

# NOVEMBER DOVETALE 2020

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*They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share, thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that really is life.* 1 Timothy 6:18-19 NRSVA

Taking “hold of the life that really is life” is something to which we all can aspire. That is a life filled with generosity based on our faith in a God who is generous in all things. The last six months have hardly looked like a life that really is a life to which to aspire, but we can take assurance that God has never left us. No more is that belief embodied than in the theme for the 2021 stewardship campaign. That theme is a call to each one of us to be “generous and ready to share” so that our futures are secure and our lives are worth living.

# Announcing the 2021 Stewardship Campaign (by Ted Zern, Pledge Secretary)

Amazon Prime Days have come and gone but it is clear that retailers have launched their push for holiday gift giving and I don't mean Halloween or Thanksgiving. I even saw a billboard that referenced the coming "season of giving." It made me stop and think, does giving really have a season? Jesus certainly did not restrict giving to a season. Yes, we celebrate certain occasions within the liturgical calendar but His love for us is evident 52 weeks every year, 12 months, 365 days, 8760 hours every single year. For good measure, we get an extra day every four years. Perhaps that bonus is just to remind us how important giving is to sustain our faith journey. I like to think, therefore, that the act of giving has more to do with what it is in our heart than what is in our wallet or any other physical representation for that matter.

As we begin our 2021 Stewardship Campaign, I want to share a story that was recast in a booklet called “Faces of Faith: A Steward's Book of Prayers.” It is a story we have all heard at one time or another and is often retold in countless ways. In fact, I spoke about this story several years ago but it just seemed to fit this year’s theme. In any event, think Charles Dickens and be reminded of a character named Scrooge. In this particular version, I think the author, Dan Conway, captures the very essence of what stewardship means. (Dan Conway is a writer, teacher and consultant who has worked in secular and religious venues for the past twenty four years, and has served as Senior Vice President for RSI Catholic Services Group.)

**The story begins this way.**

It is a cold, damp night somewhere in London. It is Christmas Eve. Two “portly gentlemen,” as Charles Dickens calls them, enter the offices of Scrooge and Marley hoping to raise money “for the poor and destitute who suffer greatly at the present time of year.” These two gentlemen are passionate about their cause and make their case, pointing out that “hundreds of thousands are in want of common comforts,” but Scrooge is not impressed. “Are there no prisons?” the old miser asks. “Aren’t the workhouses still in operation?” he snarls.

“Yes,” one of the gentlemen replies, “I wish I could say they were not.” Undaunted by Scrooge's retort, the two gentlemen continue. “What shall we put you down for?”

“Nothing!” says Scrooge.

“Ah, you wish to be anonymous?” the gentlemen ask.

“I wish to be left alone!” says Scrooge.

The gentlemen leave with hearts full of sadness. They grieve for the poor and the homeless “who would rather die” than suffer the humiliation of a 19th-century English workhouse; but they also grieve for old Ebenezer Scrooge whose self-centered misery has blinded him to the simple joys of Christmas.

Although he never uses the word, Charles Dickens’ wonderful story is about stewardship. It is about the joy of giving and about learning to care for (and be responsible for) all of God’s creation. And, as Dickens makes very clear, A Christmas Carol is about more than just the sentimental (or commercial) “Christmas spirit” that comes and goes each holiday season. It seems to be more about giving from the heart or stewardship at its core.

Scrooge is not a good steward. He hoards what he has been given (time, talent and treasure) and he buries his gifts deep within himself. He cannot give or share, and the result is a twisted, self-absorbed misery. Along with his gifts and talents, Scrooge accumulates and hides all the hurts, resentments and disappointments of a lonely lifetime. In the end, nothing makes him happy. Nothing gives him peace.

But wait; there is more to the story. There is only one thing that can save this miserable old man from the hell he has made for himself. Open, generous, unrestricted giving is the only cure for the likes of Ebenezer Scrooge. As long as he holds back, asking “What’s in it for me?” Scrooge is condemned to live the life that he has fashioned for himself through many years of lonely self-centeredness.

Fortunately, Dickens believed in a God who is generous and forgiving. Old Scrooge is given one last chance to experience life as it was truly meant to be lived. There are spirits, three to be exact, lurking in the background. The spirits who visit Scrooge (including Jacob Marley, a former business partner now condemned to haunt the spirit world in chains of his own making) help Scrooge to face painful truths about himself. And by caring enough to confront him with his selfishness, the spirits give Scrooge something far more valuable than all his gold; they give him a glimpse of who he was, who he is now, and who he could become – if only he would let go of his bitter resentment and embrace the joy of giving.

This marks the remarkable transformation in the life of Scrooge. There is this change of heart that begins to take hold. As he hurries to join his nephew’s family for Christmas dinner, something he has never done before, Scrooge encounters one of the two “portly gentlemen” who had asked him for a contribution the day before. After greeting the gentleman so warmly that the man barely recognized the old miser, Scrooge whispers in his ear the amount of his pledge to help the poor and destitute.

“My dear Mr. Scrooge, are you serious?” cries the gentleman, “as if his breath were taken away.”

“Not a farthing less,” says Scrooge. “A great many back-payments are included in it, I assure you. Will you do me that favor and accept this gift?” he pleads.

And then the most amazing thing happens. As the astounded solicitor tries to express his gratitude, stammering from both appreciation and disbelief, old Scrooge says it for him. “Thank you,” says Scrooge. “I am much obliged to you. I thank you fifty times. Bless you!”

In A Christmas Carol, Dickens wants each of us to discover what old Scrooge had to learn the hard way: the only way to hold onto something is to give it away. This is the paradox of giving: the one, who gives a gift, from substance and without counting the cost, is the one who is most grateful. Besides being a donor, the generous person is also a beneficiary. That’s why Scrooge says thank you “fifty times” and also why he asks the gentleman, quite sincerely, to do him a favor by accepting the gift.

Ever afterwards, Mr. Dickens writes, it was said of Scrooge “that he knew how to keep Christmas well.” Like any good steward, Scrooge kept it well by giving it away. And so, as Mr. Dickens observes at the conclusion of his story, “May that be truly said of us . . . and May God bless us every one!”

**And so, there it is.........the heart of Stewardship.** This is a story about a changing heart, a different life paradigm, one that reminds us we are blessed many times over when we give from the heart. Indeed, stewardship is a journey in faith, one that leads us to remember the greatest gift of all.

Over the course of the next few weeks, you can expect to see a number of references to the topic of stewardship. Most notably, look for stewardship reflections attached to Fr. Harvey’s weekly email. When it comes time for pledge forms to be completed, you will have the option of emailing your intentions directly to the Pledge Secretary instead of needing to complete and return the form. Of course, if email access is not readily available, mailing the pledge form will still be possible. The end goal for the financial portion of the stewardship campaign is **Sunday, November 29** at which time all pledge forms, both electronic and mailed, will be offered during worship service.

Thank you for your faithfulness and ***God Bless Us Every One***!

Dovetale, by Jo Joubert, Substituting for Esther Nunn

Hi Esther, doing my best. Miss you and hope you are well. I bought a new computer however haven’t set it up yet as some work needs to be done in the area it is going. I will continue to do as best as I can to help you. Hope to see you soon. Jo

## Moving Inside, Fr. Harvey

As of Sunday, November 1, we are moving our Sunday services inside. So I wrote for this article a couple of weeks ago. But as most of you know, things turned out otherwise. The number of infections in our area rose dramatically, and the Diocese urged all Churches in our area to close our buildings for at least two weeks, through Sunday, November 8. I suspect the closure will be further extended.

Still, we will move inside at some point. And then what I originally wrote for this article will actually be relevant. Hopefully that will be soon!! I therefore leave it here. While we wait, we will continue to offer services as best we can. And we will certainly do our best to keep everyone informed.

With that, here is the moving-inside plan. But I say again, we are not there yet.

When we move inside, some things will stay the same as the recent past. We’ll stick with a single service at 9:00. (We have to disinfect the Church after every use, and it’s just too hard to get that done between services.) We’ll continue to livestream the service on our Facebook page, and post it to YouTube after the service. We’ll continue to share Communion (host only) with everyone present and say the prayer for spiritual communion for those who cannot be with us in person. And we’ll continue to broadcast the service on FM 92.9 into the parking lot for those who want to join us and share Communion without entering the building.

In an effort to stay safe, we will ask that everyone who joins us in the building for the service wait in the parking lot until an usher is ready to seat you. Please wear a mask the entire time you are in the building, and make an effort to remain socially distant at all times. We have rearranged the chairs to help with that.

We are also shortening the service. The Diocese recommends thirty minutes. I can’t promise that, but it should be about forty minutes. That will mean less music (and still no congregational singing); a shorter sermon; no passing the peace or the plate; and, tragically, no coffee hour. And still no in-person Sunday School.

Even with all the changes, I am thrilled about the prospect of resuming worship in our sanctuary. It has been too long already! I hope it is not too much longer!!

**Beloved Community: Sacred Ground**

Several of us have joined a “Sacred Ground Circle” for serious conversations about race and faith. The circles will begin meeting in the near future, and will gather once every three weeks or so for ten sessions of discussion on topical films and readings. Apparently more than 1200 congregations around the country have sponsored or are now sponsoring these circles, and the overwhelming reaction was been enthusiastic. This year’s participants will share our experiences as we go and, if there is interest, we can start another circle when these are finished.

**The Financial Picture**

I am happy to report once again that we remain in remarkably good financial shape. Thanks to the faithfulness and generosity of our people, we have a budget surplus! That is a remarkable accomplishment in the midst of a pandemic!!

**Call for Nominations to the Vestry**

We are now soliciting nominations to fill several vestry positions. Normally we put out a nominations box. That won’t work while our building is closed. But if you might be interested in serving or if you would like to nominate someone, please contact Fr. Harvey. It’s actually fun!

**Reading the New Testament**

We are still working our way through the New Testament, and folks are always welcome to join us! In November, we’ll read the short books between Hebrews and Revelation. In weekly e-mail updates, Father Harvey announces the chapters for the week and attaches a link to a helpful video on the material for that week. We also gather once a month for conversation—on Zoom for the duration of the quarantine. In November, our conversation will be Tuesday the 24th at 4:00. Spending time with Scripture is one of the best ways to deepen your relationship with Jesus Christ. And that’s what it is all about!

## Daily Prayer

We (Saint David’s) continue to offer Morning Prayer every weekday at 8:00. Deacon Terry leads it on Mondays and Fridays, and Father Harvey leads it on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. Saint Mark’s continues to offer Compline each evening at 8:00, and they share that service on our Facebook page.

In November, two sessions of Morning Prayer will have particular themes. On Tuesday,

November 3 (election day), we’ll use the Prayers for National Life from the back of the

Prayerbook. (This will a slightly modified version of the Election Prayer service we have done the last few years.) And on Thanksgiving Day, Morning Prayer will have—you guessed it—a thanksgiving theme.

Please take advantage of these services as you are able. And please spread the word!

### More Pandemic Adjustments:

### No Thanksgiving service; No Christmas Project

Concerned about the prospect of gathering people from multiple congregations during a

pandemic, the Agawam Clergy Association is NOT sponsoring a Thanksgiving service this year. We will livestream a simple Thanksgiving service at 8:00 AM on Thanksgiving Day (just me livestreaming from home), and we’ll have a thanksgiving theme in our regular service on Sunday, November 29. Hopefully things will be different next year, and we can resume the ecumenical service the evening before Thanksgiving.

With even more regret, we also decided against doing the Agawam Christmas Project this year. Purchasing the gifts, getting them to the Town Nurse, and then getting them to the families are just too complicated. This, too, will hopefully return next year.

## Mission Statement

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are called to love God and community, committing ourselves to lives of joyful worship, prayer, and the teaching of scripture.

## Creation Walk

We had such a great walk on Saint Francis Day that we decided to do it again on Sunday, November 15. After the 9:00 service (about 10:15), we’ll gather in our parking lot and caravan to the entrance to Robinson State Park, where we’ll walk for as long as we feel like. If enough people come, we might divide into two groups based on ambition. Please join us, and help spread the word!

## Advent Formation, by Fr. Harvey

At a recent clergy gathering (on zoom) one of the participants raised the issue of Advent

planning. As best I could tell, most of the others, most definitely including me!, hadn’t gotten that far in our planning yet. But Advent is coming fast—it begins on Sunday, November 29—and we’ll definitely have some kind of Adult Formation program.

Almost certainly we’ll meet on Zoom at a time to be determined to discuss spiritual practices in the midst of a pandemic. I am thinking, for example, that we will have sessions on waiting/preparing; silence and solitude; and fasting. I continue to make this up as I type(!), but as I envision the sessions at the moment, we’ll begin and end with prayer, look at a couple of short passages of Scripture, and then talk about our experiences over the last year as well as our hopes for the remainder of the pandemic. If you are interested in participating and have opinions about what day/time would work best, please let me know.

## Outreach during a Pandemic, by Fr. Harvey

I have been deeply moved by the generosity of our people during this pandemic. Week after week, people have dropped off food items for the Parish Cupboard. Others have knitted enough scarves and caps to fill a big trash bag. Carol Fabrycki has taken on the large task of delivering all those goods to the Cupboard, where they go to help needy people at a difficult

time.

In October and continuing this month, we also collected an impressive amount of “undies” (socks, underwear, and tee-shirts) for the Springfield Rescue Mission as part of their annual drive. Thanks to the leadership of Jim Shields, we also donated money from the parish Outreach line to support their Thanksgiving meal.

Because they are so efficient, our relatively modest donation will cover 44 meals! But our biggest donation in the last month was $1500 to Communities Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA), specifically for their senior farm shares program that helps needy seniors obtain fresh vegetables. That money was mostly from gifts specifically allocated for the purpose, including some money from our Lenten Complaint Challenge.

This is not an easy time for any of us. But your generosity has made it a lot better for a lot of people in our area! Thanks!!!

**Contemplative Prayer and Lectio Divina**

“Lectio Divina” is a prayerful reading of a Bible passage, interspersed with short periods of silence. The basic question we ask ourselves is, what is God saying to me through this passage? We meet on Zoom on Fridays at 2:30. While our buildings are closed, we plan to have contemplative prayer every week. Please join us!!

## Prayer Requests

We typically list prayer requests in the bulletin each week, but we can’t do that now. If you would like us to include a prayer request in the prayers of the people on Sundays or in Morning Prayer during the week, please let Fr. Harvey know. We also have an online prayer chain. To put out a prayer request on it, please contact Father Harvey or Kathy Glista. Do the same if you’d like to receive the prayer requests. If you are requesting prayers for someone other than yourself, please first confirm that the person would like to be on the list. And don’t forget thanksgivings. It’s good to offer those, too!!

**Parish Life: Halloween Fun**

For the last few years, we have celebrated Halloween with “Trunk or Treat” in our parking lot. That didn’t seem like a good idea this year, but we wanted to do something, and both the State and the Town officially allow Trick or Treating. A few of us came up with the idea of drive-through Trick or Treating on Halloween (Saturday, 10/31) from 11:00 to 1:00, and inviting the town. Mary Moore pre-prepared bags of candy to give to every child who drives through. She and perhaps others will be there to hand it out. As I write this, the event hasn’t happened. But I am thrilled that we can do something fun for our children and for other children in town.

**Fall Work Day**

Thanks to everyone who joined us for our Fall Work Day! I wasn’t sure how it would go, given the pandemic. But a good crew of folks showed up, worked safely and efficiently, and got a lot done. Given that we were still worshipping outside and were about to invite town children to drive-through our lot on Halloween, it was great to get the outside looking good. And since we are moving inside, after several months, we had lots to do there, too. Special thanks go, as always, to Bob Rendrick, our fearless Junior Warden, for organizing the day, and to Ellen Rendrick for providing us with goodies to keep us going!

## Diocesan Convention

​The Diocese has made the wise decision to move Diocesan Convention online this year. But rather than asking delegates to spend an entire day sitting at their computers, they have spread the Convention over a week. It will begin with an election service on Monday, November 2 (tonight!) at 7:00. We’ll “share” it on our facebook page. The other main event in Morning Prayer on Saturday, November 7, at 9:00. That is when the Bishop will deliver his address. Other events will unfold over the course of that week, but these worship services are the ones that will be of the greatest general interest.

## Prayers for Our Nation

It has been a challenging year for our nation! During the campaign season, Deacon Terry and I have been including in Morning Prayer each day one of the prayers for our nation from the back of the Prayerbook (pages 820-827). I invite you all to include some of those prayers in your own prayer practice as well. It may be a while before everything is resolved. If so, our nation is going to be needing a lot of prayers!!

**Friday Schedule Adjustments**

While our building is closed, we won’t be having our Friday Healing Eucharist at noon. But we will continue with the Bible Study at 1:00 on Zoom, as well as sessions of Contemplative Prayer at 2:30. All are welcome! Contact Fr. Harvey or see his weekly e-mails for log-in information.

**Virtual Pastoral Care**

As the weather turns cold and we all retreat inside, it is more important than ever that we be sensitive to each other’s needs. Isolation can be as harmful as the covid-19 virus, and it is likely to increase! Please stay in touch with your brothers and sisters at Saint David’s. Reach out by phone or e-mail or in whatever other way seems appropriate. And if you are struggling, emotionally, financially, or logistically, please let Fr. Harvey know. He should be able to connect you with parishioners who are ready to help.

**Creation Care Corner, by** Jim Shields.

We humans owe our lives to the sea. 4 in 10 humans rely on the ocean for food. Marine life produces 70% of our oxygen supply. 90% of global goods travel via shipping lanes. Ocean-based tourism in the U.S. alone is worth $124 billion a year. The ocean acts as a giant planetary air conditioner; over the past century, the ocean has absorbed 93% of the heat trapped in the atmosphere by greenhouse gas emissions.

But we humans have also been squeezing the life out of the oceans. Increased CO2 levels in the atmosphere have made the oceans more acidic, threatening food chains. Warming waters not only are killing sea life, they are also changing currents and affecting global weather patterns. In the meantime, we dump 8 million tons of waste into the ocean, in addition to agricultural and industrial runoff that poisons coastal areas. At the current rate of harvesting fish, by 2050 there will likely be more plastic than fish in the oceans.

Enter the pandemic. As economies restart around the world, this is our best chance to reset our goals for a healthy ocean, according to a leading marine biologist (“never let a good crisis go to waste”). A revitalized ocean would not only feed a growing population, but strengthen our fight against climate change. New developments in offshore wind-farms could provide an inexhaustible supply of green energy, while the mineral deposits on the sea-floor could provide the raw materials for batteries to store it. While the ocean is a victim of climate change, it should also be thought of as part of the solution.

## FROM THE KITCHEN CREW:

Cream Cheese Crumb Bars
The same light and buttery walnut-crumb mixture makes up the bottom crust as well as the topping – and a light and creamy cream cheese filling sweetens up the middle.  The filling also has a slightly lemony flavor (thanks to the addition of fresh lemon juice) and it adds a perfect amount of brightness so that these bars are sweet – but not too sweet!

* **Prep Time: 15 mins,  Cook Time: 45 mins,  Total Time: 1 hour,  Yield: 9-18 pieces**

##### INGREDIENTS

1/3 cup butter, softened

1/3 cup brown sugar plus two tablespoons, divided

1 cup all-purpose flour

1 cup walnuts, chopped and divided

1 tablespoon vegetable or canola oil

¼ cup granulated sugar

8 ounce package cream cheese, softened

1 egg beaten

2 tablespoons whole milk or light cream

1 tablespoon lemon juice

½ teaspoon vanilla

###### INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

**Line an 8×8-inch pan with foil pressing tightly up sides. This will help remove the finished bars once baked.**

**In the bowl of a stand mixer with paddle attachment, cream the butter and the 1/3 cup of brown sugar until fluffy.**

**Add flour until just combined.**

**Remove from mixer and blend ½ of the chopped nuts in by hand and stir mixture until a small crumb forms. Reserve one cup of this mixture. Take remaining mixture and press into the prepared 8X8 pan and bake for 12 minutes. Place on rack to cool.**

**To the reserved cup of crumb mixture, add the remaining 2 tablespoons brown sugar, remaining ½ cup chopped nuts and the one tablespoon of oil. Mix thoroughly and set aside.**

**Place stand mixer bowl back on with paddle and cream the sugar and cream cheese until light and fluffy. Scrape bowl and mix again.**

**Add egg, milk, lemon juice and vanilla and beat until very light and creamy.**

**Pour this mixture into cooled pan over the cooked crust and top with reserved topping pressing just slightly into mixture.**

**Bake for 25 minutes and cool on a rack in the pan. Once cool, lift the foil edges up and place the bar on a cutting board. Fold the foil down flat and slip the foil out.**

NOVEMBER CALANDER

Prayer M-Fri at 8:00

Compline M-F at 8

Men’s Bible study every Monday at 7

Bible Study every Friday at 1

Contemplative Prayer, every Friday at 2:30

UTO IN-Gathering, 11/15 at 9:00

Creation Walk 11/15 at 10:30

Vestry 11/17 at 7:00;

NT Conversation 11/24 at 4:00

Dedication of pledge cards, Sunday 11/29

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**Submitted by Penny Miller:**



“You’re always you, and that don’t change, and you’re always changing, and there’s nothing you can do about it.”

**Neil Gaiman, “The Graveyard Book”**