

What Stewardship Is

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Stewardship is everything we do after we say, "We believe...." It is our living relationship with God. It is our response to God's unconditional love and to the gifts of salvation through Jesus Christ and grace through the Holy Spirit.

Stewardship is not about money. It is about how we use everything that God has given us. It is about how we live and how we give. What do we give to God in response for all that has been given to us? We give time, talent, and treasure.

Most people find giving their time, maybe, and talent easy, almost natural. Giving treasure seems more difficult. We may ask, "How do I fit the church into our family's budget?" That question comes from living a life of scarcity and not **abundance**.

Daily stories in the news are filled with descriptions of shortages – food, money, sales, or work – all the stuff and activity in our daily life. Still I am struck by the ordinary **abundance** that is all around us. It is these abundances, existing in the ordinary places of life that allows us at Cary Presbyterian to be of service physically and spiritually every day to people suffering from these oft mentioned shortages.

In Leviticus 19:9, we are reminded of God's instructions to the peasant farmers of Israel, "When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the alien." Should we not be sharing the seemingly invisible leftovers of our life in the same manner? Emphatically, yes!

We have food that is in excess of our needs. We have time that slips away with no idea of what was accomplished. We spend our "treasure" in numerous small ways that in retrospect created little "good" for others or even ourselves. In short, we too may have gleanings – a hidden **abundance** – that through our Church community can be put to service doing the work of our Lord.

When we consider the mission of Cary Presbyterian, it is the simple act of taking the ample supply of things, time and money that we have and sharing this **abundance** with those whose lives are filled with shortages. When we live a life of abundance, not scarcity, the question changes to "How do I best respond to God's gifts?"

Stewardship then is a life-long exploration of how this perspective can be lived on a daily basis. Church is about encouraging the congregation as a whole, so that all members are sharing their abundance – even the widow's mite – so that we may fulfill our mission as members of the living Body of Christ in the world.

Dear God, help us to see your abundance. That gift of love that so abundantly fills our life with salvation and a vision of the service possibilities that you place at our doorstep. Teach us to live a life of abundance. Amen.