



## Stewardship 2015

To Love and Serve with Gladness and Singleness of Heart

*“Grant us, Gracious God, to take our place in the building up of your church, and to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart through Christ our Lord. Amen.”*

October, 2015

In the Outline of the Faith in the Book of Common Prayer, we find a definition for the ministry of lay people:

*The ministry of lay persons is to represent Christ and his Church; to bear witness to him wherever they may be; and, according to the gifts given them, to carry on Christ's work of reconciliation in the world; and to take their place in the life, worship, and governance of the Church. ~ BCP p. 855*

It is a definition of ministry that is worth spending some time considering, and today I want to call your attention in particular to the last part of this definition, which speaks of taking one's place “in the life, worship, and governance of the Church.” What I take away from this statement, and what I like very much about it, is that it makes you, as a lay person, a *partner in our ministry at Trinity*. And when we think and talk about stewardship, we are really thinking and talking about how we live into that partnership.

In many parts of our lives, we are accustomed to being consumers either of goods someone produces or of services that someone provides to us. Often, it seems that our culture defines us as consumers first and foremost. But you won't find the word “consumer” in the Bible – and it is not a part of our Christian vocabulary. And there's a good reason for that. For Christ does not call us to be consumers of religious services provided by professional clergy. Rather, he calls us to be partners together in the building up of the church and in the proclamation of the Good News of God's love in the world. As St. Paul wrote so eloquently, “now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it” (1 Cor 10:16) and “the gifts he gave were...to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11a, 12).

As we enter another stewardship season, you will be asked to consider prayerfully how you will support Trinity financially in 2016 and to make a pledge of that support. It is a time when we really ask you to consider how you partner with Trinity financially to build up the life of the church. I hope, however, that as you think about how you are a part of the body of Christ at Trinity, you won't think only about your financial partnership. I hope that you will think more broadly about how you are taking your place in the life, worship, and governance of the church. Because everyone at Trinity has gifts to give, and everyone in our community is here because the Spirit has led you to this place and called you “to love and serve with gladness and singleness of heart” (BCP p. 365).

This season, take some time to reflect on the shape of your belonging at Trinity, and on your partnership with our community in creating a sacred space in Menlo Park that offers a safe place for the seeking soul, that has a heart for justice in our hurting world, and that embraces all people with an open spirit. This is our mission to the community around us, the sacred work to which God has called us – together, in partnership.

Peace and blessings,

The Rev. Matthew R. Dutton-Gillett, Rector