

BLESSINGS ALWAYS

November 6, 2024

Association Minister Message

Rev. Daniel L. Busch

STEWARDSHIP. “For all of them have contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.” (Mark 12:34). As of 2023, there are 735 billionaires in the USA and 22 million millionaires. The combined worth of the 2020 (latest statistic) of the 400 richest Americans was \$3.2 trillion, up from \$2.7 trillion in 2017. Staggering figures, but the more important questions are, how have they gotten their money and how do they use it? However, those questions are relevant to all who believe that all that we have are gifts and trusts from God. If we truly believe that all creation is God’s and entrusted to us for its care, we truly are stewards and not owners of anything.

In this season of the church year, many faith communities are doing *STEWARDSHIP* campaigns. In the United Church of Christ, statisticians have noted that UCC members give 1.8% of their incomes to the church. There are other denominations that solicit a tithe of 10% (a few churches who know members’ incomes send bills of 10% to members for collection). Just think if a church budget is \$100,00.00 at 1.8%, the attainable challenge at 2.7% would be \$150,000, 3.6% would be \$200,000. Can you imagine increasing our giving yearly until we are tithers? In the gospel reading from Mark, there was an arrogance that sharing was done out of abundance, holding back for themselves what was God’s in the first place. The woman gave her all back to God, everything, at the risk of poverty, having nothing at all.

STEWARDSHIP is not just about money: it is about our time, talents, and treasures. It is relationships to God, commitments to the faith community, and charity toward societal needs that cannot be sufficiently covered by taxes. It is about sharing, being compassionate, and aware of others who do not have the resources to take care of the necessities of living. *STEWARDSHIP* is not just about us but returning and being held responsible to God for what has been entrusted to us for the good of God’s creation. *BLESSINGS ALWAYS*.