



Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Ephesians 5:1-2, NRSV

Dear Holy Trinity,

Generosity is a journey. It is a practice that we learn and nurture within our hearts. It just isn't in our nature to give away what we have worked hard to acquire or to donate our precious time without compensation. It takes something as radical as Love to inspire us to share our time, talent, and treasure with others. This is a journey we make together.

The past six weeks have been a tough journey to say the least. The two recent hurricanes have challenged our community in ways that haven't been seen in almost a century. Every one of us knows at least one person or family whose home was flooded because of the storms. We've all seen the news stories of entire neighborhoods displaced due to flooding and damage. Yet, hope was not lost. We rolled up our sleeves and began to help each other. Whether it was members of our own church, neighbors down the street from our homes, or strangers at a local laundry mat, we did what Holy Trinity does best...we practiced generosity; we practiced Love!

Despite the wide-spread damage all around us, Holy Trinity was very fortunate. Our campus was protected from serious damage. Many of our congregant's homes and properties were spared from the worst of the storm. Keep in mind, this same sentiment cannot be shared by many of our sister churches in Pinellas and other areas of our diocese. Therefore, we have much of which to be thankful. Thankful for God's protection during the storms. Thankful for the will and opportunities to help our neighbors. Thankful for the resources we have which enable us to assist others. Thankful for the generous hearts that have been cultivated in the people of Holy Trinity.

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In past stewardship letters, I have highlighted the accomplishments of the current year and then forecasted the goals of the next year, but that doesn't seem appropriate this year. Instead, I think this year's stewardship focus should be one of thankfulness. I recall Bishop Scharf's sermon during his visit in August. He preached on all the amazing benefits: improved physical, mental, and spiritual health when we simply practice thankfulness in our lives. As this year's stewardship campaign kicks off, let us be intentional in raising up stories of how we are being thankful in our congregation. Whether it's before or after Sunday worship, before or after meetings and gatherings, or during our wonderful hot breakfast, I invite you to kick off conversations with "What are you thankful for lately?" Let's share our stories of inspiration and thankfulness with each other.

One of the many ways we can practice our thankfulness is through generosity. Giving graciously of our time, talent, and treasure is a powerful testimony and response to the blessings that God has given us. As this year's theme scripture from Ephesians teaches us, Christ gave everything He had (His Life) as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. He did this in thanksgiving to God, as a generous gift for the Love He has for us ALL. We therefore, are called to be imitators of this level of thankfulness and generosity.

Please take a moment and prayerfully consider your financial gift and commitment to Holy Trinity in 2025. Similarly 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 discern your pledge for 2025. All our stewardship materials can be found on our website: <https://holytrinityclw.org/stewardship/>

Included with this correspondence is our updated pledge form. 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 forms by **Sunday, December 8th**, where all pledges will be blessed, and our entire stewardship campaign will be prayerfully offered to God as part of our Holy Eucharist. May our stories of thankfulness, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, bring forth a harvest of generosity and Love.

In Christ+



Rev. Daniel J. Lemley