



St. Barnabas Episcopal Church

October 14, 2018

Dear Ones,

At the heart of the Gospel, the heart of God's mission in the world is **Christ's call to love**. How will we answer this call?

That question, and our answer together, is truly at the heart of stewardship. As the Finance Committee completes the work of developing the 2019 budget, you will hear about that budget for the operations and ministry of St Barnabas. Whether from the pulpit, the weekly e-newsletter, or the 'wrapper' on the Sunday bulletin, we will, of course, keep you informed of the facts and figures regarding the finances of the parish. However, that is not our focus in this new stewardship season.

This year, we are inviting the entire parish into deep and prayerful discernment about what the St Barnabas community means to us, what the church means to us and what God is calling us into as individuals and as the very particular iteration of the Body of Christ that is St Barnabas on Bainbridge Island. So this is not a letter asking you for money. Instead it is a letter asking for your prayerful consideration of your participation in God's work in the world as lived out in this community.

In your prayerful consideration, you might reflect on the blessings of your life, gratefully acknowledging the source of those blessings. You might consider the challenges you have encountered, and the role of your faith and your faith community in moving through those challenges. Your prayerful consideration might include poignant reflections on the brokenness of the world, as well as the role of love in healing that brokenness. Or perhaps you'll consider what it means to take your place and do your unique part as co-creators with God in bringing God's love to the world. These questions and more might inform your discernment as you consider your stewardship pledge for the coming year.

This year, we invite you to consider stewardship not just as pledging money to this place we love so dearly, but to what God is doing in our lives and how God is calling us to deepen our commitment to God's work in the world. This year, we're all invited to prayerfully consider aligning the way we use our money with our most deeply held values, and to the value of participating in the life of this beloved community.

This year, you will hear from some of the people who dearly love St Barnabas, about why they love their church, and about how that leads to generous, open hearts. This year we will not be focusing on how far we have to go to meet our budget (though that information will be available to you). **This year, what we will measure is participation, with a goal of 100% participation** in our annual giving campaign.

We're focused on participation because we know that when we participate, we feel a sense of belonging that simply does not happen when we stand back and set ourselves apart. **Every one of us deserves to feel a part of the mission and ministry of St Barnabas, and absolutely everyone can participate in this annual campaign.** St Barnabas is a wonderfully welcoming and inclusive community, a community where everyone belongs. Participating in the life of this community in every way brings each of us deeper into communion with God and with each other.

So thank you for your prayerful consideration. Thank you for your involvement and support of the mission and ministries of St Barnabas. We give thanks for your many contributions to this community of faith, and for the blessing of having you as part of the St Barnabas family. Please know that your prayerful consideration and participation is truly what this letter invites you into. Also please know that your questions and conversation are welcomed by the Rector and any of the members of the Stewardship Committee.

We look forward to talking with you, to praying with you, and to celebrating together with you and the whole congregation on **Sunday, November 18th** at the conclusion of our giving campaign. Thank you and may God richly bless you as you have blessed us all.

Faithfully,

The Reverend Karen Haig, Rector

Stewardship Committee Members

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