

Chandley McDonald

This morning I would like to share with you some thoughts on Stewardship. Three words actually: Faith, Hope and Charity. While these words are not new, perhaps I can ascribe some current thinking to these words and their relation to stewardship.

Faith is different for each of us but in common, it is the Lord's promise of goodness in this life and the hope for salvation in the next. Faith is hope made manifest by belief and prayer. It may come to us gradually or all of a sudden but faith is one of Christianity's basic tenants. Faith is like money in the bank – see where I'm going with this?

How are we ever to learn, to have our faith renewed each week and to proclaim our love for God except by belonging to the community of the faithful—as proclaimed in the Nicene Creed? What a blessing to be reminded each week and to pray those familiar prayers, reminding us that we are God's children.

Hope in general means a desire for things to change for the better. Hope concerns things that, though difficult, are possible with God's help. This is why we as Christians need hope. Life has its challenges and there will be obstacles and discouragements. But hope summons us to persevere, and not to lose sight of the goal. We can say that one of the goals should be that, with God's help, we are able to help maintain our parish community and to help others through our stewardship. And getting right down to it, it is money – our money from pledges, so that our parish can thrive and serve our community. It means keeping up with your pledge and paying on a pledge that you've made this year or in years past. A good steward of the church will review his resources, consciously make an increase and keep up with this pledge. We must be good stewards of **our** resources for the church.

Charity is the easy one. Stewardship is charity but it is also remembering all the gifts of this life and the desire to share them with others. It is gratitude for what you have been given and giving freely to the church so that it may provide for those who seek its help. Your pledge is the resource that allows the church to function, to maintain

this elegant building, to pay its staff, to contribute to their ministries, and to provide for parish and community programs. True, some of Immanuel's Outreach contributions are funded by the pumpkin patch--and how fortunate we are to have these resources--but the parish can only thrive if parishioners continue to pledge generously each year and to keep up with their pledges.

You can help in several ways. We ask you to consider increasing your pledge by even a modest amount. In the pledge packet you will also find information about generous matching gifts for those who are first-time pledgers, for those who increase their pledges, and for those who re-instate a pledge at the same or higher amount.

We are all called to make a difference. Let us all be good stewards so that our parish can prosper this year and beyond.