

From the Rector

September, 2008

Dear Friends,

This summer while in Nashville for our youth mission trip we visited a farmers market. Some peaches were purchased and shared among the group. As I bit into the peach I experienced the sheer joy of abundance. The succulent fruit was an explosion of sweet taste. I had to lean out over the floor in order to keep myself from being drenched in the luxurious juice of the peach. It was sheer abundance.

I think of St. Catherine's and our life together in the much the same way. Sheer abundance of deep and loving care; abundance of time and talents offered through our many ministries; abundance in our willingness to welcome, accept, nurture and serve all people. In this season of stewardship I am deeply grateful for our life together and I look forward to the coming year as a time when new and exciting ministries will appear among us as we continue to respond to the needs of our community.

The external reality, however, is stark. As we come to this stewardship season we do so in challenging economic times. The economic numbers paint a picture quite the opposite of abundance. Families are worried about jobs, gas prices take a more substantial portion of our income and prices overall seem only headed up. Listening to the 24 hour news cycle quickly challenges any sense of abundance we legitimately feel in our spiritual lives and in this community of faith. There is a tension between our sense of abundance and the world's sense of scarcity.

Into this tension Jesus speaks, *Give and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap.* I recently read [A New Earth](#) by Eckhart Tolle. In the book he addresses our search for who we truly are. He says,

Acknowledging the good that is already in your life is the foundation for all abundance. The fact is: Whatever you think the world is withholding from you, you are withholding from the world.

I wonder: what is it that I am withholding from the world? Is it my treasure, cherished time, a hidden talent, forgiveness of someone, abundant love shown, life's joy celebrated? What is it? It's likely more than one thing. Tolle challenges us to be the first to give and when we do, he argues, we discover that the source of abundance is not outside us, but rather is a part of who we are.

As we enter this season of stewardship, I invite you to participate in a stewardship lunch or dinner to hear about the exciting ministry of St. Catherine's and our vision for the future. We have completed a Stewardship Video to remind us of what this community means to each and everyone of us. After a stewardship meeting and viewing the video, I invite you to give generously of your time, talent and treasure as we continue to welcome, accept, nurture and serve all people in this piece of God's good kingdom.

Thank you for all that you give and do for the life of this body of Christ.

In Christ's love,
Father Jim+

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