

November 19th Stewardship *"In Gathering"* Approaches

"A Rite Beginning to be thankful for" A Word on Stewardship from the Bishop

In my address to Diocesan Convention, I spoke of the diocese's current work being that of "making a right beginning". Throughout this year, we have used our blessings and our love of God to do just that.

Here are ways we are being good stewards of God's gifts amongst us:

The Rooted in Jesus gathering saw over 80 people coming together to deepen and broaden our expressions of faith. I pray that ideas from that event are being expressed in the churches of attendees. There was an abundance of love and Spirit gathering us together and sending us out. We are committing to this being a yearly event for the whole diocese. For this opportunity: Thanks be to God!

The Diocesan Council had a spectacular working retreat during which they named historic trends that have led to our current place of financial and missional instability. In the naming, we all became hopeful and unified in our commitment to the work ahead. We commit to turning instability into possibilities for strong and vibrant ministries in our diocesan region of The Episcopal Church. For our mission in Utah: Thanks be to God!

The Standing Committee has been working to assess property assets to initiate challenging and real conversations around the cost of mowing grass vs. seeding new ministries. They have much more work to do but are standing in brave spaces with imaginative hearts and listening ears for God's call to our work. For brave leaders: Thanks be to God!

Representatives from a majority of our churches gathered to make a beginning in changing our relationship to pledging our gifts to the work of the church. We were led by three volunteers who are deeply passionate about the work needed for all of our churches to bridge their fears and proclaim their trust and power in the Lord. By the end of the fourth week, the talk of scarcity amongst participants had greatly diminished and the creativity had begun to flow. For living into the bigness of God's dreams for us: Thanks be to God!

Now it is your turn to make a right beginning in our work as the Episcopal Diocese of Utah.

We have named Sunday, November 19th, as In-gathering Sunday when pledges will be brought to the altars of our churches. (Some churches needed to choose another date, so check with yours). Through November, I ask the diocese to pray in gratitude and hopefulness for the pledges we need to make a right beginning in the healing and life-giving work before us. Pray that all of our hearts may be opened.

As part of my prayers this month, I offer to God deep gratitude for all who have written stewardship letters, given presentations, and designed innovative ways to communicate our responsibilities to the ministries God entrusts to us.

In closing, I extend the profound words of our cathedral's dean, The Very Rev. Tyler Doherty. These thoughts echo the words you may have heard from your clerics or stewardship volunteers. They are

from the letter he wrote to the people of St. Mark's as their rector. I share them with you as words from our Dean, praying that you feel their deep power in the way that I was blessed to feel.

(Fr. Tyler+ writes of the need to move off reliance on investments; the parallel for the diocese would be the Perpetual Trust.)

"A sustainable portion of the revenue from these investments—instead of having to be used to cover shortfalls in our budget—can then be used to grow our ministries to the last, the least, the lost, and the left behind in the city: the "Church Outside the Walls." In short, instead of using our investment income on ourselves, we can pour it out on others in imitation of Our Lord Jesus Christ who pours Himself out for us. Pretty clear. Pretty simple. And entirely within our grasp...

In a very real way, our example at the Cathedral will impact whether or not the Episcopal Way of radical welcome and indiscriminate hospitality, of deep prayer, rootedness in Jesus, and passionate advocacy for justice, peace, and creation care remains a part of the social fabric of Utah. Please give generously in imitation of the one who gave his life for us." *The Very Rev. Tyler B. Doherty*

Thanks be to God! Thanks be to God!
+Bp. Phyllis Spiegel