

Every Perfect Gift

October 4, 2021

The Feast of St. Francis of Assisi

Dear People of God,

Every pledge campaign begins with Gratitude, and that is how I want to begin my message to you this year. I am inspired by your generosity – by the grand acts that you have accomplished this year, by the single acts of love and kindness, and by the unseen work you have done in the service of God and our church community. Thank you, I cannot say it enough.

Our pledge campaign this year focuses on our gifts; not just on the things we wrap with paper and bows, and not just the things we put in envelopes or give from our bank accounts, but all of the gifts that we give throughout the year. We frequently talk about the three-legged stool of **Time, Talent, and Treasure** when we discuss our gifts, without really focusing on the power of each of those elements. I am grateful and aware of the ways in which you have given all three, and today I want to focus on your time and your treasure. In a few weeks, you will receive another letter from our Senior Warden, in which he will focus on the importance of our offering of our talent.

Time, they say, is the greatest gift because it is a gift that we can't replace. When we give of our treasure or our talent, they come from renewable streams to some extent. But time, once given, can't be taken back, reclaimed. This is why I am inspired by the ways that you give of your time to this community. Whether these gifts of time are measured in hours spent running a ministry, participating in our services, or volunteering in the community, or in minutes spent on the phone or in person reaching out to each other, taking care of each other, this community is generous with its time!

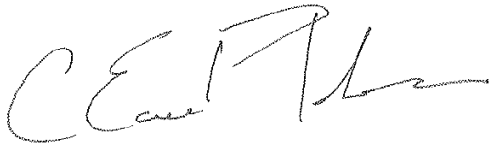
This year has been so different from other years in terms of what has been asked of us as individuals and as a community. I want you to know, because I have heard your stories and walked with you this year, that I know some of us are struggling with finances, with isolation, with uncertainty. Repeatedly, I learn that it is the God we encounter at our church and Jesus who we follow by recognizing him in each other, that keep us together, that provide the consistency in a shifting world.

Every dollar we raise, every pledge made to the church, has a face behind it, a story, a purpose, a mission! We use our financial gifts, to serve God, to care for each other, and to show our love for our neighbors. What greater gift can there be? I am grateful for how each of you supports our ministry in our community.

If you are ever in doubt about the impact of your giving, look about you. Whether you have seen your church family through a screen this year or in pews as we have been allowed, every person you see is part of the story of your giving. As you consider making your gift or your intention to give this year, I ask that you also consider how you have been impacted, and how you will impact this church and our neighbors. What is the story of your gift, how will it unfold? How will your blessing be a blessing to others? This is the spirit behind our theme of Every Perfect Gift.

In the weeks ahead, you will receive a pledge card in the mail, or if you prefer, you will be able to fill one out online, either at the parish website, or by clicking a link in the weekly eNews. This year I invite you to make your perfect gift, reflective of the gifts you have received from our Creator.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Earl Mahan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

The Rev. C. Earl Mahan, Rector