

Steve Raftery
St. Nicholas Episcopal Church
1072 Ridge Avenue
Elk Grove Village IL 60007

November 8, 2013

Dear Friend of St. Nicholas Episcopal,

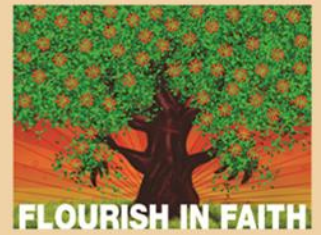
The “Flourish in Faith” bulletin inserts have inspired some very interesting conversations in our home! I hope you have been as challenged and blessed by them as we have.

One of the topics that created a discussion for us was the idea of praying for God’s guidance and whether or not we actually listen— especially when it comes to the difficult stuff like giving. When we say, “God’s will be done,” do we really mean it? If I am honest, I know I sometimes want God’s will to be done only as long as it’s the same as mine.

Until recently, I hadn’t thought much about whether or not God agreed with the amount of our financial pledge and the sharing our of our time and talent to the church, or if God cared about our giving at all. Having spent some time with the reflections over the last few weeks, I have come to a new understanding about God and giving. I believe that God cares deeply about how we use the resources and blessings of our lives. All the gifts of this life were given not to be squandered or used carelessly, but to do God’s work in the world. That’s what it means to be a steward of God’s gifts. How we choose to steward God’s gifts is a reflection of who we are and of our relationship to God. It is an incredible challenge and blessing which allows us to honor God and flourish in faith.



THE
EPISCOPAL NETWORK
FOR STEWARDSHIP



Serving on the Bishop's Committee for three years, and serving as the Senior Warden this past year, I have come to know the importance of each member of our congregation sharing their time, talent, and treasure to support the parish we all love. It is important that our members understand the importance of your pledge, whatever level of giving you can make. Your pledge allows the Bishop's Committee to plan our operating budget for the upcoming year. Our operating budget helps us to keep the doors open – lights, heat, and air conditioning on. Additionally, the budget helps us to plan to provide a salary and benefits for our Vicar and a stipend for our director of music. We as a Bishop's Committee cannot commit to paying our bills next year based on an estimated guess of what our open plate cash donations may be.

As Hal and I discerned this year's pledge to St. Nicholas, we have an amazing sense of gratitude to be able to once again make a financial pledge this year. Through our prayer and the willingness to listen, we can truly rejoice in what we have been given by giving back. Because we believe God delights in our acts of generosity, giving feels more like another gift than like a sacrifice.

We feel so fortunate to be a part of this spirit-filled and active community. On behalf of the Bishop's Committee, thank you for joining us on this incredible journey of stewardship. May your acts of generosity inspire you to *flourish in faith*.

Faithfully,

Steve Raftery
Senior Warden