

A WEEK OF DAILY  
STEWARDSHIP

# *Reflections*

DEAR CHILDREN,  
*let us not love with words or speech  
but with* ●

actions  
*and in* truth

— I JOHN 3:18

EVERY MEMBER CANVASS 2020

CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL

Dear Cathedral Family,

During the Stewardship Council's first meeting each year, members spend time studying what Holy Scripture says about stewardship. It was during this Bible study that the Council selected the theme for the 2020 Every Member Canvass from 1 John 3:18:

“Dear Children, let us not love with words or speech but in actions and in truth.”

In the coming year, we will both continue to reflect on the many blessings we have received at Christ Church and look forward to identifying more ways we can turn words into action for the greater good.

In preparation for the 2020 Every Member Canvass, several Stewardship Council and vestry members reflected upon the meaning of stewardship in their lives. Their thoughts are on the pages that follow. It is our hope that these anonymous reflections will inspire you to recall the blessings in your life and consider how your gifts can aid to further the Cathedral's mission.

Faithfully,  
Gail and Mike Hendryx  
2020 EMC Co-chairs

SUNDAY

## *Reflection one*

*“Through thick and thin, this community is there for us, for you and for all, parishioner or not.”*

Not long ago I heard a donation solicitation on TV that really resonated with me. The speaker said that the charity was so precious to his family that they put giving to that organization right behind paying their mortgage. I have not been able to get that statement out of my mind; it's like a favorite song stuck in my head.

How important is the Cathedral, our spiritual home, to our family? As important as our physical home? Absolutely!

Our family is fairly involved at the Cathedral, as I'm sure yours is. We give of our income, our time and our talents so that this special place can continue to share God's love with others, and in return we have received blessings upon blessings. Through thick and thin, this community is there for us, for you and for all, parishioner or not. We are there with love, care, concern, and a helping hand for those we know and for the strangers in our midst. This spiritual family, of which we are a part, shows its love of our fellow man not only with our words, but also more importantly, with our actions, just as we are called to do.

If we are to continue our work at The Beacon, our outreach to the less fortunate of this city and beyond, as well as our educational, spiritual, and music programs, we must give of our money, time and talents. Taking care of our physical campus and all of our programs requires financial support from all of us.

Will you put your love and gratitude for our Cathedral right behind your mortgage or rent payment so that we may continue to show our love for others with our actions not just our words? Please, prayerfully consider your pledge to the EMC.

MONDAY

## *Reflection two*

*“It took me more time than most to realize what a gift it is to have the opportunity to support the Cathedral.”*

For years I didn't know what “EMC” really meant. I grew up attending church and as a child/teenager, I knew I was expected to volunteer for projects and put something in the offering plate on Sunday, but I didn't spend any time thinking about how the church financed its work. The grown-ups took care of that. As a younger adult with young kids,

I certainly understood that the Church needed money, but we were counting every penny and we were busy and, while we put more in the plate on Sundays, the idea of a pledge was too daunting. Besides, the grown-ups always took care of that.

I'm not exactly sure when it occurred to me that "we" were fast becoming the grown-ups, but somewhere along the way the fog lifted, and I came to the realization that we were not just people who attended Christ Church Cathedral. We, and everyone we knew there, and those we didn't know but shared our Sundays with, were the Cathedral; we were the grown-ups. That realization was frightening, mostly because I was loath to take on even more responsibilities in my life. I already felt stressed for time and financial security. Now even more responsibility to help the Cathedral survive?

As a consistent slow learner, it took me more time than most to realize what a gift it is to have the opportunity to support the Cathedral. I think many of us sometimes struggle for meaning in our lives, and the Cathedral helps me in that struggle. I know I need to love God and love my neighbor as myself, but sometimes I don't know how to do that in ways that make a positive difference in the world. That's one of the gifts of the Cathedral. Our communal worship and our communal service

are ways to make love of God and our neighbor manifest in the world.

The EMC is no longer something that makes me nervous. It is an opportunity to show myself that I can make a difference. We know that our contribution to the EMC is used to express our love of God in worship and to effectively and thoughtfully help those who need help in our community. We still deliberate about the dollars, but we try to do more every year, knowing that we have been blessed with far more grace than we deserve or could ever repay.

With God's help, we're trying to be the grown-ups.

TUESDAY

## *Reflection three*

*“No matter what the circumstances, I at least strive to increase my pledge by some increment, often by the amount requested by the Cathedral’s budget increase.”*

I used to fret that my stewardship contribution would never be enough or wouldn't matter when others had so much more to give. I knew these thoughts were wrong, but how could I move past them? One Lent a decade ago, I challenged myself to take on a discipline instead of giving something

up. I chose to find at least one thing to which I could give every day for 40 days. With kids in my life, there were school fundraisers, bake sales, and several walks for a cause to include. I noticed more opportunities to give bottles of water and peanut butter crackers to needy people that I encountered. Cathedral ministries helped me find more and more ways to give. I was never focused on how much I gave, but rather on seeking ways to give back. Abundance came from the consistency of giving rather than the specific amount. That Lenten experience has colored my giving ever since.

In making my pledge each year, I strive to make a reasonable but heartfelt pledge. If my circumstances have changed for the better with an unexpected boon in my life, I tithe 10% of it. No matter what the circumstances, I at least strive to increase my pledge by some increment, often by the amount requested by the Cathedral's budget increase.

I may not have the means to make a major contribution, but I can be part of the community that raises their pledge to meet the growing needs of the church and the world we reach out to help. Giving has become a privilege and pleasure, not something to fret about. Monthly direct debits make it easy to be consistent. The blessings of

community and the nourishment of worship mean all the more knowing that I have done what I can to contribute.

WEDNESDAY

## *Reflection four*

*“Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.”*

1 JOHN 3:18

When we first started coming to the Cathedral, like many parents we would give our children coins or a dollar to drop in the offering plate each Sunday. Then one year during EMC season, I handed them pledge cards and asked each of my kids to complete them. I thought it would help our children develop a practice of giving, and soon pledge envelopes arrived with their names printed on them.

To my surprise, instead of merely a lesson in giving, our children developed an interest in where their money was going. They began to understand budgets and organization. They became aware that their weekly donations support staff salaries, mission work, and maintenance of the buildings and grounds of our beautiful church.



To our children, the Cathedral represents a community of friends, volunteers, and support. They saw the Cathedral make the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey easier to bear for those directly impacted. Following the Sowing the Seed campaign, they watched the slow but sure transformation of the Cathedral, brick by brick. And our family took part in Rally Day, where hundreds of volunteers gathered to prepare over 100,000 meals. For our children, the church provides a place where you have fun, learn to respect and love each other, and in doing so, you love God.

Our children told us that those weekly envelopes remind them of their promise to give and provide a feeling of responsibility by having their names attached to the offerings. Attending the EMC dinner and filling out our pledge cards have become annual events for our family. I hope you, too, will prayerfully consider your support for our Cathedral home.

THURSDAY

## *Reflection five*

*“We can begin to be Christ’s body on earth, loving and caring for the world.”*

A plea from one of the prayers at The Well on Sunday evenings is this: “Lord Jesus Christ, present with us now, breathe your spirit upon us, that we may be your body on earth, loving and caring for the world.” The supplication is a request for “us” (not “me”) so that “we” (not “I”) may be Christ’s body on earth. The body on earth, the body that is to care for the world, is the collective of people who are the church.

When we as a couple consider our annual pledge to the church, we consider not only its place in our lives, but how our church acts on love in the community. We volunteer our time and contribute to the mission of several non-profits in the city. Those organizations address important aspects of life and either seek to assist those in need or enhance life here in Houston. In the case of the Cathedral, all of us, the “family” that is the church, are able to be part of its missions and ministries, showing the love we feel by our actions. But in order to participate in that outreach, we

have to personally demonstrate it by prayerfully considering and then fulfilling our pledges to Christ Church Cathedral. With this, we can begin to be Christ's body on earth, loving and caring for the world.

FRIDAY

## *Reflection six*

*“As I have been pondering and reflecting on what truly brings me joy, our Cathedral home always comes to mind.”*

There was a popular book that came out several years ago about tidying up one's home, particularly the closets, by giving away anything that did not bring joy (or fit!). Slowly but surely, I have been thoughtfully making my way through drawers, closets, and papers in my house, and letting go of things I thought I needed. This process has been surprisingly liberating and cleansing and created space where there was none before. Curiously, I started experimenting by extending this exercise to other areas of my life and as I have been pondering and reflecting on what truly brings me joy, our Cathedral home always comes to mind.

Frankly, I procrastinate when making my annual giving pledge. In honest reflection about the reason behind my slow decision, I realized I needed to

let go of worrying about not having enough, like I let go of some of the clothes in my closet that no longer fit. Now there is space in my mind and in my heart to reflect on the joy the Cathedral brings and how I can contribute.

SATURDAY

## *Reflection seven*

*“I take comfort in knowing the values I deem sacred are reflected in the vibrant life of the Cathedral. This is why I give each year.”*

Simply put, I have never once given a second thought to donating to the Every Member Canvass when it rolls around each year because I hope to see the Cathedral as a guiding presence in the city for many years to come. As a lifelong member, the Cathedral is a part of my history. This church is the setting for the strengthening of my faith. It is the place that has marked major milestones for my family, from baptisms to weddings to funerals. But most of all, the Cathedral is a welcoming and inclusive community. Ours is a community continually striving to learn, always questioning, and perpetually seeking to improve the lives of those beyond 1117 Texas Avenue. It is this wonderful community that keeps my family

involved (although the beautiful worship space and breathtaking music help, too). I take comfort in knowing the values I deem sacred are reflected in the vibrant life of the Cathedral. This is why I give each year.

The church functions because all of us contribute time and energy to its many worthy programs. So, too, does the EMC succeed by all our participation, from gifts of all sizes. As you consider a gift to the Cathedral, I urge you to think about what draws you to this community and makes it your spiritual home.

