



Christ Episcopal Church

Ridgewood

Dear Christ Church Parishioners and Friends,

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry often describes us as “The Episcopal branch of the Jesus movement”. As we begin to talk about the stewardship of our parish and wider community, we might wonder: What does that mean for us? What is God calling us to do as followers of Jesus?

First, we follow the One who loves us so much that he gave his life to redeem the creation that God loves so deeply. And we, *you and I*, are the Crown Jewels of God’s creation!

As Episcopalians, we find inspiration in our worship and the celebration of Eucharist. We reach out to help those in need. We believe the Bible is the word of God and, along with our God given reason and experience, we approach each day as a vital part of God’s plan for the world.

God created us to emulate Godly love in the world, through how we *live* and how we *give* – following God’s standard of *transformational generosity*. As followers of Jesus, we are called to give all of ourselves to God’s ministry in the world. In the 6th chapter of Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus, after teaching us how to pray, specifically talks to us about money, our needs and our hope. He reminds us that we cannot have two masters. We cannot love God and money.

Jesus then says:

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?”

He finishes by calling each of us with these words, *“But seek first God’s kingdom and God’s righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”*

How would Christ Church –how would *we* – be transformed if each of us remembered to seek God first, and trust in God’s provision through the *priorities* he calls us to live into?

Establishing new priorities for ourselves and for our church means transforming how we think about generosity. That transformation will call upon us to look for generosity in every aspect of our work and in every aspect of our lives.

Jesus calls us to take the **long view** by challenging us to give all of ourselves to God’s righteousness and to trust in God’s care. What a challenge! What a call for transformation!

I pray you will join my family and I as we work together as the **Family of Christ Church** to transform generosity in our church, our community and our lives.

In Christ,

Fr. Tom