



Parish of St. John the Divine, Squamish

1930 Diamond Road P.O. Box 236 Garibaldi Highlands, BC V0N 1T0
www.squamishanglicanchurch.ca (604) 898 – 5100

November 2023

My dear friends in Christ,

St. John's always holds our stewardship month in November. I like this for several reasons, not least of which is because it means that our stewardship month is bookended by the Feast of All Saints (November 1st), and the Sunday of the Reign of Christ (the Sunday before the first Sunday in Advent, this year on November 26th).

I believe that these two celebrations have powerful teachings for us, to inform and shape our stewardship.

All Saints reminds us that we are part of something bigger than just ourselves, a Church that spans both time and space. We remember that there are so many who have come before us – our ancestors – who have faithfully and generously laid the foundation for who and what we are today. We also remember that we ourselves are ancestors in the communion of saints, handing on the faith that has been entrusted to us, laying the foundation for those who will come after.

The Reign of Christ also reminds us that we are part of something bigger than just ourselves, that the work we do here is our small, but important contribution to the upbuilding of the Kingdom of God. A Kingdom that does not look like how the world so often looks, but that is rooted in love, peace, forgiveness, mercy and generosity.

During this, our stewardship month, informed by the perspectives of All Saints and the Reign of Christ, I invite all of us to take the opportunity to reflect on how we, as individuals and as a community, use the gifts that God has given us – including but not limited to our money, our time, our energy and our skills. What is the story that the way we use our resources tells? Can we better balance and align our stewardship around what we say and think is important?

So, I ask that you join me in filling out a stewardship form and making a pledge to our shared life and ministry at St. John's for 2024. This will help inform our planning about the level of ministry we are able to maintain in the coming year.

Our annual budget for the last couple of years has been just under \$200,000. Under half of that has come from pledges and donations. To sustain our current level of ministry, my dream, my prayer, is that half of our budget would come from our pledges and giving. That seems like a lot,



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but spread over our community, each doing as they are able, you might be surprised what we can accomplish together, with God's help.

Though money is important, it is not the only gift that we have been given and resource that we have been called to steward. We do not want to become obsessed or anxious about money as if it was our true Master (something Jesus warned us about in Matthew 6:24), and in turn rob us of our love, our generosity and joy.

The act of stewardship also involved thanksgiving and celebration.

And so, let me take this opportunity to thank you. Thank you so much, for everyone who has given so generously of themselves here at St. John's. You have honoured those who have come before; you have been a good ancestor; you have, through your generosity, worked towards the Kingdom of mercy, justice and peace – the Kingdom of God.

Let me also take this opportunity to celebrate all that we have done this year. From our central role in serving our vulnerable neighbours through Community Christmas Care to promoting peace and understanding through the Squamish Multifaith Association, from making space for children and families through our Tot Time to welcoming new Christians into the family of God through baptism. We have been a center for community, a patron of the arts, a place of prayer, support, love, and fellowship, making known the love of God through everything we do.

As we reflect on stewardship and prayerfully fill out pledge forms, I want us to ground ourselves in God's goodness and abundance. I want us to know, deep in our bones, that we have what we need to be faithful followers of Jesus, that we have what we need to be the Church in this place.

Though we are small, we are mighty. It is my honour and privilege to be the priest at St. John the Divine, to learn about what it means to follow Jesus, to be stewards of all that God has entrusted to us alongside you here and now.

Thanks be to God!

The Reverend Cameron Gutjahr