



*They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when heat comes, and its leaves shall stay green; in the year of drought it is not anxious, and it does not cease to bear fruit. - Jeremiah 17:8*

October, 2023

Dear Friends:

As the annual St. Stephen's stewardship campaign gets underway, we are pleased to introduce the theme, *Rooted in Abundance*. It is a reminder to us that we are inspired to give because so much has been given to us. This is not transactional – we do not give in proportion to how we feel we have benefitted or suffered – rather we give because of the love we have experienced in the story of our faith. We explore trees, roots, flowers all as metaphors for the way we dig deep into what nourishes us to transform that goodness into work, service, and joy in a world that needs us. Every gift matters this year, and each gift will be accepted, brought to the altar, and blessed before God and our community on December 3, 2023.

As you fill out your pledge cards, you'll notice that one side is about your financial promises for the year, your wealth. The other side is dedicated to how you might want to share your works and your wisdom. Our works bring us opportunities to roll up our sleeves, to volunteer for service, to pitch in to help make things better. Our works as a church in the community include sponsoring Recovery Groups (AA and NA); providing "Music at St. Stephen's" to the ecumenical community beyond our own church walls; and meeting the needs of the underprivileged in our community through our food pantry and clothes closet. Our works within our church family require each of us to consider contributing as a member of the altar guild, serving as litanist, assisting in communion, donating service hours through the food pantry/clothes closet, or as a member of the vestry.

This year, as you pray about your commitment to our church, please tap into that nourishing structure of faith and generosity shown to us by an extravagant God, a patient Shepherd, and a gathering Spirit who call us to extend our networks and share our gifts with the world. When you are rooted in abundance, you realize that your giving can be as boundless as the Creation that gave birth to us all. Thank you for your generosity and your prayerful consideration of your pledge to St. Stephen's.

In gratitude,

St. Stephen's Vestry

P.S. The last Sunday of our campaign is November 26<sup>th</sup>. Please send by mail **or submit your gifts online** ([www.ststephenswb.org](http://www.ststephenswb.org)) by that date so that we may gather them together and bless them on December 3, 2023.

# Works & Wisdom

**It takes more than money to operate ministry in our church.**

With gratitude we accept the many gifts of our members as volunteers, servers, ambassadors, and friends in and outside our community. **Thank you for all you do!**

I/my family would like to volunteer:

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I/my family would like to learn more about these ministries or opportunities:

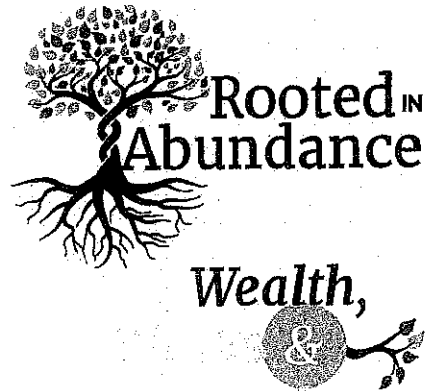
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I/my family have skills and interests we would like to share or teach to our church:

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NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

### PLEASE CONTACT ME ABOUT:

- setting up payments from my checking account/credit card.
- including the church in my estate plans.
- making my gift through stocks or securities.

**My 2024 Promise:** Acknowledging that we are Rooted in Abundance, I/we promise \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for ministry. I/we plan to fulfill this pledge  weekly  monthly  semiannually  annually