

Stewardship: It's About Us; It's About God.

In her recent book, *The Church and the Crisis of Community*, Dr. Teresa Lanini takes note of the cultural forces that make having a sense of Christian community difficult: increased mobility; loss of a sense of place and tradition; electronic communications with Facebook and Twitter creating “faceless” social networks and revolutionizing friendship; rampant individualism; and myths of heroic self-sufficiency.

In light of these and other challenges of being a Christian community, we are drawn to the question of its importance. In his most recent sermon, our Assisting Priest, Jay Kanzler identified one good reason to be the church: a person's heartfelt need to belong to a spiritual community. And to make the point, Jay was talking about himself as a sometime seeker of good news. Happily, for him and for us, he found that good news here at St. Peter's Church as people welcomed, listened and encouraged him. In other words, when Jay was searching, there were people who helped him be found.

When we practice the Good News of God in Christ in Christian community, we not only help meet the human need for belonging but we also mirror the divine life of our Triune God. Yes, Christian community is about the Trinity. The proclamation that “these three are one” is not about math but rather about relationships: diversity and unity, similarity and difference, participation and co-inherence. As one theologian has noted, we humans have relationships; God is the relationships God has.

There are many, many ways of being a part of Christian community: gathering for worship and prayer, mutually caring for one another and working together for the benefit and flourishing of others. And last, but not least, is the giving of our money as a sacramental sign of doing our part in creating Christian community while at the same time giving witness of our desire to participate in God's Triune life. Think of what we do: at the Offertory in our liturgy we come forward with our monetary gifts held high and doxologically offer them to “Father, Son and Holy Ghost.” These gifts are brought together with the gifts of bread and wine, an action that further sacralizes our offering of money. Stewardship: It's about us, our coming together, our life in community. It's about participating in the life of God.

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