October 13, 2021

***“We Offer with Joy and Thanksgiving”***

Dear People of St. Paul’s,

We have come to the time of year when we ask one another to think and pray and decide about how much we will give as an offering to St. Paul’s in the coming year (2022). This year, we will gather those giving intentions (pledges) as part of our worship on Sunday, November 7. The theme that we have chosen for this season of prayerful discernment is *“We Offer with Joy and Thanksgiving,”* words taken from the Offertory Prayer that we pray each week after our offerings are gathered and brought to the altar.

*Gracious God, we offer with joy and thanksgiving what you have first given us, - ourselves, our time, and our possessions, signs of your generosity and love. Receive them for the sake of the one who offered himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

This prayer reminds us that our offerings are primarily an act of thanksgiving to be offered with joy, a thankful and joyful response to what a generous God has first given us. Those good gifts from God come to us as life and personhood (ourselves), time to grow in love for God and to develop our talents to serve our neighbor and God’s creation, and money and possessions to steward and share.

That theme was introduced last Sunday, October 10, and for the next three weeks, three members of St. Paul have been invited to share their stories about those three signs of God’s generosity and love. On October 17, Pam Harris will speak about offering herself to God. On October 24, Susan Hubbard will speak about why she offers her time to the mission and ministry of St. Paul’s, and on October 31, Ron Lewis will speak about why he gives from his resources to support the work of his church. Then, after receiving an estimate of giving (pledge) form in the mail around November 1, we will all be asked to bring those completed forms to worship on November 7 and present them as an act of worship.

We hope that you can join us in person for worship these next several weeks, and especially on Commitment Sunday, November 7. If you cannot attend in person, please join us online using our livestream broadcast (a link is easily found on our www.stpaulsgardner.com webpage). Completed Estimate of Giving forms can also be mailed or brought to the church that first week in November. We will announce the total amount of our commitment for giving in 2022 on November 14.

We are people blessed by a generous God. We offer ourselves, our time and our possessions with joy and thanksgiving. We cannot outgive God, but we can grow in our giving to more fully express that thanks and know that joy.

For the Vestry,

Pastor Dan Wilfrid, Bridge Pastor

Denis Meunier, Senior Warden