



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 St. Stephen's Community:

As our annual stewardship campaign gets underway, our theme for this year, **Rooted in Abundance**, is a reminder to us that we are inspired to give because so much has been given to us. This is not transactional – we do not give in proportion to how we feel we have benefited or suffered – rather we give because of the love we have experienced in the story of our faith.

I am grateful that I have been called to lead this annual process of telling the story of our abundance and our gratitude. I love hearing the stories that will be told about what connects all of us to St. Stephen's. Every pledge matters this year, and each pledge will be accepted, brought to the altar, and blessed before God and our community.

As you fill out your pledge cards, you'll notice that one side is about your financial promises for the year, your wealth. The other side is dedicated to how you might want to share your works and your wisdom. Beyond staffing committees, our work of wisdom is about unlocking creativity to grow our mission, collaborating with other people, institutions, and churches to serve more of our neighbors, and how we form generous, grateful hearts through our education programs. Our works bring us opportunities to roll up our sleeves, to volunteer for service, to pitch in to help make things better.

This year, as you pray about your commitment to our church, please tap into that nourishing structure of faith and generosity shown to us by an extravagant God, a patient Shepherd, and a gathering Spirit who call us to extend our networks and share our gifts with the world. When you are rooted in abundance, you realize that your giving can be as boundless as the Creation that gave birth to us all. Thank you for your generosity and your prayerful consideration of your pledge to St. Stephen's.

In gratitude,

Shad Scharlach
St. Stephen's Vestry
Stewardship Committee Chair

P.S. The last Sunday of our campaign is October 29. Please send or submit your gifts by that date so that we may gather them together and bless them.