

Stewardship Testimonials, Sunday, October 16, 2016

Henry Courtney, 8:00 a.m. service

Good Morning, it is a pleasure to be in your company. I suspect you might be as nervous as I am if you were answering the question: What does Christ Church mean to me? We are hearing during this season all that is to be celebrated with our birthday next year. We are marking time in the best way as we think about: our history and resources; Francis Scott Key; our splendid music and education from Tom Smith; our programs for families and children; our worship, rituals, learning and mission; the flowers and the tending of the holy table; and the peace of our garden. I remember the lucky words I heard on September 11 when we welcomed the people to our church for Light the City Georgetown, "I'm Tim Cole, this is my first day." All of us recall with great affection the sustained care and presence of Elizabeth and Kristen. There are some other heroes to be celebrated. Their names are Glenn, Jennifer, Samuel, Henry, Tyrone, and his son Eric.

There is something profoundly important beyond our celebrating. It is equal, I would say, to regard what we mean to each other right here today at this lucky time of eight o'clock, when we can have our own pew if we like, find some solitude, and have some extra time with each other and the clergy. What we mean to each other may be hard to name, and it might be slightly mysterious. I learned this recently from the poetry of Mary Oliver: "Mystery, after all, is God's other name and deserves our consideration surely." If you are wondering about mystery in this place, then look into the eyes of your fellow eight o'clockers; then, look over your left shoulder when our windows catch the slanted morning light.

I will soon stop rambling and mention an idiosyncratic feature of this early morning service. We have to remember our offering envelope or cash—get it out of our pockets and carry it to the plate. We have to have it in mind or it will be forgotten. My fellow Vestry members will be ever so happy to have your pledge, and the Bicentennial Committee will be thrilled for you to be a part of the birthday plans. There you have it! I hope you have a good week; I will see you next Sunday and we will experience all over again—all the way around—great luck, mystery, gratitude. One last thought from Mary Oliver: "Happiness when done right is a kind of holiness."

Liz Dougherty, 9:00 am

Good morning. I am Liz Dougherty. It is an honor to speak to you this morning about stewardship at Christ Church and why Christ Church is a philanthropic priority for our family. When I think about why we support Christ Church, two themes come to mind – our internal life in the church and the outward facing activities of the church.

Regarding our internal church life, I am so grateful for the home I have found here at Christ Church. I have been a part of this community for over 30 years, and it is a very special place for my family. I was married here and both my children were baptized here. This church is an oasis to me. No matter what else is going on in my life or in the world, I can come here and see the smiling, accepting faces of my church family in this wonderful surrounding, and everything feels better. There are so many things that contribute to this special environment – the incredible music, the beautiful flowers, the youth programs, the fantastic clergy, and so much more. Your support makes all these things possible. These elements of Christ Church build a unique community that helps us grow our life in Christ and our love of God and for each other.

But stewardship at Christ Church is not only important because of the community it builds for us internally. Your support also helps Christ Church serve Christ by helping those in need outside of our church community. If you are not familiar with the many mission activities of Christ Church, I encourage you to take a look at the Mission tab on the website, and I guarantee you will be inspired! From the mobile soup kitchen, to the winter homeless shelter, to support of children through Bishop Walker School and other organizations, to support of many international organizations, Christ Church does so much to improve lives throughout our region and around the world. These activities would not be possible without your support, and your family can help Christ Church continue and grow this important work.

One final word about pledging: your generosity in any form is so appreciated and wonderful, but if you are able, please consider making a pledge of a specific level of support during this annual stewardship appeal. Pledging a specific amount for the upcoming year gives our church leaders financial certainty that allows them to plan robust activities that enrich our lives in the church and the lives of others less fortunate. Thank you so much for your generosity and for being a part of this special church community.

Chad Thorley, 11:15 a.m.

What Christ Church Means to Me: As a cradle Episcopalian and having grown up in a family where involvement in the Episcopal Church was taken very seriously, church has always been a major part of my life. Once my wife and I were married and settled in Washington over ten years ago, church “shopping” only lasted one Sunday. Not only was Christ Church the closest Episcopal Church to our apartment in Georgetown, but it instantly brought back memories of “the ways things were done” when I was growing up. As our former Rector Stuart Kenworthy often said, “everything that is done at Christ Church begins and ends with prayer” and that was evident from the first Sunday Christy and I walked through those doors.

More important to me personally was this parish’s use of time-tested and particularly Anglican forms of worship. In a rapidly changing world where it often seems that people and institutions, particularly the church, abandon the old in favor of the new with the frequently false hope that doing so will appeal to more or younger people, Christ Church does exactly the opposite. More importantly, our worship truly offers something for everyone - numerous services that use the prayer book in it’s entirety, an outstanding music and choral program, and superb youth and adult education opportunities. And we are lucky enough to have Father Tim and the rest of the outstanding clergy and staff to lead us not only every week, but now as we look forward to celebrating our bicentennial.

I purposely left mention of stewardship until the end for none of the above would be possible without sharing our time and treasure. The Rector of the church where I grew up would offer the following quote by Saint Basil the Great each year at this time and while thinking about what I would say today, it seemed particularly appropriate yet again. Saint Basil said, “the bread which you hold back belongs to the hungry; the coat, which you guard in your locked storage-chests, belongs to the naked; the footwear decaying in your closet belongs to those without shoes and the silver that you keep hidden in a safe place belongs to the one in need.” Let us all remember that as we prayerfully consider what we can give of our time and treasure to Christ Church and most importantly to God in the year ahead. Thank you.