage in stewardship a little differently this year. The usual methods of dinners and storytelling just cannot be done; however, this opens the door for us to try something new. Over the next couple of weeks, I will be posting several videos on our website. Each video will focus on a different aspect of stewardship. I encourage everyone to watch these videos, listen to the content, and prayerfully discern your pledge for 2021.

Included with this correspondence is our newly designed pledge letter. I invite you to receive this with grace and prayer as you consider how you will share with our church what you have received from God. In addition, all our 2021 stewardship materials and videos can be found on the website: [www.holytrinityclw.org/stewardship2021](http://www.holytrinityclw.org/stewardship2021)

It is our goal to receive everyone's signed pledge letter by **Sunday, November 29<sup>th</sup>**, the first Sunday of Advent. On this Sunday, all pledge letters will be blessed and our entire stewardship campaign will be prayerfully offered to God as part of our Holy Eucharist.

In the spirit of generosity and love,

Rev. Daniel J. Lemley