



*They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when heat comes, and its leaves shall stay green; in the year of drought it is not anxious, and it does not cease to bear fruit.
Jeremiah 17:8*

Dear Holy Trinity,

As I was preparing my thoughts for this year's stewardship letter, I took the opportunity to re-read last year's letter. It opened with a wonderful and lengthy list of all the advancements and improvements that occurred in 2022, and I deemed 2022 the return to "normal" (following all the ramifications from Covid) and predicted that 2023 would be a year of growth. I'm excited to say my prediction came true. We have grown...and grown in many different ways! Easter attendance was the biggest it had been in years, average Sunday attendance increased, and new people have become members of Holy Trinity. The choir has tripled in size, Prayer & Share returned, Alpha resumed, Grief Share began, and there were days when we ran out of seats at Coffee with the Clergy. We maintained all our new fellowship initiatives and saw the return of the Annual Picnic. Outreach continues to lead the charge as we hosted our first Sleep in Heavenly Peace Bed-Build (providing 60 local children with beds), expanded Laundry Love through new ministry partners, continued our support of Sandy Lane Elementary through various endeavors (especially the Back-Pack Project), all while maintaining our regular support of other local outreach partners. To meet this growth, we expanded Anne Punch's administrator position from part-time to full-time and we hired Stephanie Forant as our new church nursery coordinator.

In addition to many of these visible expansions and changes, there were a number of deferred maintenance projects that commenced behind-the-scenes in 2023. We also discerned several large-scale facilities projects: new refrigerators and freezer for the kitchen, new irrigation well, total replacement of all exterior lighting fixtures, new LED lighting for the sanctuary and narthex, and complete refurbishment of our Holy Trinity sign and marquee. Many of these projects will be completed by early 2024 and funding has already been secured and designated.

All of this great news deserves a massive THANK YOU! Thank you to everyone who gave generously of their time, talent, and treasure to make all this possible. Thank you to the newer members of our church, who joined us throughout the year and began contributing to the work of this wonderful community. Most of all, thank you to God for blessing us in ways that continue to be awe inspiring.

If 2022 was a return to normal and 2023 was a time of growth, I think 2024 will be a year focused on building for the future. I have no doubt that our growth will continue over the next year, but the time has come for Holy Trinity to take a serious look at securing the staff and facilities needed to support the future vision of our church. Stay tuned for the upcoming stewardship videos where I unveil additional information and exciting details regarding some of the initiatives we're hoping to fund in 2024.

This is why I am asking each of you to seriously consider your financial commitment for 2024. We need to garner additional resources that will help build and secure Holy Trinity's future. I know the past year has been challenging for many. Inflation, market uncertainty, and sky-rocketing insurance costs have impacted us all. The church has encountered the same hurdles: utilities increased throughout 2023, our vendors are charging more for routine services and maintenance, and we just received word that our 2024 property insurance premium increased 28% (over \$10,000) from last year. Yet, despite rises in costs and financial instability, I feel confident God will continue to bless Holy Trinity and its members with the resources we need to continue on our journey of building for the future.

Similar to last year, I intend to post stewardship videos that will dive into additional details not covered in this letter. I encourage everyone to watch the videos, listen to the content, and prayerfully discern your pledge for 2024. All our stewardship materials can be found on our website: <https://holytrinityclw.org/stewardship/>

Included with this correspondence is our updated pledge letter. I invite you to receive this with grace as you consider how you will share with our church what you have received from God. It is our goal to collect everyone's pledge letter by **Sunday, December 3rd**, where 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