

Keeping our Spiritual Treasure Store Flowing
Stewardship Sermon on 1 Timothy 6:17-19
Sunday November 18, 2007
Trinity United, Ottawa. Rev. Ellie Barrington, M.Div.

***“Build a store of treasure that will last,
gaining life that is truly life.” ~ 1 Timothy 6:19***

Last year when they were working with us on Visioning, Presbytery looked at our membership figures and financial statements and they said: “Trinity doesn’t have a Vision problem - Trinity has a Stewardship problem!”

Compared to most of our neighbouring sister churches, Trinity welcomes far more ‘new to church comers’, young families, ‘returned to church folks’ and people moving from other denominations. We are so glad you are all here, that in recent years we’ve been shy about telling you exactly how much ‘offering’ it takes from each of us, to keep our Trinity treasure store of God’s gifts flowing.

We’ve been afraid of offending you by asking for money, afraid that some of you might go away if we ask for more. But I believe in you faithful people. I believe that you all have enough faith to face financial facts - faithfully.

Trinity United operates on what **you** give each year, and nothing more. No Papal treasure store to draw on. No mounting bequests from rich, dead people. Actually, Trinity doesn’t have any rich people - only ordinary families juggling financial priorities. People with budgets much like yours and mine.

Trinity is a charitable, not-for-profit organization. So we’re **supposed** to ask for donations. Are you offended when the Cancer Society asks for money? Or the World Wildlife Fund? No! Giving charitably is a personal opportunity for busy people to make a positive difference in our world. As you’ve seen this morning, Trinity United is like a ‘United Way’ of charitable giving - guided by Jesus’ values of justice and compassion for all. Trinity is a tangible, really human-connected way to make a BIG charitable difference in this community. That’s what we want our children to see us doing, isn’t it?

Your financial commitment to Trinity is your opportunity to keep God's treasures flowing through you. Give - and try trusting that you won't run out of what you really need. Give - and God's treasures will surely flow back to **you** - when you or someone you love is the one who needs ministry or community.

The letter from the Stewardship folks puts it plainly. The per household cost of keeping Trinity's treasure store flowing in 2008 is about \$4 a day. Far too many of us are giving less than \$1 a day to our Trinity United way. A few genuinely can't afford to. Those are the ones Trinity slips \$100 into a card for at Christmas. But let's face it. I'm told that most families among us here manage to put more than a dollar a day into coffee! Or \$2 day into music lessons. Or \$3 dollars a day into hockey!

A dollar a day is a good start for new committed givers to Trinity. And remember that Revenue Canada sweetens the deal at Tax Return time, when you get roughly a quarter of what you give to the church right back! Isn't it worth a buck a day to feel really good about your giving? And to feel **given to**, each Sunday morning that you manage to get here?

How much, or how much more should you give? It's a very personal decision. Perhaps, in this Season of Stewardship Commitment, you'll make your pledge decision a spiritual discernment - a healthy, spiritual stretch. Glen, my former partner in ministry here, used to say 'Keep giving until it feels good.' Struggle with your 'inner treasurer' and pray that your fear of 'not enoughness' will be overcome by your faith in God's abundance.

Make a commitment, a pledge, write post-dated cheques or go on PAR. You will be rewarded with good feelings about all the good that we do. Please take part and take pride in the overflowing of God's treasure store through Trinity's united way!