

## Some Thoughts About Stewardship – December 2015

By RevWik

The holiday season can be a great time to practice stewardship. Often we feel ourselves pushed and pulled in a hundred different directions, the weight of demands dragging behind us. There is so much *expectation* – maybe even more free-floating expectation than there is Christmas muzak in the air. There are a few hearty souls who are absolutely energized by all the holiday hullabaloo, yet many of us are more than a bit worn down when the new year rolls around. And some of us find the seasonal celebrating not just draining but debilitatingly depressing. (It can be hard to be bombarded with messages about “the joys of giving” when you feel you have neither joy nor anything to give.)

Although the word “stewardship,” in church circles, is often equated with the annual pledge drive and a campaign to get people to give more of their *time, talent, and treasure*, the word actually refers to the function of a steward – a person or group who have been entrusted with the care of certain resources and ensuring that they be put to the best possible uses. Understood this way, stewardship is not simply about *giving more*. It is even more importantly about using our resources *wisely*.

During the holiday season many of us feel pressured to give so much of ourselves that we become depleted in the process. This is not good stewardship. Perhaps if we spent a little less money, took one less trip to a crowded store, or attended one less family gathering we might find ourselves with more energy at the end of it all, and be able to enjoy what we do more, too. Sometimes the role of a steward is to know when *not* to use the resources in our care, when to save them up for another time.

Our year-round Stewardship Task Force is not, as some people assume, a year-round *pledge drive by another name*. Think of it, instead, as a group focused on helping each of us, and all of us, to be better stewards of the congregation's resources as well as our own. TJMC has no greater resource than the *people* who call this place home, so during this holiday season we encourage you to *take care of yourself*. Yes, it is “the season of giving,” but that needs to include giving to yourself – some peace, a much needed break, some quiet, learning to say “no” when appropriate, and practice in choosing not to try to do *everything* so that you can really be fully present and engaged in doing *something*.

Happy Holidays ...