

transforming generosity

Michaelmas 2018

Dear Friend of St. Mark's,

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry often describes us as "The Episcopal branch of the Jesus movement." As we begin our annual stewardship campaign, I want to pose these questions: What does being the Jesus movement mean for us? What is God calling us to do as followers of Jesus?

As Episcopalians, we love our worship. Our liturgies inspire us. The Eucharist is at the center of our lives. We cherish the Bible, and we are people of the Word. As part of the Jesus movement, we follow the One who loves us so much that he gave his life so that we might understand God's never-ending love for all of creation.

And here's the hard part: As followers of Jesus, we are called to give all of ourselves to God's work in the world. In the sixth chapter of Matthew's Gospel, Jesus, after teaching us how to pray, talks to us about money, our needs, and our hope. He reminds us that we cannot have two masters. We cannot love God and money.

Jesus then says: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?" He finishes by calling each of us with these words, "But seek first God's kingdom and God's righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

How would our church—how would we—be transformed if each of us remembered these words of Jesus? We are indeed called to set new priorities.

Establishing new priorities for ourselves and for our church means transforming how we think about generosity. That transformation will call upon us to look for generosity in every aspect of our work and in every aspect of our lives.

I hope you'll join me as we work together to transform generosity in our church, our community, and our very lives. With this letter you will find a pledge card for 2019. You may also pledge online via our website: stmarkshonolulu.org/pledge-online. Pledge cards may be placed in the offering at any of our services during the month of October. On November 18 we will celebrate the Feast of Dedication, and everyone is invited to receptions after the services in celebration of our many ministries. Mahalo in advance for your generosity.

Faithfully,

The Rev'd Paul Lillie, Rector