

TODAY WE WILL BE KICKING OFF OUR STEWARDSHIP DRIVE. I HAVE BEEN THINKING ABOUT THE MESSAGE I WANTED TO CONVEY AND HOW I WANTED MY WORDS TO INSPIRE ALL OF US TO DIG DEEPER AND GIVE MORE,

BUT THE MORE I THOUGHT ABOUT IT THE MORE I REALIZED THAT I DIDN'T REALLY NEED TO THINK OF SOMETHING WITTY OR UNIQUE. I JUST NEEDED TO TELL THE TRUTH. THE TRUTH IS THAT WE ARE ALL CALLED TO GIVE BACK TO GOD WHAT BELONGS TO GOD. AND TO SHARE WITH GOD WHAT GOD HAS SO GRACIOUSLY GIVEN US. GOD HAS MADE US STEWARDS OVER THE EARTH AND EVERY LIVING CREATURE IN IT, AND IN RETURN GOD CALLS US TO TAKE CARE OF OUR EARTH, THE CREATURES THAT LIVE IN IT AND OF EACH OTHER.

WE ALL PRACTICE STEWARDSHIP IN OUR OWN WAYS, WHETHER IT IS RECYCLING AT HOME, BECOMING A VEGETARIAN, DOING HIWAY CLEANUP, HABITAT FOR HUMANITY, NEW ORLEANS AND HAITI MISSIONS, HOPE WARMING PLACE OR ANY OF THE OTHER OUTREACH MISSIONS THAT WE DO. MANY OF THESE PARTICULAR MISSIONS ONLY REQUIRE SHARING OUR TIME AND TALENT, BUT WE ARE ALSO CALLED TO SHARE OUR TREASURE.

OUR TREASURE IS WHAT MAKES IT POSSIBLE TO PAY THE BILLS, MAINTAIN THE PHYSICAL GROUNDS AND CHURCH BUILDING, AND TO SUPPORT THOSE CAUSES THAT ALLOW US TO BE GOD'S FACE AND HANDS AT WORK IN THE WORLD. BY MAKING THE COMMITMENT TO SHARE OUR TREASURE, WE ARE MAKING THE COMMITMENT TO HELP THOSE IN OUR COMMUNITY, OUR STATE, OUR COUNTRY AND OUR WORLD.

I WENT TO CONVENTION THIS YEAR AND WAS ABLE TO TAKE PART IN A WORKSHOP GIVEN BY ERIC LAW. THIS WORKSHOP CALLED "HOLY CURRENCIES" WAS VERY INSITEFUL AND MORE IMPORTANTLY IT MADE SENSE. ALL IT REQUIRES IS FOR US TO MAKE A COMMITMENT TO OPEN OUR HEARTS AND OUR SPACE TO EACH OTHER, OUR COMMUNITY AND OUR WORLD, TAKE CARE OF OURSELVES AND EACH OTHER, TELL THE TRUTH OF OUR BLESSINGS AND GODS LOVE FOR US, AND GIVE BACK TO GOD WHAT IS GOD'S, AND TO GIVE IT JOYOUSLY. ONCE WE DO THAT THEN OUR CHURCH WILL BE BLESSED WITH WHAT WE NEED TO CONTINUE ON AS ST PAULS AND DO THE WORK THAT GOD HAS GIVEN US TO DO.

SO INSTEAD OF ASKING YOU TO DIG DEEPER AND GIVE MORE, I AM GOING TO ASK THAT YOU JUST MAKE THE COMMITMENT. NEXT WEEK PLEDGE CARDS WILL BE AVAILABLE IN THE NARTHEX. EACH PLEDGE CARD WILL HAVE A MAILING LABEL ON IT AND A RETURN ENVELOPE. PLEASE PICK YOURS UP, TAKE IT HOME AND PRAY ABOUT IT AND THEN MAKE THE COMMITMENT TO FILL IT OUT AND SEND IT BACK.