

**WHEREVER YOUR TREASURE IS,
THERE THE DESIRES OF YOUR HEART WILL ALSO BE**

Twenty-Fifth Sunday after Pentecost
November 10, 2024

Jesus and his disciples had crossed the Kidron valley and were ascending towards Jerusalem's eastern gate. As they passed through, they could see the Temple complex looming ahead of them. They continued on, as the crowds continued to increase. Finally, Jesus and his disciples had arrived. He had them sit down near the Temple collection box.

Unknown to the disciples, Jesus' mind was fixed on a particular lesson he wanted to present, one that just might reveal itself here, at the collection box, while the people were bringing forward their offerings. The disciples sat there observing the many tradesmen coming forward, extending their calloused hands as dropping in their offering. Many scribes and lawyers and theologians came as well, dressed impressively and resplendently in expensive attire, their hands crammed full of large coins as they began to drop them in one by one by one by one. The sound resounded for all to hear as each coin dropped; clink, clink, clink, clink, clink. It was impossible for anyone nearby to miss the impressive display of generosity being made.

The line continued to move forward one at a time towards the offering box. In the midst of the line, barely seen, was a short elderly woman in tattered clothing, hunched over, slowly moving forward. The disciples hadn't noticed her, but Jesus' had spotted her, his gaze fixed firmly on her as she moved along.

Several who were present knew this woman. Her husband had died several years earlier leaving her destitute. She had been trying desperately just to survive on her own. And here she was, impoverished, and standing in the

same line with all the rest, moving towards the offering box. As she finally reached the box, she extended her bony fistful hand. It didn't appear that she was carrying anything. Ah but she was; two of the smallest copper coins only worth a couple of cents. As she opened her fist, there was the almost imperceptible sound of one very soft clink that could barely be heard. Her offering now given, she quietly turned and walked away.

At that moment Jesus knew that he had his lesson. He turned his face towards his disciples and began to speak. "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has given more than all the others who are making contributions." The disciples must have frozen in disbelief. There they were, Peter, James, John, Andrew and the rest; every one of them looking at Jesus shocked and confused. Matthew, who had been a tax collector, was probably more confused than any of the others. It was blatantly obvious to all of them that this widow woman had hardly given anything, only an insignificant offering into the box. Meanwhile, most of the others had given ten times, a hundred times, or even much more, into the Temple treasury! So, how could Jesus say that she had given more than all of them?

Then Jesus explained. "All of [the others] ... have contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on." Jesus was saying that in God's economy, it didn't matter the amount that each person gave. What mattered was the attitude and devotion of the heart that lay behind each offering. This poor widow woman, insignificant as her contribution was, yet, it was the most extravagant and abundant of all the offerings made that day. Why? Because her heart's devotion to God knew no bounds; she gave her all, everything she had to live on. Meanwhile, many of the others indeed gave impressive sums, yes, but they had given only what was expected of them, an established portion of their resources, but for these individuals, their

offering wasn't much of a sacrifice. Their hearts devotion to God was much smaller than that of the widow.

There are many offerings you and I place into the offering box. There is the offering of our money of course, given at church and through other charities. But there is also the offering of our time, the offering of worship, the offering of reading from the scriptures and other sources, the offering of prayer, the offering of creation care as we choose not to take a plastic bag while checking out at the grocery store, the offering of a kind word to someone, the offering of choosing a compassionate response to that person who just always seems to rub you the wrong way. Offering upon offering upon offering. Many offerings large and small, made every day. Some we consciously choose to make. Others are made unconsciously.

This morning three of our parishioners are going to come up and share stories from their lives; examples of offerings they have made, and offerings others have given to them. See if you can pick out the offerings.

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THE THREE WILL TELL THEIR STORIES = Megarie, Bob, Bill

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So, as you listened to each story, did you hear the coins dropping, the clink, clink, clink, clink, clink as each of their offerings were given? Each of you give your offerings every day as well. Each of these offerings given to individuals and groups are ultimately given out of your love for God. Not as some kind of an indulgence to reduce the number of days you think you might have to spend in purgatory, or for any other less noble motivation. Each of our offerings are given from the level of love and devotion to God that is in our hearts. Many of our offerings are known to God alone. Every one of our offerings benefits our lives in many ways. They cause us to

rejoice, give thanks, and sing. They give us a sense of peace and contentment. They bring us satisfaction in a job well done. Many of our offerings benefit others around us. They benefit the community in which we live, and our church community.

Jesus said: “Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.”

Megarie

Greeting and introduce myself

Rejoice, Give Thanks and Sing! The theme of our stewardship campaign this year.

I can closely relate to 2 of the three, I will leave the singing to our wonderful choir! And if you sit anywhere near me at the Saturday evening or the 10 AM services, you would have to agree !

I want to tell you, as briefly as I can, why I Rejoice and Give Thanks that I am here at Good Shepherd.

When I was 11, a few short years ago, I had a vision. That vision led me on a life long quest for my church home. A little over two years ago I found it, here at Good Shepherd.

My dear friend Grace Gagliardi told me about a Women's Bible Study that was about to begin at Good Shepherd, she knew I had been searching. She gave me Nancy Fee's contact information and I reached out. I introduced myself to Nancy and asked if, even though I was not a member of Good Shepherd, if I could join the class. She said of course I could, that they would be happy to have me. At the appointed time I pulled into the parking lot and the first person I met was Terri Marino. She was so warm and welcoming as we walked through the parking lot that I felt comfortable right away. As we walked through those beautiful red doors, I immediately felt a sense of peace. I was comfortable, I felt at home, I sensed the love, even before I met the rest of the family!

I attended Bible Study for a few weeks and then my David died. The compassion and love I received from my new church family really got me

through my most devastating loss. I gave thanks to our Lord for bringing me to this wonderful church and the family I have gained since joining.

Since then I have become involved in many rewarding missions. I give my time and talent freely to the Mailbox Ministry, the Hospitality Committee, the Vestry, the Christian Women's Fellowship and, with my co-chair Christine Pizer, the Outreach Team.

The treasure I give to support our church, I give freely and gladly. Grateful to the support of the Good Shepherd family I have grown to cherish. I hope you will join with me this year and share your time, talent and treasure as we Rejoice, Give Thanks and Sing.

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My name is **Bob Clark** and I, too, would like to share some thoughts on my service to Good Shepherd, and in particular, my work in the Memorial Garden. When we talk about offering our "time and talents" to the church, I have to say that I don't see it as a big ask. That's because any time I get involved in anything at Good Shepherd, I get a whole lot more in return. To me, it's all a blessing.

I can still remember the first day I worked in the garden, about 15 years ago. I remember being on my hands and knees next to Steve Eibling, pulling weeds, getting to know Steve and learning all that we had in common. (That was back when Steve and I could actually get on our knees.)

Enjoying all the fellowship of our garden crew over the years has been a real blessing. Having a little time to look around and think about those who are interred in the garden, including those I've counted as good friends? What a blessing. Working a little overtime to keep the garden a Holy place all of us

can enjoy? It's all a blessing. After all, to me, the garden is one of those thin places Father Joe talked about in his sermon last week.

Whether I'm outside in garden, or inside scrambling eggs with the breakfast boys, diving into a deep discussion with my flock family, or sitting in silence at contemplative prayer, it's one blessing after another after another—and it couldn't be easier to give thanks and, right along with that, to give back to church and to God with gratitude.

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Good morning, **My name is Bill Flack.**

I am proud to be a member of the Church of the Good Shepherd. We truly have something special here. **Every Sunday, we experience a wonderful church service, an inspiring sermon, great and uplifting music and the absolute best coffee hour.** But being a part of a Christian community is more than Sunday Worship.

Here at Good Shepherd, we are given the opportunity to participate in God's kingdom through many educational and community service events. **I enjoy participating in the Contemplative prayer group, Bible Studies, Father Joe's classes, working on the stream team (By the way, you won't find a better streamed service than ours!) I enjoy serving on the alter, being a member of the stewardship and formation committees, helping with men's breakfasts and Italian dinners, and being a part of the newly formed Good Shepherd Good Fellas!**

When Sally and I walked through the door at Good Shepherd almost two years ago, we were immediately greeted by Libby, with a big smile and her arm stretched out to welcome us. We immediately felt welcome, and by the time we left church that Sunday morning, we knew we had found **our new church home!**

In the 25th chapter of Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus says to his disciples: For I was hungry, and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ Members of our clergy and various ministries of our church **and/or** the organizations we support **do most, if not all of the above**. Stewardship is more than financial support, **although financial support is needed to continue the fine work done here at Good Shepherd**. Stewardship is also giving our time and our talents. **There is a ministry here for all of us to share our time and talents, whatever they may be!** So lets Rejoice, give thanks and sing our praise! May we continue to bless and be a blessing! Thank you.

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