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"Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above..." James 1:17, NRSV

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

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 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.

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!

In his timeless work, *The Little Prince*, Saint-Exupéry says, of the Prince's tending of his beloved rose, "It is the time you have spent on your rose, that makes your rose so important." Our church is that rose, tended gently and blessed abundantly by the effort, love, prayer, and time you give to us.

In this season where we uphold our gifts, I hold you up in light, love, and leadership. Over the coming weeks you will be hearing more about our gifts from our leadership, in our liturgy, and in our common life together. You are a gift, each of you, and you are gifts to each other and to a world in need of our love; certainly blessed with every perfect gift that comes from God above.

Peace,

The Reverend Michael L. Delk
Rector